

The Chains of Pornography – Dan Hitz

This article is adapted from our new teaching series “Escaping the Dungeon of Porn”. This series can be taught in men’s groups, Sunday school classes and Saturday seminars. If you are interested in hosting an “Escaping the Dungeon of Porn” class at your church, call Reconciliation Ministries at 586.739.5114.



The battle for pornography is a battle for our souls. Pornography enslaves and divides. Pornography turns the hearts of husbands from their wives, and dads from their kids. Pornography corrupts the image of women in the heart of a teen. Even those less enslaved find their walks crippled by guilt and lust. It is time for men in the body of Christ to live the word of Ephesians 5:14b,

“Wake up. O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” If you or someone you love is in the dungeon of pornography, reach out for help. Repent, rise from the dead, and put on the armor of God.

The battle for men’s souls begins early. The average age of first exposure to pornography is 11. The average age of men getting help for pornography addiction is 33.¹ Many of those finally seeking help are motivated by the disintegration of their marriage, seeing the effects of their own sin on their sons and daughters, or arrest. Unfortunately, many young boys who view porn find it in their own homes. Hosley and Watters, report “Most men confess their first introduction to pornography resulted from finding a stash of magazines belonging to either their **father** or friend. **This early exposure set many men on a path toward sexual addiction.**”² Don’t ever hide pornography in your house – your kids will find it! They will also share it with their own friends. Unless interrupted, the cycle continues.

The morals of popular culture have infiltrated into the church. A report on WWJ stated that churched teens are only five percent less sexually active than unchurched teens.³ Barna research reports that one in six pastors struggle regularly with pornography.⁴ We must ask ourselves what type of example we are setting for our own kids. In another report, Barna found the following:

Half of all adults stated that watching a movie with explicit sexual behavior is morally acceptable. **That view was shared by three out of ten born again adults.** In like fashion, more than four out of ten adults (43%) claimed that reading magazines with explicit sexual pictures and nudity is morally acceptable. **Half as many of the born again adults embraced that perspective (21%).**⁵



Pornography use and addictions has many roots. Primarily, we are fallen beings living in a fallen world. Our own sexuality, which God intended to be a blessing, has been corrupted by our own sinful choices and desires. We have sought to fulfill our legitimate needs and desires in very illegitimate ways. God will not take our sexuality away. Instead, He intends to teach us to fight our sinful desires by His strength and bring our sexuality in line with His design.

Some men engage in pornography to avoid intimacy. Intimacy is risky. Although we desire it, we often run from it out of fear of rejection, manipulation, or the effort required to maintain it. Pornography offers us the illusion of intimacy. The images will never reject us or demand anything from us. Unfortunately, we willingly surrender to them what we would never willingly yield to another. We give them our purity, our hearts, and our relationships. Pornography use

inhibits healthy intimacy and erodes marital fidelity. The National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families writes:

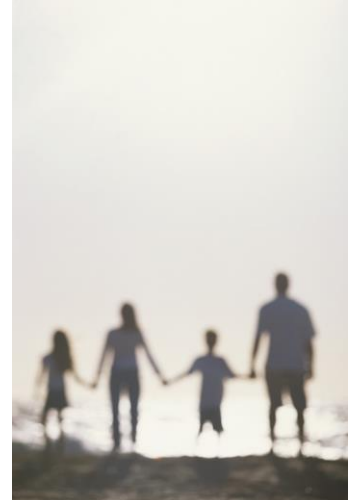
Getting along with the opposite sex is often difficult and sometimes downright exasperating. That's when pornography can begin to seem more interesting. But no matter how alluring or inviting the scenario, it's a poor substitute for the real thing. And frankly, it's a cop-out from building a meaningful relationship with a real person.⁶

Pornography numbs. Some use it to anesthetize inner pain – pain that God wants to heal. When the pressures of life begin to build up, an illicit sexual release drives the pain deeper into the soul. For a time the addict is numb, but sooner or later the pain overwhelms and is met once again with porn.

Not everyone began their journey into pornography to avoid pain or intimacy. Some simply stumbled upon it. What began as a simple diversion became a long-term habit. We may have been too busy engaging in our “hobby” to learn how to interact with other people. When our hormones began to flow, we gave them the wrong outlet. It was much easier to make friends with the images rather than humans. Unfortunately, pornography is a possessive friend with ever increasing demands. One day we realize that we've never learned to connect with others the way everyone else seems to. Other interests and relationships have grown shallow while the dungeon of porn grew deeper still.

One of the main foundation stones in the dungeon is the addictive nature of pornography itself. Hosley and Watters write that, “Internet pornography has earned itself a reputation for being the crack cocaine of sexual addiction.”⁷ The addiction is progressive. Those who view it find that they quickly become desensitized to the images that originally brought arousal and must search out more intense images to continue the thrill. There are men who cannot climax during sexual intimacy with their wives unless they view or fantasize about pornography.

If you are trapped in the dungeon of porn get help now! The worse thing you can do is to keep feeding the hidden beast. Repent and ask Jesus into your pit. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.” You will need help to break the addictive cycle. Don't let shame convince you that you can walk out of this problem on your own. Bring your struggle into the light by telling trusted others – especially someone on your church leadership team. You may or may not be asked to step down from your church responsibilities for a season, but freedom from the addiction of pornography is well worth the price. Find an accountability partner who will help you uphold personal boundaries. Put a blocker and/or accountability software on your computer. Most important of all, begin now to deal with the unresolved issues in your heart that are keeping you bound to sin. Groups are available from Reconciliation Ministries and other ministries to help you meet Jesus Christ at the foot of the cross to rebuild the broken foundations in your life. No matter how long you've spent in the dungeon of porn, help is available.



¹ *God and Sex* seminar brochure, New Life Church, 2002.

^{2, 6, 7} *Dangers and Disappointments of Pornography*, Ryan Hosely and Steve Watters, M.A., 2004. retrieved from www.pureintimacy.org on 4/2/07.

³ WWJ radio report, 2003.

⁴ Barna Research. Retrieved from www.family.org/pastor/resources/sos/a006443.html in 11/03.

⁵ *Practical Outcomes Replace Biblical Principles As the Moral Standard*, The Barna Update, 9/10/01. Retrieved from www.barna.org on 4/2/07.