

Module Five

# When He Has Checked Out

*“Male sexual withdrawal is one of the most confusing and damaging dynamics a wife can experience – and one of the least talked about in Christian marriage spaces.”*

**Complete this worksheet individually before sharing with your spouse. Honesty here is more important than comfort. There are no wrong answers – only honest ones.**

## MODULE FOUNDATIONS

- 1 Male sexual withdrawal is not always about pornography – it can be driven by performance anxiety, fear of rejection, emotional disconnection, depression, or**
- 2 Pornography rewires the brain’s reward system away from real intimacy toward a frictionless substitute – a husband who has used it extensively often finds real-life intimacy emotionally demanding in ways that make avoidance easier than engagement.**
- 3 The wife of a checked-out husband almost universally concludes she is the problem – that she is unattractive or that he is getting his needs met elsewhere. This conclusion is devastating and almost always wrong.**
- 4 Performance anxiety creates a self-reinforcing cycle – the more a husband fears failure, the more he avoids, the higher the stakes become, the more he avoids.**
- 5 Restoration requires the husband to name what is happening rather than disappear into silence – and requires the wife to create a response environment where honesty feels safer than avoidance.**

SECTION  
1

## Naming What Is True

*If pornography is part of this conversation, the husband should answer those sections privately before deciding what to share. Nothing here should become ammunition.*

<b>Husband's score:</b>	—	<b>Wife's perception:</b>	—	<b>on of this nt and</b>
	—		—	
	—		—	
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**2. For the husband: How long have you been in the place you are currently in? Was there a specific moment, season, or event that began the withdrawal — or has it been gradual?**

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**3. For the wife: When did you first notice the shift? What story have you been telling yourself about what his withdrawal means — about you, about him, about the marriage?**

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SECTION  
2

## What Is Underneath

*These questions surface the actual drivers of withdrawal. The husband answers honestly — not the version that protects his image.*

**4. For the husband: Which of the following have contributed to where you are? Check all that are honest:**

**Performance anxiety — fear of failure**

**Accumulated resentment**

**Fear of rejection — safer not to try**

**Feeling like a failure as a husband**

**Pornography use**

**Sense my wife is not interested**

**Depression or chronic stress**

**Shame I have never named to anyone**

**5. For the husband: If pornography has been part of this, name as honestly as you can what it provided that felt easier than real intimacy — and what you believe it has cost your marriage.**

**6. For the wife: What has your husband's withdrawal cost you personally — not the marriage in general, but you specifically? Be honest about what conclusion you have drawn about yourself as a result.**

SECTION  
3

## The Shame Spiral

*Shame is the primary driver of male sexual withdrawal. These questions name the spiral that keeps it in place.*

**7. For the husband: Describe the cycle as it operates for you. Does avoidance make the next attempt feel harder or easier? How long has the spiral been running?**

**8. For the husband: Have you ever named what is actually happening to your wife — not the behavior, but the reason behind it? If not, what has stopped you?**

SECTION  
4

## Both Voices

*The husband shares first. The wife listens without responding until he is completely finished.*

**10. For the husband: What is the one thing you most need your wife to understand about where you are — that you have been carrying in silence? For the wife: What is the one thing you most want your husband to know about what his withdrawal has cost you — said not as accusation but as honest disclosure?**

**MY ANSWER:**

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**MY SPOUSE'S ANSWER:**

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SECTION  
5

## Commitment

*Name one specific commitment each of you is making. Not a feeling — a decision.*

**MY COMMITMENT:**

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**MY SPOUSE'S COMMITMENT:**

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*“Men who check out are rarely uninterested in sex. They are managing a shame spiral that makes the risks of engagement feel greater than the rewards.”*