

Passionately Pursue Sexual Purity!

Men's Bible Study | CFBC Men | Friday, April 28, 2017

I. The EPIDEMIC

from Tim Challies <https://www.challies.com/articles/10-ugly-and-updated-numbers-about-pornography-use>

Consider these startling & disturbing stats:

➔ **At age 11**, the average child has already been exposed to explicit pornographic content through the internet. 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to internet-based pornography during their adolescent years and 22% of the vast quantities of porn consumed by people aged under 18 is consumed by those aged less than 10. Significance: Parents are nothing short of negligent if they take no steps to protect their children from being exposed to pornography.

➔ **70% of teens** and young adults define porn by its function, not its form. Pornography is not defined first as nudity or even presentations of sexuality, but as anything intended to bring about sexual arousal. Significance: Young adults do not consider things pornographic if they are not explicitly intended to cause arousal, so sex and nudity in movies or television is not considered pornographic, especially if it is an integral element to a story. As Christians we need to teach a thorough theology of the body and of sexuality.

➔ **96% of young adults** are either encouraging, accepting, or neutral in their view toward pornography. (17% talk about porn in a positive way, 43% in an accepting way as if it's just a reality of life in this world, while 36% don't consider the morality of it at all.) That leaves only a tiny minority who consider it a negative thing. Only 1 in 20 young adults say their friends consider porn a bad thing. Significance: Early exposure to pornography and the negligence of parents to adequately address it leaves young adults believing pornography is normal and acceptable and its use unremarkable.

➔ Today, **33% of women** aged 25 and under go searching for porn at least once per month. 56% of women in that age group have gone looking for it at least one time in the past (compared to 27% of those aged 25 or older). Significance: Pornography has typically been considered the domain of men, but its use is rising among women. We must be careful not to ostracize young women who may be struggling with porn by speaking about it as if it is an issue that pertains only to men. Our churches must be prepared to help young women who are locked in this struggle just as we've been willing to help young men.

➔ **62% of teens** and young adults have received a sexually explicit image. Meanwhile, 41% have sent one, usually to their boyfriend or girlfriend. Women are more likely to both send and receive these nude images, presumably because it has become part of the dating ritual that women send nude or nearly-nude photos of themselves to boyfriends or potential boyfriends. Significance: Young people are using their digital devices to trade in self-porn; there is immense pressure on young women to send photos of themselves to young men (who, of course, can never be trusted with such photos). Parents must address this with their sons and daughters.

➔ **36% of young adults** watch pornography to get tips or ideas that they can apply to their own sexual relationships. This increases to 38% in the next oldest demographic, then falls sharply. However, among older people, pornography is more commonly used to "set the mood" for sexual activity with a partner. The most common reasons people use pornography are personal arousal or boredom. Significance: Young people are learning about sex through pornography and then, inevitably, attempting to perform what they have seen on their sexual partners. Yet pornography teaches everything but the reality of sex as God intends it. They are learning from the very worst of teachers!

→80% of porn users feel no sense of guilt when using porn. Significance: We know that any sin, when repeated over time, begins to deaden the conscience. Those who at first felt guilt about pornography soon come to find their conscience hardened, then seared. Porn is so available, so common, so celebrated, and so widely-used, that many people have lost even that inner sense that it is wrong.

2. The DESIGN

A biblical theology of sexuality

Gen 1:27-31 (male & female)

Gen 2:18-25 (man & woman joined together in marriage)

Matt 19:4-6 - joined together by God

3. The PROBLEM

The heart!

Mark 7:21-23 (out of the heart proceed...)

I Kings 11:1-9 (example of Solomon's *heart* going astray)

Proverbs 4:23*; Prov 7:3, 25

4. The DANGER

Prov 5, 6, 7

The warnings: Eph 5:1-6; Col 3:5-6; Gal 5:19-21 (don't live & remain in these these sins & lose your soul!)

5. The REMEDY

I Thess 4.1-8 — a very simple, satisfying, sweet solution!

Heath Lambert says:

“The most important thing you can do in your pursuit of purity is to get to know the living God. Paul says that the difference between those who are controlled by sexual sin, and those who know how to control their own body in holiness and honor is the difference between those who know God and those who do not. The people who live in the passion of lust are the people who do not know God. The people who are growing in purity are the people who do know him.”

1. when you know God you see His purity!

2. when you know God you see His pardon for your sin!

3. when you know God you see His power to change you!

Psalms 119:9-11, 37

Prov 5:15-19 - be intoxicated with *your own wife!*

Prov 5:20-23 - remember that God *sees all you do!*

Ps 90:14 - satisfy us *each day with your covenant-keeping, sovereign love!* (see Ps 65!)

Richard Baxter provides many helpful “directions for hating sin”:

1. Labour to know God, and to be affected with his attributes, and always to live as in his sight.

2. Consider well of the office, the bloodshed, and the holy life of Christ.

3. Think well both how holy the office and work of the Holy Ghost is, and how great a mercy it is to us

4. Know and consider the wonderful love and mercy of God, and think what he has done for you; and you will hate sin, and be ashamed of it.

5. Think what the soul of man is made for, and should be used to, even to love, obey, and glorify our Maker; and then you will see what sin is, which disables and perverts it
6. Think well what pure and sweet delights a holy soul may enjoy from God, in his holy service; and then you will see what sin is, which robs him of these delights, and prefers fleshly lusts before them.
7. Bethink you what a life it is which you must live for ever, if you live in heaven; and what a life the holy ones there now live; and then think whether sin, which is so contrary to it, be not a vile and hateful thing.
8. Look but to the state and torment of the damned, and think well of the difference betwixt angels and devils, and you may know what sin is.
9. Look always on sin as one that is ready to die, and consider how all men judge of it at the last.
10. Look always on sin and judgment together
11. When you have found out your disease and danger, give up yourselves to Christ as the Saviour and Physician of souls, and to the Holy Ghost as your Sanctifier, remembering that he is sufficient and willing to do the work which he has undertaken.
12. See that you take not part with sin, and wrangle not, or strive not against your Physician, or any that would do you good.
13. Keep as far as you can from those temptations which feed and strengthen the, sins which you would overcome.
14. Live in the exercise of those graces and duties which are contrary to the sins which you are most in danger of.
15. Bestow your first and chiefest labour to kill sin at the root; to cleanse the heart, which is the fountain; for out of the heart come the evils of the life.
16. Take heed of the first approaches and beginnings of sin.
17. Make God's word your only rule and labour diligently to understand it.
18. Wait patiently on Christ till he has finished the cure, which will not be till this trying life be finished.

6. The HOPE

Ps 51 - the picture of genuine heart-wrenching, soul-exposing, sin-hating repentance!

John 21:15-19 - reminder: God uses *broken* (and forgiven!) men in ministry! *NEVER FORGET THIS!*

1 Cor 6:9-11 - ...such were some of you (dirty pasts before Christ; now righteous *in His merits!*)

Ensuring Sexual Purity as Godly Men in an Ungodly Age

some helpful questions:

1. Do I love Christ passionately?
2. Do I really meet with God in prayer daily?
3. Do I spend too much time online simply 'browsing' blogs/sites?
4. Do I enjoy marital intimacy frequently with my beautiful bride?
5. Do I have any relationships, occasions, or appointments where I may be alone with a woman other than my wife?
6. Do I have anything in my heart/life/mind/ministry that I'm unwilling to disclose to my wife?
7. Do I welcome other godly men specifically asking me about my own sexual purity?
8. Do I hate it when I do sin sexually & do I repent of it seeking to mortify that hellish dragon?
9. Do I earnestly pursue & diligently pray for aggressive holiness?
10. Do I rehearse in my mind the devastating effects that falling sexually would have on my marriage, family, and ministry?

Some questions that men can ask one another (elders ask these)

1. Since you last answered these questions, have you viewed any immoral, impure or pornographic material online, on your cell phone or any other device in any way?
2. Since you last answered these questions, have you been in any questionable situation with a woman other than your wife that could be perceived as questionable?
3. Have you grown fond of and emotionally attached to any woman other than your wife even in the slightest?
4. Has your relationship with your wife been open in communication, healthy in sexual intimacy, and affectionate to serve her?
5. Has your mind and heart been pure as you have been out and about — work, lunches, cars, parks — as you have seen other women?
6. Have you lied about any of the answers you just gave?

From Philippians 4, being “content”:

Christ had brought Paul through experiences of hunger and distress, as well as circumstances of plenty and fullness. One moment Paul is surrounded by encouraging friends, has a roof over his head, and is experiencing great success in ministry. Then the next moment he is being stoned, shipwrecked, or thrown in prison. Both kinds of experiences—plenty and hunger—were the way Christ initiated Paul in the school of contentment. Every valley and every mountaintop was another opportunity to trust the wisdom of God’s providential and purposeful care.

Deep in the core of our being, we must choose to believe in our covenant-keeping God over the false promises of the ancient serpent—the serpent that whispers in our ear that God is holding out on us.

We must then turn that faith into a daily rehearsal of what Brother Lawrence calls “practicing the presence of God,” turning all our moments, no matter how mundane, exciting, or tempting, into an opportunity for prayerful dialogue and praise.

PICTURE YOUR LIFE AS A ROOM. Beautiful hardwood floors are swept clean. Sunlight streams through windows. Photos of family and friends hang on the walls. The furniture is arranged just how you want it -- for maximum usefulness and comfort. The room is peaceful. It’s just right. But in a corner hidden by shadows, in a tiny crack between two floorboards, a small, ugly weed has sprouted. The weed represents pornography. It’s so small. It’s easy to hide. You can cover it with a rug or chair. You can ignore it and downplay its significance. There are so many other good and beautiful things to enjoy in the room of your life. But the weed grows ... and grows... Its thorny, twisted vines steadily spread across the floor and climb the walls. They wrap themselves around tables and chairs. They even grow over the windows -- blocking out the sunlight. Now no part of your room is untouched. Everywhere you turn, the weed has invaded and is choking out life. You feel like a prisoner. I don’t know how big a problem pornography (or sexual impurities in *any* of its forms) is for you. Maybe this weed has overtaken your life. Or maybe it’s just beginning to grow. If you’re like many people, you’ve tried to uproot it with little success. The problem is that too many of us use ineffective tools. Picture that tough, thorn-covered weed. And then imagine yourself trying to dislodge it with a fork. A toothpick. A flimsy straw. These are the kinds of useless tools we’re working with when we try to change deeply rooted habits with mere willpower, personal resolutions, and self-centered, worldly sorrow.

We need better tools.

- Joshua Harris

“You are never in a pit so deep that the grace of Jesus cannot lift you out... Jesus’ grace to change you is stronger than pornography’s power to destroy you.” (Heath Lambert)