

We will only be scratching the surface tonight. If you do struggle, this is not to condemn you in any way, but rather to show you the damaging effects of porn and show you how to find help and healing!

Matthew 5:8

8 Blessed are the **pure** in heart: for they shall see God.

Psalm 24:3-4

3 Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?

4 He that hath **clean hands**, and a **pure heart**; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

Purity matters to God!

Job 31:1

1 I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid (young virgin girl)?

Psalm 101:3

3 I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.

Pornography

Through the centuries, cultures have had erotic drawings and depictions, but the first time that pornography appeared in its current form was in 1953 with the release of the first issue of Playboy with Marilyn Monroe on the cover. And for quite a while this was the only way to access pornographic material - magazines, printed images, and then in ensuing years, home videos. If you wanted to access pornography you had to actually go out in public and purchase it. And for a lot of people, this was reason enough to abstain from it. But then in 1993 everything changed. The world wide web was introduced to the public and shortly thereafter pornography was introduced to the home computer. Suddenly you didn't have to go out in public to access porn, you could access it in private, in the comfort of your own home. You could keep it hidden from everybody else and indulge in it as much as you wanted. This is the time period that I grew up in. I was born in 1991 and I first accidentally viewed porn on a desktop computer when I was 4 or 5 years old.

For a lot of men this still wasn't enough to ensnare them because the home computer, *if* you even had one, was typically located in a high traffic area in the home - the living room, the kitchen, etc. But then the laptop started becoming more mainstream and pornography became a little more portable. And as you move through the ensuing years to where we are today, pornography is as portable and private as it has ever been. No longer is it restricted to a news stand, a desktop computer, or even a laptop, now it is in our pockets. It's on our iPhones, iPods, tablets, video game systems, our smart TV's, our computers, etc. It is everywhere!

And not only is it on hardcore websites and the pages of playboy, but even in mainstream media and television. The line between porn and pop-culture has been blurred to the point where it is almost non-existent. It is not problem to go to any movie theatre or tune in to certain TV stations and see full-frontal nudity, something that was illegal just a few short years ago.

We live in a sex-crazed, sensual world, where porn is the norm. People say it's normal, that it's even expected that people indulge in this fantasy world. But I stand here tonight to say to you that this is not normal. This doesn't work! And you don't have to fall prey to the sinister clutches of porn.

Why is porn so bad?

Matthew 5:27-28

27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

When you view pornography, you are committing **adultery**. When you view somebody having sex or removing their clothes and you pleasure yourself, you are joining yourself with them in your mind.

Last week we laughed at Solomon for having so many wives and concubines, yet some of us have amassed a harem of whores and harlots that would rival Solomon's, but only in our imaginations.

Porn makes men lazy.

Sexual relations with real women involve commitment, pursuit, intentionality, romance, love, and respect. Sex takes work. This is why pornography is so alluring to some men. Like a lot of temptations, porn offers a quick fix - a shortcut to pleasure without virtue or integrity. Pornography rips sexual pleasure from its relational context and creates a realm of fantasy.

Porn enables a man to feel like a man without requiring him to be one. You might think it's manly to view the hot babes online and masturbate, but in reality you are emasculating yourself, never really learning what it takes to woo a real woman but only how to indulge in fantasy.

Porn is a big deal! You might wonder why we are talking about this. After all, we are all Christians, right? But here's the facts...

1 out of 2 church-going men struggle with pornography.
1 out of 5 church-going women struggle with pornography.

Why Men and Women Struggle with Porn

Men are stimulated by what they see. The sight of the female form causes the male brain to release a surge of testosterone, arousing the man.

This is primarily why men are drawn to pornography. Bottom line ... naked women turn them on. Viewing porn gives a man a sexual rush.

Females are stimulated by how they feel emotionally. When a woman sees a man naked, she really doesn't care. It's not sight that stimulates her, but how she feels.

Women are drawn to pornography, because when they view people engaging in a pseudo-intimate act on a computer screen, they *feel* an intimate connection to what is going on.

A woman might view pornography not because she wants to see naked bodies, but because she is lonely. There is no man in her life, no intimate connection, and by her viewing an intimate act (as FAKE as it may be), this fulfills that desire for intimacy.

In either case, pornography and masturbation is an addictive behavior because chemicals are released in the brain of both genders when porn is viewed. Just like shooting up with a drug, your body becomes dependent on this chemical release and it becomes harder and harder to say no to porn and masturbation the more you do it.

If the stats are accurate, that means about a third of the people under the sound of my voice wrestle with porn, and yet we are so scared to talk about it.

The enemy would love to have you to believe that you are the only one who struggles with it and make you feel isolated.

Please realize that YOU ARE NOT ALONE in this fight! There are other people in this very room who are walking through the same battle that you are.

How can we overcome this issue?

Psychologist Al Cooper once coined the phrase the “Triple-A Engine” when referring to internet pornography and cyber-sex addiction. It’s as if pornography stands on a three-legged table. Kick one of the legs out, and your struggle will diminish.

The Three “A’s” are:

Affordability
Accessibility
Anonymity

Affordability

If porn weren’t cheap, and in many cases free, it wouldn’t have as strong a foothold in our culture.

This first leg is nearly impossible to remove. A good amount of porn is available for free online. Porn is only as expensive as an internet connection nowadays, which makes kicking out this first leg difficult to say the least.

Accessibility

This second leg is easier to remove, but with the constant advance of technology, it becomes more and more difficult.

When giving advice for overcoming temptation, Jesus said:

Matthew 5:29-30

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.

In the same book, Jesus repeated Himself:

Matthew 18:8-9

8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

Jesus is not embellishing or being dramatic to make a point, He is being serious. Whatever causes you to sin, REMOVE IT! I'm not telling you to go home and pluck out your eyes, but I am telling you if your phone causes you to sin, get a different phone or get rid of it. If your computer causes you to sin, get rid of it or at least get some accountability software on it. Remove the accessibility.

If you kick out this leg, then the stronghold of porn will crumble.

Anonymity

This is a big reason that porn is used, but it is also the easiest leg to kick out from underneath the table.

The fact that you can view porn and masturbate with no one else knowing is one of the greatest reasons that porn addictions persist.

You can view whatever you want on the internet and wipe your history so no one else will know. They even have "incognito browsing" windows that don't keep any browsing data on file. It's so easy to be anonymous in a cyber world of sex, and because of it, many people stay ensnared.

The enemy would love to have you to believe that you are the only one who struggles with this stuff and keep you quiet about it, because he knows that if you ever start bringing your struggles into the light, and remove the anonymity, they will lose their grip on you.

John 3:19-21

19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

21 But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Proverbs 28:13

13 He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.

There is something so powerful about bringing your struggles into the light and dialoguing with a brother or sister about them.

The devil knows that sexual lust loses its grip when we become open with others about it. That's why he seeks so desperately to keep you in isolation and make you feel like you are the only one struggling. That's a lie!! This is an area that everyone you meet struggles with to some degree. We have got to start talking about this stuff in a constructive, Godly manner!

James 5:16

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

Healing comes when we kick out the leg of anonymity and confess our struggles and our faults one to another.

The church has made this subject so taboo that nobody wants to be transparent about it. We have put sexual immorality at the top of the list of "bad sins" and have in turn created a culture where nobody wants to admit that they struggle lest they be singled out and judged. We are forced to put on a front of "sexual perfection" and we all come to church and pretend like nothing is wrong, but the stats tell us the truth. Many of us struggle.

Shame on us for putting sex on a higher tier of evil than other sin. To God, sin is sin. Whether you're cheating on a test or having sex, you're in sin. Shame on us for creating such a taboo culture in our churches concerning sexual sin. We have made it nearly impossible for those burdened with addiction to find healing. We need to start obeying scripture and open up about this stuff. We need to be transparent so that we can experience healing! How can we expect a world steeped in sexual sin to come to our churches if it looks like you have to be perfect first?

I'm not saying that you should broadcast your struggles, but find somebody or a small group that you trust and get them to hold you accountable!

Kick out that leg, remove the secrecy and anonymity, and bring your sin into the light.

We need to start taking this stuff seriously and get victory. God didn't save you for you to flounder in sin for the rest of your life, He saved you so you could overcome! You don't have to struggle anymore. There is healing available.

Viewing porn is subtly sinister, and it robs you of so much more than you might even realize.

Two weeks ago we read the writings of Paul in 1 Corinthians 6, where he said, “whoever sins sexually sins against himself.” and this is so true of porn.

I want to read an excerpt from an article.

Porn Rewires the Male Brain

1. As men fall deeper into the mental habit of fixating on [pornographic images], the exposure to them creates neural pathways. 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. Over time these neural paths become wider as they are repeatedly traveled with each exposure to pornography. They become the automatic pathway through which interactions with woman are routed....They have unknowingly created a neurological circuit that imprisons their ability to see women rightly as created in God’s image (Wired For Intimacy, 85).

In a similar vein regarding porn’s effect upon the brain, Naomi Wolf writes in her article, "The Porn Myth,"

1. After all, pornography works in the most basic of ways on the brain: It is Pavlovian. An orgasm is one of the biggest reinforcers imaginable. If you associate orgasm with your wife, a kiss, a scent, a body, that is what, over time, will turn you on; if you open your focus to an endless stream of ever-more-transgressive images of cybersex slaves, that is what it will take to turn you on. The ubiquity of sexual images does not free eros but dilutes it.

Imagine a big **untouched** field in front of you and on the other side is sexual gratification. As you travel across the field via the avenue of porn and masturbation, you begin to wear a path across the field. The more times you obtain sexual gratification via that path, you create a well-worn dirt road. Later on in life, when you get married and try to have sexual relations with a real woman, your brain has been so trained to be turned on by porn that a real woman is not as effective. Many who have used porn excessively have diminished sex drives with real women because their brain has been rewired.

Pornography rewires the male brain and creates well-worn neurological “pathways” of how we get turned on.

You can see how this would be beneficial in God’s plan. If you have sex with only one woman after marriage, your brain will naturally be trained that sexual gratification is achieved with this one woman.

When you create other “paths”, you are damaging, sinning against, yourself and your future spouse.

I heard of one man that was so entangled in porn, that in order to perform with his wife, he had to have dirty magazines on the pillow next to her head.

The lie is that looking at porn will help you have a great sex life. It's not true! Looking at porn and masturbating to it will destroy your sex life for the rest of your life.

Supper Time Analogy

Remember your mom saying, "Supper is at 6. Don't snack, it will ruin your appetite!"

If you "snack" on porn, you will totally ruin your sexual appetite for the main event, which is marriage.

Porn will never satisfy you. Have you ever heard of a person viewing and masturbating to the same image again and again? Neither have I. If even the most beautiful and digitally enhanced of supermodels can't keep you from eternally going farther and farther afield and searching out new women, new scenarios in porn, why would we ever imagine that a real women with real physical and spiritual flaws would? Sin by its very nature always lusts for more.

If not stopped, porn will lead to only harder and harder porn, and eventually to acting out some of the things you see and fantasize about.

The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers (Divorce Lawyers) reported these staggering numbers in divorce cases today:

- 56% of divorces involved one party having "an obsessive interest in pornographic websites."
- 68% involved one party meeting a new lover over the internet.

Porn never stays innocent. It always leads to harder stuff. It leaks out into your actions and messes up everything.

No individual illustrates this to us better than a man by the name of Ted Bundy.

Ted Bundy was born on November 24, 1946, and is known for being one of America's most notorious and feared serial killers during the 1970's. Bundy beat, raped, and murdered at least thirty girls from the ages of 12 - 26. For his actions, Bundy was given the death sentence, but just one day before his execution, with dozens of reporters clawing outside, Bundy requested that he be interviewed by Christian leader James Dobson.

What's interesting about Bundy is that he had none of the tell-tale triggers that rapists or murderers have. He was never molested or abused as a child. In fact, quite the opposite. During the interview with Dobson, Bundy said:

James Dobson: How did it happen? Take me back. What are the antecedents of the behavior that we've seen? You were raised in what you consider to be a healthy home. You were not physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

Ted Bundy: No. And that's part of the tragedy of this whole situation. I grew up in a wonderful home with two dedicated and loving parents, as one of 5 brothers and sisters. We, as children, were the focus of my parents lives. **We regularly attended church.** My parents did not drink or smoke or gamble. There was no physical abuse in the home. I'm not saying it was "Leave it to Beaver", but it was a fine, solid Christian home. I hope no one will try to take the easy way out of this and accuse my family of contributing to this. I know, and I'm trying to tell you as honestly as I know how, what happened.

As a young boy of 12 or 13, I encountered, outside the home, in the local grocery and drug stores, softcore pornography. Young boys explore the sideways and byways of their neighborhoods, and in our neighborhood, people would dump the garbage. From time to time, we would come across books of a harder nature - more graphic. This also included detective magazines, etc., and I want to emphasize this. The most damaging kind of pornography - and I'm talking from hard, real, personal experience - is that that involves violence and sexual violence. The wedding of those two forces - as I know only too well - brings about behavior that is too terrible to describe.

Once you become addicted to it, and I look at this as a kind of addiction, you look for more potent, more explicit, more graphic kinds of material. Like an addiction, you keep craving something which is harder and gives you a greater sense of excitement, until you reach the point where the pornography only goes so far - that jumping off point where you begin to think maybe actually doing it will give you that which is just beyond reading about it and looking at it.

James Dobson: How long did you stay at that point before you actually assaulted someone?

Ted Bundy: A couple of years. I was dealing with very strong inhibitions against criminal and violent behavior. That had been conditioned and bred into me from my neighborhood, environment, church, and schools.

I knew it was wrong to think about it, and certainly, to do it was wrong. I was on the edge, and the last vestiges of restraint were being tested constantly, and assailed through the kind of fantasy life that was fueled, largely, by pornography.

James Dobson: You hadn't known you were capable of that before?

Ted Bundy: There is no way to describe the brutal urge to do that, and once it has been satisfied, or spent, and that energy level recedes, I became myself again. Basically, I was a normal person. I wasn't some guy hanging out in bars, or a bum. I wasn't a

pervert in the sense that people look at somebody and say, "I know there's something wrong with him." I was a normal person. I had good friends. I led a normal life, except for this one, small but very potent and destructive segment that I kept very secret and close to myself. Those of us who have been so influenced by violence in the media, particularly pornographic violence, are no some kind of inherent monsters. We are your sons and husbands. We grew up in regular families. Pornography can reach in and snatch a kid out of any house today. It snatched me out of my home 20 or 30 years ago. As diligent as my parents were, and they were diligent in protecting their children, and as good a Christian home as we had, there is no protection against the kinds of influences that are loose in a society that tolerates....

The old saying is true:

Sin will take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay, and make you pay more than you wanted to pay.

Most likely your porn addiction won't lead to actions like those of Ted Bundy, but how much damage are you willing to let porn wreak in your life? Are you willing to let it rob you of a marriage? Are you willing to let it rob you of intimacy with a spouse? Are you willing to let it rob you of a proper view of the opposite sex? Are you willing to let it rob you of Heaven?