

# What the Bible Says about Pornography

Begin by reading and discussing a case study.

What is the world's view of pornography?

What are some different forms of pornography?

Why do you think pornography is so popular?

(\$57.0 billion world-wide industry; Pornography revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises in America.)

What is your opinion about a person's decision to view pornography?

Do you think more women or men are addicted to pornography? Why?

Do you think that Bible has anything to say about pornography? Why or why not?

What principles from the Bible can be applied to the issue of pornography?

- Pure Marriage Bed: Hebrews 13:4
- Mastered by Nothing/Body Temple of the HS: 1 Corinthians 6:12-13, 19-20
- Lustfully looking at women: Matthew 5:28
- Focus of our thoughts: Philippians 4:8
- Reaping & Sowing: Galatians 6:7-8

What did you learn from these passages?

What did you not understand? What questions do YOU have about these passages?

Personal Reflection to discuss later with your Bible study leader:

What is God leading you to do or change as a result of what you learned?

## Leader's Guide

### Case Studies:

- Some of your roommates are hanging out one night in your dorm room playing poker when one of them, while surfing the internet, discovers a pornographic website. Immediately, the poker game is forgotten as you and your roommates crowd around the monitor to see what he's found. After seeing a few images, you feel uneasy and step back. You begin reading a book on your bed not wanting to see too much but also not wanting to leave the room to draw attention to yourself. After a few minutes, one of your roommates, who you've been trying to witness to, calls you back over to check out something he seems very impressed by. After a few minutes of acting engrossed in your book, he looks at you directly and says, "What's the matter? Don't you want to see this?" What do you say to him? How do you handle the situation?

### Definition:

- Pornography is any written or visual material that depicts nudity and/or sexually explicit activity for the purpose of causing sexual arousal. Of course, not all descriptions or photographs of nudity, sexual organs, and sexual activity (such as those found in educational material or medical textbooks) are pornographic. What makes material pornographic is its calculated intent to cause sexual arousal.
- **Soft-core pornography** features naked or scantily clothed men and women. It highlights breasts and genitalia but shows no sexual intercourse.
- **Hard-core pornography** includes various forms of sexual penetration, forced and unforced, between two or more people.

### **Internet Pornography: What is so dangerous about the Internet?**

- Accessibility
- Anonymity
- Affordability.

\*\*\*Pornography surfers are able to find content for any appetite at low or no cost and without ever showing their faces in public. The Internet also helps to mainstream perverse obsessions. People who have felt guilty about secret obsessions go online and are encouraged to explore their desires. They can easily find support groups where people trade graphic – and often illegal – pictures. It's a dangerous acceleration in an already destructive trend.

### **Characteristics of Pornography:**

#### 1. Degrading to women

- a. Pornography is responsible for spreading the lie that women are available and willing at a moment's notice to fulfill a man's sexual demands. In most cases, it portrays women as mindless objects who exist only to service a man's every sexual whim. It further propagates a demeaning view of both women and men as being nothing more than animals interested in sex.
- b. Pornography also teaches men to dehumanize women by viewing them as sexual objects. Men who repeatedly look at pornography lose their ability to give women the respect they deserve. Instead of enjoying the mind and heart of a woman, they focus on her body. In many cases, they find it difficult and uncomfortable to imagine themselves being involved with a woman in any other way than physically.

#### 2. Degrading to marriage

- a. Whether a person is married or single, he/she is in danger of transmitting the infection of pornography into his current or future marriage. Sexually explicit material does *not* enhance sex between a husband and wife. Pornography creates unrealistic demands about the frequency of sex, specific sexual acts,

and the nature of sexual response. Real life seldom lives up to what is represented in the fake world of pornography. When a person demands that reality imitate his/her fantasy, sex becomes empty and degrading. In the end, both spouses feel resentful and less interested in sex with each other.

### 3. Destructive to the User

- a. Pornography corrupts the minds of its viewers. Emotionally and sexually exciting images set off a physical chain reaction, which burns images that can remain etched in a person's mind for years.
- b. As pornography pollutes the mind, it often turns into an enslaving sexual addiction where there is a "continual lust for more" (Eph. 4:18-19). This is why the Old and New Testaments of the Bible tell us that sexual sin captures the body and soul. The book of Proverbs reminds us that "the evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast" (Prov. 5:22). This is precisely how people feel who are in sexual bondage.

#### **Causes of pornography addiction:**

- ❑ The combination of "**craving for love and approval from others,**" "**pessimism and negative self-concept,**" and "**lack of direction, rules, and purpose in life.**" Addiction to pornography is a symptom of trying to find love, comfort, fulfillment, and sense of purpose. People involved in pornography addiction might have negative views of themselves. We think we are flawed in some way and we seek approval from others. We are shy and we might try to find love or approval but might be unsuccessful so far. We give up and resort to pornography.
- ❑ The **high intensity of sexual excitement and orgasms associated with novel sexual stimuli.**
- ❑ **Loneliness**
- ❑ **Low self-esteem.**
- ❑ **Past hurt in your life** that you are trying to drown out with pornography. You might have been emotionally, physically, or sexually abused. You might feel helpless and unworthy with regards to relationships, work or your abilities.
- ❑ **Self-sabotage or self-hatred.** Deep down, for some reason, we might feel sorry for ourselves. "Poor me..." We enjoy pornography, and at the same time, we sabotage our lives so that others would feel sorry for us, comfort us and give us attention. Alternatively, we want to make others feel sorry for what we think they have done to us. This is a weird kind of revenge that involves self-pity and self-destruction in order to make others feel guilty

#### **Progression of Pornography Addiction:**

If porn's biggest consequence were addiction, that would be bad enough, but it gets *worse*. Here's how the addictive process happens:

- ❑ **Early exposure:** Most people who get addicted to porn start early. They see porn when they are very young and it gets its foot in the door.
- ❑ **Addiction:** You keep coming back to porn. It becomes a regular part of your life. You're hooked and can't quit.
- ❑ **Escalation:** You start to look for more graphic pornography. You start using porn that disgusted you earlier. Now, it excites you.
- ❑ **Desensitization:** You become numb to the images you see. Even the most graphic porn doesn't excite you any more. You become desperate to feel the same thrill again, but you can't find it.
- ❑ **Acting out sexually:** This is the point where people make a crucial jump and start acting out the images they have seen. Some move from the paper and plastic images

of porn into the real world: violence, prostitutes, child molestation and maybe even rape.

People with an addiction to pornography will identify with one or more of the following statements:

- I regularly seek out pornography.
- I often spend parts of the day looking forward to viewing pornography.
- I feel out of control and unable to stop.
- I often compare my spouse or boyfriend/girlfriend to the people in pornography.
- I often choose to look at pornography rather than be sexually intimate with my spouse.
- I refuse to tell others that I struggle with pornography.
- I tell lies to cover my struggle.
- Looking at pornography has led to serious problems in my life (such as a threat to or loss of job or marriage, financial debt, promiscuous or criminal behavior).

**Categories of Addiction:** The extent of addiction can range from a category one addiction (mild) to a category three addiction (severe).

- In a category one addiction, a person no longer has a mere casual interest in pornography – he/she is obsessed with it. He/she has gone from occasionally running across it to making a conscious effort to seek it out.
- In a category two addiction, he/she attempts to bridge the fantasy world of pornography to the real world. It's not uncommon for a person to try to recreate in real life what he/she is seeing in pornography. He/she may try to enact with his/her spouse what he/she has seen, with or without their knowledge or consent. As the problem deepens, he may hire prostitutes or try to pick up women for "one-night stands."
- Many people live in a category one or two addiction for years and never progress any further. If people progress to a category three addiction, and there are plenty who do, they get involved in more severe forms of pornography, including child pornography. They also move to serious criminal behavior such as rape and child sexual abuse.

**Scenarios you might encounter:**

- A disciple has a father, brother or boyfriend who is addicted to pornography
- A disciple has been exposed to pornography but not initiated further
- A disciple has sought out pornography out of curiosity about sex
- A disciple, or their friend/roommate, owns pornographic material or regularly visits pornographic websites
- A disciple's roommates/friends view pornography regularly and he/she feels it's hard to not be exposed as well

- A disciple doesn't believe pornography is wrong because it doesn't physically involve anyone else

**Additional Resources:**

- None available at this time.

**Going Deeper:**

- How common is pornography in your dorm, department, or university?
- Do you think most people who are involved in pornography are open about it? Why or why not?
- How easy is it to find pornography if someone seeks it out? Where would they find it?
- Have you ever seen pornographic material for sale in a DVD shop or bookstore? Did you look at it?
- Have you ever been exposed to a magazine, movie or internet site that you think might have been pornographic? When? Where were you?
- Do you have classmates who have pornographic material? Is there any in your dorm room?
- Have you ever felt curious about what is pornography and why it is so popular?
- Do you struggle with a strong desire to find out more through the media or books?
- Do you think involvement in pornography can be a harmful addiction? Why or why not?
- Have you ever looked at any pornography? What kind? When? How many times?
- Do you feel like it is an area that needs to be addressed in your life? If so, why? Why not?
- Why do you think pornography is a struggle for many people but not others?
- What kinds of things do you think make a person vulnerable to the temptation to view pornography?
- How do you think pornography becomes an addiction in someone's life?
- How would someone who is addicted to pornography begin to find freedom?