

When making decisions about these procedures, ask yourself: ‘If some of my blood will be diverted outside my body and the flow might even be interrupted for a time, will my conscience allow me to view this blood as still part of me, thus not requiring that it be “[poured] out upon the ground”? (Deuteronomy 12:23, 24) Would my Bible-trained conscience be troubled if during a medical procedure some of my own blood was withdrawn, modified, and directed back into my body? Am I aware that refusing all medical procedures involving the use of my own blood means that I would not accept a blood test, hemodialysis, or a heart-lung bypass machine?’

A Christian must decide for himself how he will allow his own blood to be handled in the course of a surgical procedure. The same applies to medical tests and current therapies that involve extracting a small amount of one’s own blood, perhaps modifying it in some way, and then reinjecting it.

Gain the Victory Over Masturbation

A spiritually unhealthy habit, masturbation instills attitudes that foster self-centeredness and corrupt the mind.* A masturbator may also grow to view others as mere sex objects—tools for sexual satisfaction. Sex becomes separated from

* *Masturbation* is the stroking or rubbing of the genital organs, commonly resulting in orgasm.

love and is relegated to a reflex that gives momentary pleasure and relieves sexual tension. But that relief is only temporary. In reality, instead of deadening the body's members "as respects fornication, uncleanness, [and improper] sexual appetite," masturbation arouses them.—Colossians 3:5.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Beloved ones, let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear." (2 Corinthians 7:1) If you are struggling to heed these words, do not give in to despair. Jehovah is always "ready to forgive" and to help. (Psalm 86:5; Luke 11:9-13) Indeed, your self-condemning heart and your efforts to give up the habit—despite occasional relapses—indicate a good attitude. Keep in mind, too, that "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." (1 John 3:20) God sees more than our sins; he sees the whole person. This knowledge enables him to hear with sympathy our earnest pleas for mercy. So never weary of turning to God in humble and earnest prayer, like a child who goes to his father when in trouble. Jehovah will bless you with a cleansed conscience. (Psalm 51:1-12, 17; Isaiah 1:18) Of course, you need to take positive steps in harmony with your prayers. For example, you would strive to avoid all forms of pornography as well as bad associates.*

* As a practical step in controlling the use of a home computer, many families keep it in a public area. Additionally, some households purchase software that filters out undesirable material. No system, though, is completely reliable.

If your problem with masturbation persists, please speak about the matter with a Christian parent or a spiritually mature and caring friend.*—Proverbs 1:8, 9; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Titus 2:3-5.

* For practical suggestions on how to overcome masturbation, see the article “Young People Ask . . . How Can I Conquer This Habit?” in the November 2006 issue of *Awake!*, and pages 178-182 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1.

The Bible’s View on Divorce and Separation

Jehovah expects those who are married to remain faithful to the marriage vow. When uniting the first man and woman in marriage, Jehovah stated: “A man . . . must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh.” Later, Jesus Christ repeated that statement and added: “Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart.” (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:3-6) Hence, Jehovah and Jesus view marriage as a lifelong bond that ends only when one partner dies. (1 Corinthians 7:39) Since marriage is a sacred arrangement, divorce is not to be taken lightly. In fact, Jehovah hates divorces that have no Scriptural basis.—Malachi 2:15, 16.

What forms a Scriptural basis for divorce? Well, Jehovah hates adultery and fornication. (Genesis 39:9; 2 Samuel 11:26, 27; Psalm 51:4) Indeed, he finds fornication so despicable that he allows it as grounds for divorce. (For a discussion of what fornication involves, refer to Chapter 9, paragraph 7, where