

Pornography: Satan's Deadly Trap

In our modern culture, pornography has both shaped and warped our views of sex.

I. Pornography: Introduction

Definition of Pornography: Sexually explicit images or literature intended primarily for the purpose of inducing sexual arousal in the viewer or the reader.¹ Elisabeth Thoms adds that pornography is more than merely sexually explicit material, but it has “an offensive quality in that it degrades sex, condones antisocial behavior, and assaults the sensibilities of the viewer by its obsessive and unrealistic treatment of sex.”² Though pornography is not a new challenge to Christians, this generation faces the danger of immediate access through the internet and cable TV.

A. Extent of the Problem

Pornography is available in an almost endless number of forms. Access to pornography can be gained through print (magazines), cable TV, satellite TV, sexually oriented businesses (book stores to strip clubs), the internet, and even via cell phones. Racy “romance novels” serve as a form of porn as well.

Internet pornography is perhaps the most vexing type of pornography. One reason why “cybersex” is so dangerous is because it employs a dangerously high number of addictive “hooks” such as isolation, fantasy, objectification, anonymity, and sexual images.³

In 2006, the porn companies in the United States generated around \$7 billion dollars in revenue. A 2013 article in *The Journal of Sex Research* studied porn use over a forty year period. Porn use was defined as watching one pornographic movie during a year's time. This study offered the following data for porn use by males in the United States:

¹ Susan Neiburg Terkel and R. Shannon Duval, eds. *Facts on File Encyclopedia of Ethics*, s.v. “Pornography” (New York: Facts on File, 1999), 214.

² Elisabeth D. Thoms, *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics*, s.v. “Pornography,” R.K. Harrison, ed. (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992), 315.

³ The Society for the Advancement of Sexual Health, *Cybersex and Sexual Addiction*. www.ncsac.org/general/papers_cybersex.aspx, (Accessed December 15, 2006).

1970s	26% of respondents used pornography
1980s	30% of respondents used pornography
1990s	32% of respondents used pornography
2000s	34% of respondents used pornography ⁴

B. Legal Definitions

It is common today to differentiate between the erotic and the pornographic. “Erotica” is material designed to stimulate sexual interest. Pornography has been defined by the United States Supreme Court as material that meets three standards: it has no artistic merit, it appeals to a prurient (wanton or excessive) interest in sex, and it violates community standards of decency. Stanton and Brenna Jones clarify the “legal” difference between “erotica” and “pornography” when they say, “We might think of erotica as a very large circle, and pornography as a much smaller circle inside the larger circle; all pornography is erotica, but *legally* not all erotica is pornography.”⁵ Thus, what most right-thinking Christians consider pornography, *Playboy* magazine for example, is considered “erotica” in the legal sense.

In *Miller v. California* (1973), the United States Supreme Court held that obscene materials are not protected by the First Amendment. The Court said at that time a work may be subject to state regulation where that work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest in sex; portrays, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law; and, taken as a whole, does not have serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value. The Court supplied three tests for obscenity:

1. Community Standards: Would the average rational person applying contemporary community standards find that the work appeals to prurient interests?
2. State Law: Does the work describe, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by the applicable state law?
3. Scientific / Artistic Value: Does the work as a whole lack any scientific or artistic value?⁶

⁴ Paul J. Wright, “U.S. Males and Pornography, 1973–2010: Consumption, Predictors, Correlates,” *Journal of Sex Research* 50.1 (2013): 65.

⁵ Stanton and Brenna Jones, *How & When to Tell Your Kids About Sex* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1993), 197.

⁶ The entire *Miller v. California* decision can be found at <http://supreme.justia.com/us/413/15/case.html>.

On January 20, 2005, Judge Gary Lancaster of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania issued a ruling in which he claims federal obscenity statutes are unconstitutional in light of *Lawrence v. Texas*. The case, *United States v. Extreme Associates*, addressed videos depicting the rape, torture and murder of women. Lancaster said, “First, we find that after *Lawrence*, the government can no longer rely on the advancement of a moral code i.e., preventing consenting adults from entertaining lewd or lascivious thoughts, as a legitimate, let alone compelling, state interest.”⁷ It is somewhat interesting to note that Lancaster quoted liberal Harvard professor Laurence H. Tribe who stated that “the Court’s holding in *Lawrence* is hard to reconcile with retaining the state’s authority to ban the distribution to adults of sexually explicit materials identified by, among other things, their supposed appeal to what those in power regard as ‘unhealthy.’”⁸

II. The Addictive Nature of Pornography

Pornography is addictive. Typically, people begin by using “gateway” porn such as tawdry magazines and movies. After a period of time, users of pornography typically move to media that is progressively more violent and graphic. There is no “moral bottom” to the swill of pornography available today. A typical cycle of addiction may follow the pattern suggested below. Not all addicts will follow this pattern exactly and some may skip entire stages.

A. Stage One: Fantasy

Steven Earll offers this insight into the dangers of sexual fantasy when he says, “If an addiction or compulsion does not divert a person’s mind from reality, it’s not worth doing. For the addicted person or the person starting down addiction’s path – life’s stresses often feel overwhelming or unbearable. Fantasy is a method of survival that allows mental escape from pressures.”⁹ Earll goes on to suggest that James 1:13 – 15 describes the destructive nature of fantasy:

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot

⁷ Lancaster’s opinion is available at <http://news.findlaw.com/hdocs/docs/conlaw/useextremeassoc012005opn.pdf>.

⁸ Laurence A. Tribe, “*Lawrence v. Texas*: The “Fundamental Right” That Dare Not Speak Its Name,” *Harvard Law Review* 117 (2004): 1945. Lancaster cites Tribe on page 30 of his decision. Tribe uses the word “unhealthy” from *Brockett v. Spokane* (1985).

⁹ Steven Earll, “Signs of Trouble: Five Criteria for Addiction Assessment.” www.pureintimacy.org. (Accessed November 13, 2006).

be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. (James 1:13-15 NIV)

The word translated *evil desire* is *epithumia* or “lust.” Sexual fantasies are certainly a form of lust. When these fantasies are nurtured, the cycle downward into addiction has well begun. Furthermore, this text makes clear that these actions are sin.

B. Stage Two: Ritualization

Most sexual addicts engage in certain “rituals” before actually indulging in pornography. This may involve arranging schedules to make sure that their sin can be indulged. Though he uses the term “Self-Nurturing” instead of “ritualization,” Steven Earll seems to have the same idea in mind when he says:

The power of any addiction includes the fact that the behavior is self-nurturing. Self-nurturing means that the addict can decide the timing of the action, the amount of substance or behavior, the mix of the substance or behavior, and the amount of stress that is allowed to build before indulging. . . . The timing and anticipation of the addictive behavior is an important part of the process. The more time an addict waits, the more they experience the affects of delayed gratification and the more self-nurturing it feels. Timing issues also include creating the proper setting. . . . Sessions of internet porn are often planned around time when the addict is alone or the family is asleep. A proper setting becomes part of the addict feeling nurtured.¹⁰

I believe Earll has accurately described the self-deception that occurs in sinful behavior and especially indulgence in pornography.

C. Stage Three: Realization

Ed Young, Sr. says, “In this stage the addiction is “realized” or acted out. When people act out their addiction [sin physically], they are essentially saying to God, “You cannot or will not meet my deepest longings, so I’ll do it on my own.” Sooner or later, all continuing fantasy or ritual is acted upon.”¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ed Young, Sr., *Expression of Love* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishing, 1997), 165. I have taken these five stages from Young’s work as well.

D. Stage Four: Paralysis

By this stage, the “addictive behavior becomes so deeply entrenched that the addict feels he no longer has a choice about his actions.”¹²

E. Stage Five: Desensitization

Ed Young, Sr. comments, “Eventually, the addict becomes desensitized to the effects of sin. At this point, most addicts are more willing to change or adapt their career, their relationships, their commitments, and their beliefs to their addictions, than vice versa.”¹³ The stage of desensitization is perhaps the most dangerous stage because other innocent people become victims of a pornography addict’s distorted view of sex. 1 Timothy 4:2 refers to this level of addiction as a “seared conscience.”

F. Physical Effects on the Male Brain

As men become more and more preoccupied with pornographic images and fall deeper into the mental habit of fixating on these images, the exposure to these vulgar images creates neural pathways. Struthers explains, “Like a path is created in the woods with each successive hiker, so do the neural paths set the course for the next time an erotic image is viewed.”¹⁴ Over time these pornographic neural pathways become wider as they are repeatedly traveled with each exposure to pornography. Struthers then says, “They [the neural paths] become the automatic pathway through which interactions with women are routed.”¹⁵ Struthers then goes on to say that *all women* become potential porn stars in minds of these men.¹⁶

G. Defense Strategies Used by the Porn Addict

¹² Young, *Expression of Love*, 165.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁴ William M. Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2009), 85.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*.

¹⁶ Freud may have had something like this in mind when he referred to the use of “intoxicating media” as an escape from suffering and said, “The service rendered by intoxicating media in the struggle for happiness and in keeping misery at a distance is so highly prized as a benefit that individuals and peoples alike have given them an established place in the economics of their libido.” Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, James Strachey, Trans. (New York: W.W. Norton Co, 1961), 25.

William Struthers suggests five defense strategies used by the porn addict.

1. Denial

Struthers explains how men use the denial defense: “Some men may deny that they view pornography because they have equated the term “pornography” with graphic, violent or sexually explicit materials and place “softcore” pornography (pictures of naked women or videos of sexual acts that do not show the genitalia) in the “non-pornography” category.”¹⁷

2. Minimalization

When men use the “minimalization” defense, they might say, “Well, I do look at porn every now and then, but it’s not like I’m addicted or anything/!” Struthers says, “For the user of pornography who admits that he regularly views material and acts out in response to it, the next appeal is often to try and make it appear minimal. They argue that their pornography use is insignificant and has no real effect on their life.”¹⁸

3. Normalization

When men use the “normalization” defense, they might say, “Well, yes, I look at porn. But everyone else does as well!” Struthers comments, “The normalization of viewing pornography moves it away from being a bad thing to instead being an expected behavior. . . . To not view porn, with this line of thinking, is to be abnormal.”¹⁹

4. Rationalization and Justification

Struthers explains this defense, “Rationalization is the use of a logical argument to give permission *prior to* the viewing of pornography or acting out. Justification is the use of a logical argument to excuse viewing of pornography or acting out *after* the fact.”²⁰

¹⁷ William M. Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy*, 50.

¹⁸ Struthers., 51.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 51 – 52.

²⁰ Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy*, 52. Emphasis in original.

5. Celebration

At this stage of defense, the porn addict has lost any moral reservations about use of pornography. Struthers says, "They have so lost the ability to see women portrayed as human beings. They embrace the horror of sexual exploitation and celebrate their addiction to it. They speak openly about their favorite performers and their collections."²¹

III. Consequences of Porn Use

A. Addiction

As noted above, pornography is addictive and results in an emotionally stunted persona unable to enjoy true intimacy with their husband or wife. Sex addiction is not about sex. It is an intimacy disorder based in abuse or abandonment. The exception is internet pornography. It is so highly addictive no history of trauma is required to become addicted. As with any addiction, the earlier the exposure the more quickly a person will become addicted. For example, a 12 year old will become addicted after 1 or 2 viewings and a 20 year old may take 3 or 4 viewings. Tolerance develops with all addictions, so to get the same "hit" the volume of porn must be increased as well as the type of porn.²²

Pornography seems to be the most prevalent addiction in Christian circles because it is so secretive and often free of charge. You don't have to go make a purchase from a drug dealer. You don't have to leave your home. Free porn is plentiful on the internet.

B. Pornography devalues women and contributes to violence towards women.

In pornography women are treated as a subspecies of humans to be exploited and used. Ed Young captures the evils of pornography's view of women when he says, "And the insidious messages of pornography subtly teach a devalued view of women (or men) and an unrealistic view of relationships, romance, intimacy, and

²¹ Ibid., 53.

²² From Fern Sutton, personal correspondence.

sexuality.”²³ Elizabeth Thoms summarizes the way pornography contributes to violence towards women when she says, “[Pornography] advocates the subordination and exploitation of a particular group in society [women] and applauds sadistic and violent practices in relation to them.”²⁴ Focus on the Family adds:

The women in *Playboy* magazine are called “bunnies,” making them cute little animals or “playmates,” making them a toy. Porn often refers to women as animals, playthings, or body parts. Some pornography shows only the body and doesn’t show the face at all. The idea that women are real human beings with thoughts and emotions is played down.²⁵

C. Pornography leads to voyeurism.

Voyeurism is an obsession with looking at women rather than interacting with them. All other aspects of a woman other than her looks become trivial. Someone who embraces pornography becomes an obsessive observer of sordid or sensational sexual subjects. Men who abuse pornography can become obsessed with watching women, especially from a secret vantage point.

Basically, one becomes a “dirty old man.”

D. Pornography leads to objectification of women.

Objectification is an attitude in which women are objects rated by size, shape and harmony of body parts instead of their moral character and virtue.

E. Pornography leads to a distorted view of male validation.

Pornography distorts male validation by convincing men that they need to validate masculinity through beautiful women.

F. Pornography leads to an attitude that treats women as trophies.

²³ Ed Young, Sr., *Expression of Love*, 167.

²⁴ Elizabeth Thoms, “Pornography,” *Encyclopedia of Biblical and Christian Ethics*, 316.

²⁵ Gene McConnell and Keith Campbell, “Pornography and Cybersex.” www.family.org. (Accessed February 3, 2011).

“Trophyism” is the idea that beautiful women are collectibles who show the world who a man is. Pornography feeds the attitude that women are trophies to be collected. For example, Gene Simmons, the lead singer for the rock group “KISS,” claims to have slept with over 4,800 women. Furthermore, for a long time he took photographs of all the women with whom he had sex. He says, “I took Polaroid photos for a long time . . . I took photos of the vast majority.”²⁶ In this way, Simmons “collects” women as trophies or conquests, dehumanizing them as objects to be conquered.

G. Fear of True Intimacy and A Less Satisfying Sex-Life

One of the tragic ironies of pornography is that men who view it actually have a less-satisfying sex-life in their marriage than men who abstain from pornography. Men who use pornography grow dissatisfied with their wives' appearance, become emotionally distant, and sex with their spouse becomes less frequent and less satisfying.²⁷

Pornography leads to an inability for men to relate to women in an honest and intimate way despite deep loneliness. Pornography addicts actually enjoy less intimacy with their spouses.

The fear of true intimacy is one of the dangers associated with early exposure to pornography. The first messages someone receives about sex are the most important. If someone's first introduction to sex is via pornography, it distorts the young person's view of sex and can damage their marriage years later. Sadly, many men resort to pornography out of a feeling of loneliness only to discover repetitive use of porn only accentuates the loneliness.

H. Child Abuse and Sexual Exploitation

87% of those who molest girls and 77% of those who molest boys admit to regular use of hard-core pornography.²⁸

While not everyone who uses pornography becomes a child molester, almost every

²⁶ Joe Robinson, “Gene Simmons Claims to Have Slept With 4,800 Women,” October 21, 2011, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://ultimateclassicrock.com/gene-simmons-slept-with-4800-women/>.

²⁷ John Buri, “Pornography and Your Marriage,” August 1, 2007, accessed April 6, 2017, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/sex-and-intimacy/pornography-and-your-marriage>.

²⁸ Statistics found at www.erlc.com/erlc/article/pornography. (Accessed November 13, 2006).

child molester has used pornography.

I. The Judgment of God.

Pornography invokes the wrath of God on those who participate in it. See I Corinthians 6:9-11; Revelation 21:8

J. Loss of Ministry

1 Timothy 3:1-7 emphasizes the high standard of character expected of a Christian minister; among these qualifications are being “above reproach” and being “self-controlled.” Because of the immense trust placed in ministers and because of the reality that pornography addictions lead can lead to the abuse of others, churches have ample reason to be concerned when this sin enslaves a minister. In my opinion, no one with an ongoing pornography problem should be involved in vocational Christian ministry.

IV. Biblical Critique

A. Women are made in the Image of God and should not be de-humanized.

Genesis 1:27: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

B. We are encouraged not to allow any impure material into our life.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

Psalms 101:2b – 3s: I will walk in my house with a blameless heart. I will set before my eyes no vile thing.

Preachers spend an extensive amount of time alone and this contributes to the temptation to use internet pornography. Furthermore, because pastors are held to a high standard, many preachers addicted to pornography are afraid to ask for help.

C. Pornography is a form of adultery.

Matthew 5:27-28: You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit

adultery.” But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

In Matthew 5:27 – 28, the seventh commandment – “Thou shalt not commit adultery” – is expanded to include indulgence in illicit sexual activity in the imagination.²⁹ The Greek text of Matthew 5:28 says, “πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι,” and “πρὸς τὸ” with an the infinitive expresses purpose and not simply the result: this is a look that has sexual arousal in mind and may well involve contemplating the steps to adultery in one’s mind.³⁰ R.T. France stresses that the word “woman” (γυνή) in 5:28 should be understood as another man’s wife.³¹ While γυνή certainly includes another man’s wife, perhaps we should be cautious in limiting it to *only* another man’s wife: We must remember that Jesus has married men in mind here, and a married man can commit adultery by having an affair with another married woman or another woman who is single.³² In either case, pornography is certainly forbidden by Jesus’ teaching here. Matthew 5:27 – 28 teaches the outer performance of the person is a clear indication of the inner disposition. Sinful actions stem from sinful hearts and lustful eyes.³³

Men who use pornography have a greater potential to have multiple sexual partners within a year’s time.³⁴ Furthermore, pornography consumption is significantly associated with more positive attitudes toward extramarital sex.³⁵ Men

²⁹ John Nolland, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 235. Nolland goes on to say Matthew 5:29 – 30 are a later appendage to Matthew 5:27- 28, a view I strongly reject. R.T. France says Matthew 5:29 – 30 is an originally independent saying of Jesus which is attached here. R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew in The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 204. But I am hard pressed to understand why Jesus must be limited to saying things only once: Good preachers always repeat important points.

³⁰ Nolland, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 236. Do not miss the fact that Jesus addresses the sixth commandment in 5:21 – 26 and immediately follows this with a discussion of the seventh commandment. Erasums rightly said, “Therefore what anger is to murder, lust is to adultery.” Desiderius Erasmus, *Paraphrase on Matthew*, Dean Simpson, trans., in *Collected Works of Erasmus*, vol. 45 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 102.

³¹ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, 204.

³² I strongly and emphatically reject Kent E. Brower’s assertion when he says: “While modern definitions of adultery include extramarital sexual intercourse by either husband or wife, sexual intercourse between a man, married or not, and an unmarried woman or a prostitute was not understood to be prohibited by this command.” Kent E. Brower, “Jesus and the Lustful Eye: Glancing at Matthew 5:28,” *Evangelical Quarterly* 76.4 (January 1, 2004): 299. What about Proverbs 5 which prohibits sexual affairs with the “strange” woman? The idea being that any woman who is not your wife is a “stranger” or a “foreigner” to the wedding covenant? Brower’s view is based on an overly negative reconstruction of OT patriarchy, one influenced to a certain degree by feminism’s negative portrayal of Biblical teachings regarding gender.

³³ Here, I am citing Brower positively, though rejecting quite strongly aspects of his analysis. Brower, “Jesus and the Lustful Eye,” 300.

³⁴ Paul J. Wright, “U.S. Males and Pornography, 1973–2010: Consumption, Predictors, Correlates,” 66.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

who engage in “mental adultery” by using pornography are at a greater risk of being involved in physical adultery.

Pornography introduces a stranger into the marriage covenant. Women who discover their husbands are using pornography feel cheap and violated. In a *New York Times* article on cyber-porn, a thirty-four year old minister’s wife who discovered her husband’s pornography addiction said, “How can I compete with hundreds of anonymous others who are now in our bed, in his head? . . . Our bed is crowded with countless faceless strangers, where once we were intimate.”³⁶

D. Pornography darkens the mind and heart of a believer.

Matthew 6:22 – 23 (HCS): [Jesus speaking] The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light within you is darkness—how deep is that darkness!

Jesus here articulates a spiritual principle that what we allow ourselves to view has a corresponding influence on the entirety of our life. Geisler comments on the connection between Matthew 6:22 – 23 and pornography and says, “Pornography clearly corrupts the mind and natures of people. It becomes a blight that sidelines people’s minds, hardens their hearts, and causes them to live in the flesh and in accordance with their old nature.”³⁷

E. Pornography is consistent with the works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21

F. We should flee pornography.

2 Timothy 2:22: Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (NASB)³⁸

³⁶ Jane E. Brody, “Cybersex Gives Birth to a Psychological Disorder,” *The New York Times*, May 16, 2000, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/05/16/health/cybersex-gives-birth-to-a-psychological-disorder.html>.

³⁷ Norm Geisler, *Christian Ethics: Contemporary Issues & Options*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 388.

³⁸ One should note that I. Howard Marshall rejects my contention that sensual desires are the intended proscription here. See I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles in The International Critical Commentary* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999), 764.

G. Pornography is a form of lust and lust should be avoided at all costs.

I Peter 2:11: Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.

I John 2:16: For everything in the world – the cravings of sinful man, the **lust of the eyes**, and the boasting of what he has and does – comes not from the Father but from the world.

H. If You Love Children, Flee Pornography

Mark 10:13 – 16: ¹³ Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” ¹⁶ And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Jesus loved little children and Christ-followers should love children as well. Pornography contributes to the exploitation and destruction of little boys and girls. Child Pornography is a vile scourge in the sexual underground of the United States. Furthermore, many innocent children are prematurely exposed to disturbing sexual images because someone has left their filthy pornography laying around. If you love little boys and girls, **STAY AWAY FROM PORNOGRAPHY**. The link between pornography and child exploitation is also why parents are rightly concerned when someone who self-identifies as a Christian minister has a pornography problem. Finally, remember that every woman in a porn video, magazine or strip club was *once a little girl*. That is *somebody's little girl* that is being exploited.

I. Pornography fails the Philippians 4:8 Test

Philippians 4:8: Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Eight questions to ask when concerning entertainment choices:

1. Is it true?
2. Is it noble?
3. Is it right (righteous)?
4. Is it pure?
5. Is it lovely?
6. Is it admirable?
7. Is it excellent/virtuous?
8. Is it praiseworthy?

Pornography fails each of these tests. But I warn all of us: Many movies and TV programs fail this test which would not strictly fall into the category of pornography. When we think about overcoming pornographic temptation, it should cause us to be cautious in all our media and entertainment choices. Speaking in 1989, Carl F.H. Henry said, “Alongside alcoholism and drugs, television has become in some respects one of America’s worst addictions, one that now seems to worsen by the year. Nothing is any longer too sacred for the delicate media to pervert.”³⁹

J. Do Whatever is Necessary to Flee Pornography

Matthew 5:29 – 30 (NASB): If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

Are you willing to do whatever it takes to find freedom from the addictive and destructive sin of pornography? As Adam McClendon said, “Jesus is saying that if you want to walk in holiness you have to be willing to discard the very elements that are causing you to stumble.”⁴⁰ For some men, this means getting a “flip phone” and getting rid of an Iphone, which is a porn-capable device.

³⁹ Carl F. H. Henry, *Gods of this Age . . . Or God of the Ages?* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994), 173.

⁴⁰ Adam McClendon, “Plowing Through Addiction: The ABCs of Victory,” August 2, 2017, accessed August 4, 2017, <http://ftc.co/resource-library/blog-entries/plowing-through-addiction-the-abcs-of-victory>.

H. Conclusion

There is no room in the life of a dedicated Christian for use of pornography. The Bible teaches a basic principle for our thought life: **G.I.G.O.** -- Garbage In; Garbage Out.

A significant amount of modern music, especially rap, glorifies sexual immorality and the sexual exploitation of women. Much of this filth is simply audio pornography.

Pastors should also be aware that some “marriage counselors” recommend couples to view pornography together. This atrocious advice is usually given by secular therapists with a seared conscience. Struthers rightly says, “The lie that pornography can somehow enhance intimacy is seductive. Even if a husband and wife view pornography together, they are intruding on the sexual intimacy, however fraudulent, of others.”⁴¹

V. Helpful Ideas for Victory over internet porn in your family

We are in a war! What are some strategies and tactics for victory?

A. How do I know if my son or daughter is at risk?

In our culture, if you have a son or daughter, they are at risk!

The National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families has developed a list of 14 indicators that a child might be using pornography online. While there are many signs that could indicate that your child is viewing pornography or communicating with an online predator, here are some common warning signs:

1. The child is alive and breathing. What I mean is that every child alive in our world today is at risk because of the widespread availability of pornography on smart phones, computers, and every other new technological gadget to come down the line.
2. Sudden changes in habits or behavior
3. Spends less time with friends and family members and more time isolated
4. Spends large amounts of time on the computer

⁴¹ Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy*, 57.

5. Changes password without your knowledge
6. Is secretive about instant message (IM) buddies
7. The cache (short-term list of sites visited each day located in the pull-down menu of the address line) of your computer is emptied after your child has been on the computer
8. Internet history file (long-term list of sites visited, downloads, etc.) is erased after your son or daughter uses the computer
9. There are multiple ISP (Internet service providers) dial-up services on the desktop of your computer
10. Minimizes the computer screen when you walk into the room
11. Shares personal information with others over the Internet
12. Gets lower grades in school while Internet use increases
13. Accesses your Internet account from a friend's house
14. Changes in sexual behavior (becomes active)
15. Spends an inordinate amount of time at school or the local library⁴²

B. Suggestions for Protecting Your Family and Children

1. If the family has a computer in the home, keep it in a “public” area in the house where everyone can see it.
2. Porn is now available on phones! As yourself, “Is it wise to give my child access to the internet via a cell phone?”
3. Closely related to the first point, don’t let children have a computer in their bedroom.
4. Don’t let children have unsupervised access to the internet, especially when friends are visiting.
5. Filters: The parent alone should have the password to the filters and to the computer.
6. Don’t allow your children to visit a friend’s home unless you can guarantee there will be supervised access at that home as well.

⁴² “How Do I Know My Son or Daughter Is At Risk?,” <http://www.internetsafe.org/faq.html>. (Accessed February 7, 2008).

7. Fathers should tell their sons and Mothers should tell their daughters about the emotional damage associate with porn.
8. Heads up! Many vile and irresponsible people, including sexual predators, use blog sites such as “My Space” and “Xanga.”
9. Be alert to certain musical genres as a “gateway” to pornography.
10. Teach your children the blessings of following God’s plan for sexual morality: God promises: Abiding Joy, Genuine Satisfaction, Exemplary Honor, and Pure Allure.
11. If porn is a besetting sin in your home, simply disconnect the computer and get a old-school flip phone.
12. Bottom line: You are the Parent!!!! Teach and Supervise your children!!! The following online resources are helpful.

<http://www.pureintimacy.org/> (Focus on the Family)

<http://www.pureonline.com/>

<http://www.purerestoration.com/>

If the use and abuse of pornography remains unaddressed and unchallenged, then our nation and our churches will continue to see men and women live in bondage to sin and lies, marriages and families will fall apart, and women and children will not be regarded as people to be cherished and loved but as objects to be used and abused.

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