

Is Pornography That Bad?

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If someone stares at a sunset or gets lost in thought while taking in a vision of the sea, we would say he or she is enjoying God's beautiful creation. There's certainly nothing wrong with that. God made women and men just as surely as He made sun and sea. So is it okay to look at beautiful women or men who happen to be naked? No. Broadly speaking, there are three reasons why Christians must avoid pornography.

The Boundaries and Purposes of Sex

God designed sex with boundaries and purposes. The boundary of sex is marriage, in which a man and woman become one flesh in a lifelong bond (Gn 2:24; Mk 10:9). Pornography violates this by inviting us to enjoy sex outside of marriage. Jesus made this clear when He said that merely looking at a woman lustfully is the same as committing adultery in your heart (Mt 5:28). As for the purposes of sex, there are three of them: reproduction within marriage (Gn 1:28), unity between husband and wife (Gn 2:24), and pleasure shared between spouses (see Song of Songs).

Pornography Is Exploitative

Pornography exploits and harms those who are caught in its grip. The porn industry isn't supportive of moderation. They deal in hooks and they don't practice catch and release. The goal is to get you hooked and keep you coming back to feed your growing addiction. Studies suggest that watching porn actually changes the physical structures of the brain, compelling users to go back for more—like heroin addicts. Soon the addict is unable to pull out of his spiraling need for ever greater stimulation, and he comes to see women as objects of pleasure whose purpose is to serve his fantasies. Nothing could be farther from God's purposes. As for the women who sell their bodies to the porn industry, they are selling false intimacy at the price of their dignity, and they become partners in the ruin of porn addicts.

Pornography Harms Relationships

A husband who looks at porn robs his wife of intimacy, betraying her in a deeply hurtful way. Any man, whether he is married or single, also harms his relationships with his sisters in Christ when he looks at porn, for he comes to see them as sex objects and weighs their value on the basis of their sexuality, not their spirituality in Christ. Finally, porn harms your relationship with God. Porn gets inside your brain like a parasite, crowding out righteous thoughts and harming your ability to meditate on the things that please God.

If you are in the grip of porn addiction, how can you break free? Perhaps the biggest key is to become accountable to someone else. Enlist a Christian friend who will help steer you in the right direction. Be totally honest with him about the Web sites you've visited. Software programs are available that can block anything harmful; others can arrange to have reports of your Internet surfing history emailed to your accountability partner.

Christ can take the weight of your sexual sin, but the key to you developing pure habits is to get accountable. Do this today. Proverbs warns, "Why, my son, would you be infatuated with a forbidden woman or embrace the breast of a stranger? For a man's ways are before the LORD's eyes, and He considers all his paths. A wicked man's iniquities entrap him; he is entangled in the ropes of his own sin" (Pr 5:20-22).

