

Thoughts

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[Pornography: Confession, Healing, and Contention](#) ([View in PDF](#))

"Sexual intimacy is a beautiful creation by God to bring two people close together. The sex in porn involves no intimacy or connection. It is the conjoined bodies of two fake people, performing meaningless physical intercourse absent of any emotional or spiritual essence. They do not know or mean anything to one another. The money is what brought them together." — [April Garris](#) (former porn "star")

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Foreword

Please note that this article is not intended for "churched" audiences, as it is my experience that the church simply isn't interested nor willing to hear the truth/issues from both sides of the discussion and contention surrounding pornography. Let alone deal with it in their congregations.

For some time, I was reluctant to share this publicly, because I knew it meant [being vulnerable](#) about a sin that few admit to—that people would see the ugliness of that part of me. But it paled in comparison to the truth that needed to be heard. Having listened to [Jessica Harris's testimony \(original link now broken\)](#)—a lady God rescued from addiction to pornography, I was convinced that this is what I needed to do.

I was addicted on and off to pornography from sometime in the mid-1990s to about 2008. For the most part, it all began with an [lharc](#)-compressed image file I downloaded from a local [Bulletin Board System](#) (BBS). The image wasn't what I wanted—someone had intentionally misnamed its description with an innocent title to hide its pornographic contents. I say "addicted on and off" and "for the most part" because my addiction didn't begin with my first exposure to it, but like a virus, it was *dormant*. I also tried unsuccessfully many times (in my own strength) to free myself from it. Neither was it the only time I was inadvertently exposed to pornography (among others, scenes from a movie on an international flight, a photo in a [Swazi](#) newspaper, and an old "Scope" pornographic magazine two high school friends and I came across in a field near their house), but it was what I consider to have been the beginning of an ugly addiction. Because while I never asked for those initial encounters, I *was* guilty of asking for the ones that followed.

Clearly, I blame no-one but myself. I grew up in a Christian home, and was taught what was right and wrong. I knew better; but looking back to the early 90s, it only took one intentionally misnamed image to move the addiction from "dormant" to "active."

Why am I sharing this?

"Reputation is what other people know about you. Honor is what you know about yourself." — Lois McMaster Bujold

1. I want to be the same person on the inside that you see on the outside—[no mask](#). This confession is part of that process—*"Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."* [James 5:16](#) (NASB), and *"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion."* [Proverbs 28:13](#) (NASB), and *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* [1 John 1:9](#) (NASB)
2. I pray that, somehow, God might use this confession to accomplish His work of redemption and healing from pornography in the lives of others.
3. I fear for the church. As you may already be aware, this sin is rampant—*especially* in the church; including pastors, youth pastors, and other leadership, and it's not just a sin that men are susceptible to. There are two websites ministering specifically to women of all ages addicted to pornography and lust: [beggarsdaughter.com](#) and [dirtygirlsministries.com](#). The ubiquitous nature of the internet and [insidious onslaught](#) of media, coupled with the secluded nature of mobile devices is putting [generations](#) at tremendous risk; no-one is outside of its reach. All it takes is one image, video or audio clip, book, or magazine.
4. Pretending it's not a major problem in the church [isn't working](#).

Why are boys and men so attracted to it?

Boys and men will *always notice* (note I didn't say *always lust*), and be fascinated by, the female form. Young or old, we are hard-wired by God to be visually drawn to it. **God alone is responsible for that.** He created us that way, and as many times as we would love to permanently switch it off or destroy it completely—unless something medically happens to us (castration or severe, chronic depression, etc.)—we're stuck with it.

The pornography industry knows this, and it remains their greatest weapon. Pornography will always have a strong allure for two primary reasons:

1. It shows the female form in all of its intensely sensual, captivating physical beauty—but especially what boys and men can't normally see: full views of the breasts, vulva, and buttocks.
2. It shows girls and women who at least *appear* to offer the viewer several things that other women have no desire to, or apparently can't; namely:
 1. Unabashed acknowledgement that the design of their body is beautiful and desirable.
 2. Desire and appreciation for the physical act(s) of sex.
 3. Possible desire and appreciation for men's physicality and sexuality—sadly, something *very rare* in most marriages. I say "possible desire" because while many women may find some aspects of men's physicality appealing, few genuinely have any significant desire for men's sexuality/genitals. Most porn is, of course, scripted—which means the passion in the sexual acts is very likely to be fake.

One of the deadliest things in our society is the cessation of safe, non-sexual, sincere compliments and gestures of validation and affirmation (expressions of essentially *"I really like and admire you, and see value in you as a person"*) between members of the opposite sex. Pornography then, by default,

becomes the exclusive means of trying to obtain those two critical elements, making it even more difficult to resist. I believe men and women are equally susceptible in this regard, albeit through mostly different avenues.

Obviously, I can only speak for myself, but from talking with other men about this, it seems to me that the source(s) of the struggle often differ for most (except for the first item listed below, which is true for all men). It could be one or more of the following reasons, or some I'm not aware of:

1. They find the female form to be *very* beautiful, desirable, and arousing. Speaking for myself, even around the age of 8, I was drawn to the beauty of the female form via the Sears catalog's underwear section—and (believe it or not) I still hadn't even connected the dots about sexuality, let alone how it happened.
2. They are curious about—and fascinated by—female anatomy and the physical act of sex.
3. They feel little to no sense of personal value to others; rejected both in who they are (personality/character), and especially in how they sense the opposite sex views them and their physicality.
4. If married, they may be angry and resentful toward their wife for refusing them sexually. One honest man's statement from a forum post:

"You want to know the **true** appeal of porn for married men? It shows women who *act like* they **really enjoy** having sex with their partners...something that many, many married men desperately want from their wives, *but never get.*"

5. They are incredibly lonely.
6. They long to be found as sexually desirable to women in real life as the females on-screen may appear to be conveying to them (and for many men, not for the sake of pride, but for affirmation/validation and value). The allure and power women have over men in real life through visual appeal and sexuality is *drastically* underestimated. Starting at puberty, males have [testosterone levels 15 times](#) that of women. It's very frustrating without a means for expression, and the sinful misuse of that frustration is what fuels the pornography industry.
7. They have either been—or still feel—rejected by women and society/culture as a whole; including disparaging comments and views made about men.
8. They struggle with the fact that the majority of women don't struggle with sexual temptation(s) to the extent that men do.
9. It is used as an attempt to 'medicate' the painful, challenging aspects of life, lack of worth, and failure(s) whether real or perceived.
10. They are angry at, and/or bitter toward, God; refusing to take "no" as an answer to desire (and expression of that desire) for the female form.
11. If single, they are frustrated and angry at not having the opportunity to experience sexual and emotional intimacy, while plenty of other people (even decades younger) have and are—or at least appear to be.
12. Peer pressure from other guys to view it; to be accepted as "one of the guys."
13. They believe they are learning how to be great "lovers."
14. The tough-to-swallow truth that, for many men, porn is as "good as it gets"; meaning it's the closest to sexual intimacy most of us will ever know.

Why does sexual desirability matter so much to boys and men?

I believe being found sexually desirable to women is seen as the most *believable, persuasive* evidence and deepest proof of being genuinely loved and wanted—acceptance of **all** aspects of who we are, including our physicality and sexuality—valued, desired, and affirmed by a woman. Other than the sheer physical and sexual allure of the female form, this is the next biggest part of why pornography is such a temptation.

In addition, if it comes from a woman that we personally find attractive, it carries even more credence and impact, and becomes much harder to resist.

The truth about porn

Porn ≠ Love and Beauty (doesn't equate)

Quoting from mychainsaregone.org, "Porn is wrong because it tells lies." But it's more accurate to say it either *insinuates* lies, or simply "doesn't care" about the consequences on the viewer and his/her family, because beliefs or assumptions stem from what porn unabashedly *displays*, but doesn't overtly say:

- It insinuates lies about beauty and the human form ("attractive people are those with near-perfect bodies" and "they are the ones who have truly fulfilling sex").
- It insinuates lies about sexuality and its meaning ("sex is just about physical pleasure").
- It doesn't care about family and relationships ("viewing pornography won't hinder or damage my family life, and it might even rekindle or enhance your sex life" ...except now you're not being aroused by each other, but by the pornography).
- It insinuates lies about the source of value in a person ("the better you look and more sex you can have, the more attractive or impressive you likely are to others").
- It insinuates lies about the purpose of life ("life is primarily about pleasure").
- It insinuates lies about morality ("there's nothing wrong with this if no-one is physically hurt").
- It doesn't support loving a woman as she ages, and her beauty fades.
- It 'conveniently' omits any warning about the very real consequences of sexually transmitted diseases.
- It typically contains no intimacy, no love; just scripted sexual acts.

And because it has such a false understanding of the human body, porn is lying about God Himself, for we are made in His image.

Speaking to women (but that also apply to men), Jessica Harris [notes](#) the following consequences:

- **Fear:** Living in a constant paranoia that people would find out. You trust no one.
- **Low self-esteem:** You are finding worth and value in watching other women be treated like they are worthless. That's as low on the food chain as it gets.
- **Deception:** You know how to cover your trail, and will do what it takes to not be honest. You may even dress it up with the Christian thought, "God is enough."
- **Hopelessness:** For so long you have felt trapped, unable to get out. Your heart has given up on freedom, and probably on love. Do you realize you are worth love?
- **Bitterness:** The Christian women all around you disgust you. They're so perfect. Nobody's that perfect.
- **Anger:** Somebody should be able to help you get out. Where are all those people who promised they would help you if you needed it? Where are they, huh? Bunch of good-for-nothing, holier-than-thou liars.

- **Guilt:** In case you were wondering, no, you can't do anything right. Yes, it is always your fault.
- **Defensiveness:** Why are you talking to me? What do you want? What are you trying to figure out? Who do you think you are? Go Away! Stay back. They say keep them at arm's length and no one can ever hurt your heart.
- **Shame:** What is your problem? How screwed up do you have to be to get wrapped up in this stuff? Loser.
- **Callousness:** Shut up. I don't care about your problems. You have no idea what I am going through.
- **Isolation:** I can't trust anyone. No one could possibly like me for me. If they really knew who I was, they would leave, so I will just save them the trouble.

In her article [Ten Lies We Believe About Interacting With the Opposite Sex](#), Courtney Gabrielson notes:

"I would wager that if men and women spent more time interacting in a low-pressure environment with the opposite sex, the desire to rely on pornography as a source of relief would decrease. Is it a scientific fact? I don't know. Perhaps I'm oversimplifying. But from my perspective, it seems as though we're getting more and more uncomfortable with each other while the percentage of pornography users in the church grows. This problem is an essay for another day, but essentially, porn is crippling men and women, stunting their relational abilities while placing incredible pressures on the opposite sex."

Men, women, and porn: differing views

Please note that I didn't call this section "Women and pornography", because I'm aware that *most* women who struggle with lust likely do not struggle with pornography; or at least for the same reasons that men do. So I include this section for two primary reasons:

1. To acknowledge that it is (and can be) an issue for them, albeit to a smaller (statistical) degree than men, and most importantly, it is often *different*.
2. To stress that women **must** be more upfront and honest about this struggle. Why? Because without that honesty, misconceptions will continue to abound, which won't be helping anyone. Honesty serves as a bridge between men and women on this issue, which is critical in breaking down mistrust, misconceptions, conflicting views of modesty, etc.

Because the physical brains of men and women differ (as God created them to), there are notable differences in how they view pornography. Boys who see porn for the first time are immediately responsive to it because their brains are visually wired to be—they don't need to understand exactly what they're seeing, they just know they like it, and no further questions are asked. *Even boys as young as 2 can be affected*, as one rather distraught mother learned the hard way. In her reply to J Parker's blog post *The First Time I Saw Porn*, she notes:

"When my son was young, we used to watch a TV drama series that had a lot of topless women in it. One day, when he was about 2, I asked him what DVD he wanted to watch, and instead of picking from the umpteen cartoon kids ones, he decided he wanted to watch 'boobs' (his words) choosing that DVD case from amongst the others. There were no boobs on the cover of the DVD case, but apparently that was what his eyes had picked up on from being in the background of us watching this show. Thankfully, I have learned to be more intentional in my parenting since then!"

But for the majority of girls seeing porn for the first time—at least initially—their brains are wired to process the images through the lens of emotions and relationships, and so porn doesn't make sense.

Part of the issue here lies in how various types of porn is depicted. Some is displayed very sensually and "respectfully" (for lack of a better word) while others are depicted in a virtually animalistic way. Because of their relationship-centric wiring, women are incapable of understanding how men can appreciate (without lusting) the female form—specifically, *parts* of the female form. But they can, and do. The majority of women have a strong tendency to only see people in their entirety, and have little desire to focus on, or appreciate, individual physical parts of a person. They are also more susceptible to their own imagination, where relationships and a "storyline" are front and center to arousal. The porn "industry" knows this, and has since been creating porn tailored specifically for women; think "50 Shades of Grey": more backstory, dialogue, character development, and sensuality between sexual scenes. Basically, visual romance novels with some "edge" to draw viewers into the world of mainstream porn.

Porn is certainly **not** the only issue going on behind the scenes. The basic differences between the sexes are themselves enough of an issue to discourage any kind of ongoing interaction. Another is the truth that women's inclination to compare their attractiveness to other women stirs problems. As one woman shares:

"I will admit there are times where we both see a very attractive woman (and yes, I know he is looking) and the only time I don't like it is when I'm feeling self-conscious about myself. Perhaps I'm not feeling particularly attractive that day then yes, I don't like it but not necessarily because he's looking. It usually has more to do with how I feel about myself. When I start comparing myself to this other woman is when I don't like it."

Excuses I used for viewing it

I've been curious (read: fascinated, enthralled) about anatomy and sex since I was old enough to know the differences between girls and boys. Still single into my 40s, the truth is that [it is hard](#) to be [single](#) and long deeply for intimacy, especially as you get older and feel like a epic failure for not being married or at least heading in that direction. Yet we have to manage our God-given desires for emotional and sexual intimacy, and one way or another that requires sacrifice. Either our own will and desires up front (staying away from porn and lust) until—or if—God chooses to bless us with a spouse, or the deadly, cascading effects of porn in our lives which also spills into the lives of people around us when we choose to disobey God and live in sin.

As my mom told me a long time ago, excuses are the "skin of a reason stuffed with a lie." For more than fifteen years, my excuses were:

- "I'm curious/fascinated about female anatomy and sexuality." (true; but that doesn't excuse sin)
- "It's not fair—plenty of people, even *decades* younger than myself are already married and getting to enjoy sexual intimacy." (true; but many married couples actually experience very little, if any, sexual intimacy, and God never guarantees anyone will get to experience it)
- "God (and most everyone else) could care less about my singleness, so why should I? Since I've clearly failed to find a wife, I'll get what I can via porn. This is as good as it gets." (frustration at being single, and blame, anger, and disobedience toward God)
- "I just want to see what God made to be so beautiful and desirable." (true; women are beautiful and desirable, but this was impatience and anger towards God, and envy of married couples)

- I was angry and jealous of women, that—or at least so I thought—weren't susceptible to porn and never had to struggle with lust. After all, who ever heard of purity conferences for women? (again, still no excuse for sin)
- "I'm not looking at the really raunchy stuff; only what's 'tasteful, artistic, and respectful' toward women." (not good enough, and the one 'tasteful' website I was frequenting soon showed its true colors by adding 'less-than-artistic' imagery through a spin-off website)

Despite knowing it was wrong, one or more of these excuses were my response every time I came under conviction of sin.

When the majority of your peers have met their spouse and are now married—many with children—it's impossible to not feel like a failure. It's an ongoing struggle. You long to be loved, accepted, and desired by a woman—but the truth is that pornography can never satisfy that deep yearning for intimacy. It only [makes it worse](#).

How God freed me from it

God had to tear down my stubborn will, pride, and excuses to bring me to repentance, and He did this in several ways:

1. Publicly exposing my hypocrisy as a Christian in a "dollar" movie theater when I went to watch a crude movie one Saturday afternoon in 2002. Before the movie started, two teens who had apparently been expelled from a Christian school recognized me, and from across the theater, yelled out in an attempt to embarrass me: "Hey you—don't you go to <name omitted> church?" Their tactic worked; perhaps even better than they thought. Shamed and embarrassed as I deserved, I began praying that God would somehow deliver me and make me sick of what I was watching, and He began to answer my prayer, albeit slowly because of my own stubborn sinfulness. I began to realize that many times even the movies themselves I watched did not portray a "happy" ending, but rather the devastating consequences of the sin engaged in (I can easily name a number of movies from memory that did this).
2. Causing me to grow weary of living a lie and trying to hide my sin. I wanted to be the same person on the inside that people may have believed I was on the outside.
3. Making me come to grips with the truth that:
 - As mentioned above, pornography is a series of lies. It's not about love and intimacy—it's about lust and selfishness.
 - I was contributing to the sin that is so rampantly destroying our country—and world.
 - At "best" pornography leaves lasting damage, and at worst, destroys the intimacy, trust, commitment, blessing, beauty, and sacredness of biblical sexuality in marriage—even [ahead of time!](#)
 - Sin grieves and dishonors God, and hinders my relationship with Him.
 - It does not—and cannot—truly satisfy.

In a similar fashion to the believers in [Acts 19:19](#), this meant intentionally avoiding websites I used to frequent, permanently erasing numerous image and video files from my hard drive, destroying or throwing away movie and data discs, and drastically changing *what* I watched on Netflix and (more importantly) *why*.

But the temptation to lust isn't going to vanish because I got rid of material things. What has to change is my [heart](#) and mind's response to it. For a long time I've wrestled with the concept or view that

holiness is like being in a white straitjacket inside a padded room, while the world outside has all the fun. But one honest look at the world around us shows up that lie for what it is, especially as the ugly contrast to biblical truth grows exponentially.

In regards to what we often perceive as unfair limits, there's an excellent quote from one of the episodes of *The Dick van Dyke Show* that touches on this. Toward the end (23m 11s) of season 4, episode 5 "[The Man from 'Emperor'](#)", Rob Petrie makes a great statement about marriage when his love for his wife, Laura, and their marriage is tested:

"Marriage, like a lot of other things, has boundaries. And to some guys, those boundaries represent walls, and that makes marriage a prison to them. But to other guys, those boundaries hold everything that's good and fun in life."



Over the phone: explaining boundaries
(Season 4, Episode 5: "The Man from 'Emperor'")

That's what God's commands are—boundaries designed to protect; not stifle, even though at times it *will* feel like it. When I see the consequences of living without boundaries, I gladly welcome each command. They are not arbitrary or Draconian; they are designed to protect and safeguard from unnecessary pain, grief, heartache, and damaged, destroyed lives.

Compassion, porn...and the church?

The church is the only army that shoots its wounded. — unknown

Though I have shared elsewhere about [sexuality and the church](#), the topic of pornography is one that remains chronically unaddressed, despite the devastation it is wreaking among believers below the surface. There are numerous reasons why. It's simply easier for the church to foster an environment where sin and struggles don't exist, than it is to foster one of compassion, grace, and healing.

I vehemently believe that much of Christianity's headlong rush into pornography and sexual immorality is a backlash response to its own colossal failure to carefully analyze its views of, and speak candidly about, biblical sexuality. Our God-instilled, but unmet, desire for its expression in at least some form in our lives isn't going away. The church is called by God to boldly speak the truth in love, yet the effort it takes to maintain a healthy balance on the topic of sexuality and the dangers of pornography requires great risk and time—tremendous work and discomfort that the vast majority are simply unwilling to do.

Following are just some of the topics I believe the church needs to address from God's Word (wherever applicable, backed up with medical facts). They don't necessarily have to be an entire message on each topic; but acknowledgment that they exist and are issues is a critical first step:

- Defeating negative/unbiblical views of sexuality
- What constitutes sexual sin?
- Healthy interaction and boundaries between men and women: How do you

- Sexual refusal in marriage: when does it become sin?
 - Is there a difference between pornography and nudity? Are there instances of non-sexual nudity in the Bible?
 - Is it possible to have a healthy view of one's own body?
 - Mens' and womens' different views of one another
 - Masturbation: What does, and doesn't, the Bible say about it?
 - How do you heal from sexual assault, abuse, and/or incest?
- practically have, and maintain, a healthy appreciation of the opposite sex, especially when you find yourself attracted to someone of the opposite sex?
 - Beauty vs. sexuality: how are they different?
 - Dispelling lies and misconceptions of the opposite sex
 - Roles of men and women: what's biblical, what's not?

In her blog post entitled [Why the Church Must Be a No-Shame Zone](#), author Jen Ferguson notes that:

"If the church, the body of Christ, continues to adhere to this ideology that some sins are worse than others, we will simply continue to provide fertile ground for Satan to keep sowing rows and rows of shame in our pews. Shame shuts us up. The results? Catastrophic.

*... He [Satan] has such a field day with the sins that are sexual in nature. In most churches, we don't talk much about sex, let alone sexual sins. **We mention the story of Rahab (see Joshua 7) the prostitute and extol her good works and her coming to faith, but we don't use it as a launching pad to discuss our own struggles with sex and identity.** Rahab shows us redemption is possible and while the Bible doesn't show us exactly how she worked out all her issues, this is key—everyone knew her past. Her sin was out in the open and she was accepted despite it. It wasn't stuffed in the closet, obscured from view as she lived among the Israelites. And when her story is recounted in the New Testament, her past was still made known, not for reasons of shame, but to affirm the incredible power of God to heal."*

Would Jesus have compassion on someone caught viewing pornography? Would He treat them like He dealt with the Pharisees ([Matthew 23:27,28](#)) or the woman caught in adultery ([John 8:1-11](#))? Though it would depend on the heart of the person who was caught, I believe the latter—and have often wondered: *"What exactly would He say to them?"*

While there are many different reasons for a desire to look at pornography, arguably the hardest single issue when facing it is:

"Don't I ever get to experience and enjoy sexual and emotional intimacy with a woman I find to be beautiful who in turn sincerely desires intimacy with me? God created my physical and emotional being with this truth in mind. So if not, why doesn't He provide some means to dissipate or suppress the desires He alone is responsible for instilling in me?"

The sense of rejection and denial for anyone not in a sexually fulfilling marriage is very real. Not just from the world's eyes, but from fellow believers, and from God Himself (Genesis 2:18). It leaves believers with an even greater sense of lost value, emptiness, and heightens loneliness and rock-

bottom worth; especially as believers are immersed in a church culture that only acknowledges and ministers to marriage and family.

What you will rarely find in the Christian community regarding pornography is a genuine heart of compassion for those struggling with it. Is there a sincere desire to hear the whys, the thoughts, feelings, and circumstances behind the struggle? Or is it just a "whip you into shape" response? All too often the church either caves in to sin (liberal churches), or demonstrates the "pretend it doesn't exist" philosophy (while sinning in the background). There is a glaring lack of balance through "speaking the truth in love" while genuinely living the same truth. In effect, you could say:

The stark absence *of* creates an insatiable hunger *for*.

Namely, the church is notoriously marked by an unsettling absence of healthy interaction and affection; not to mention validation, affirmation, encouragement, and sincere, genuine listening ears; compassion, candor, and honesty.

It would be significantly easier to withstand pornography if there was genuine hope of those needs being met (i.e. a loving marital relationship with a member of the opposite sex to look forward to)—and finally knowing and experiencing the beauty of what God designed us to experience and serve as a reward for years, if not decades, of painful waiting. But there is no evidence in Scripture or reality that proves God has any intention of meeting or providing the very needs and desires to express and experience sexual and emotional intimacy that He instilled in us—and that relentlessly persist from puberty. This is a very frustrating place to be, especially in a world that celebrates sex. In other words, there is no tangible incentive or reward—let alone encouragement—from God or other believers for our ongoing obedience. It is something I still wrestle with greatly.

The tough, but true opposite side of the coin

"Like a dog that returns to its vomit is a fool who repeats his folly." — [Proverbs 26:11](#)
(NASB)

But what if vomit is all you have left, and is the closest you'll ever get to the opposite sex? The Christian church (on rare occasion) rightly preaches against pornography, yet offers no encouragement to men (or fraction of women) in the midst of the battle against it, let alone makes no attempt to address, acknowledge or communicate anything about, the very reasons **why** we crave it so much. And the tough truth is, sometimes it feels precisely like vomit is all that's available. For whatever reason(s) we may feel as though we will never experience genuine love, respect, interest, and desire from the opposite sex.

Even though it's mostly scripted and fake, pornography acknowledges (and openly offers) what the church adamantly refuses to: an unapologetic acknowledgement that the female form is beautiful, desirable, and offers a positive (albeit sinfully expressed) view of sexuality. I could go on and on about how intricately beautiful women are, but it would only elicit jealousy, anger, suspicion, and anti-sexual rage from most people in the church—especially women. For multiple reasons, women have significant issues with the topics of beauty, body image, and sexuality in general. And until they can genuinely see themselves as beautiful, they will likely never have a positive view of sexual intimacy and the blessing God intended it to be for them.

How many of us genuinely have someone (especially of the opposite sex) speaking words of encouragement, love, and admiration into our lives? How many even have someone they can trust in

pouring their heart out to without fear of instant judgment and criticism? So many return to porn simply because:

- At the very least, they get to see what women look like—the fascinating intricacies of their anatomy, and how it varies between them; the subtleties of their differences amidst their commonality.
- It's their only connection to women; so *any* form of acceptance, validation and love from women—even if it's only virtual or digital—has value.
- It is an understandable "push back" response to very real—and prevalent—rejection from women, including negative comments and actions in a feminist society—about themselves from any number of sources: male and/or female peers, their mother or father, siblings or other relatives, coworkers, etc. It may be exploitive of women and completely fake, but there is at least no criticism or judgment in pornography. In that sense, it is safe.
- It serves as the only "safe" means for feeling and expressing the admiration, fascination, and desire they feel for the sensual beauty of the female form. They are vehemently denied expressing it in any form anywhere else.
- Men are tired of being seen—and treated—as the only ones with lust problems, and tired of their sex drive and desire for sexual pleasure and sensual delight being treated as wicked and evil.
- Men are weary of being belittled and portrayed by a culture and society heavily influenced by the feminist movement as the constant problem that needs berating. When feminism fails, it's primarily because of a self-serving mindset that demands respect without first attempting to earn it.
- Most of the women in pornography at least *act* like they aren't ashamed of their bodies, or desiring sex, and *act* like they really enjoy it—as if it's something they themselves genuinely desire. While at times some of them clearly aren't comfortable with the positions they've been asked to pose in, the majority of them convey some sense of happiness and relief in terms of the beauty of their female form at least being acknowledged and appreciated—even if in the wrong way.
- They can admire the beauty and sensual detail of how God made women without anyone feeling jealous or being upset that they would actually like what they see and find them breathtakingly beautiful.
- Though temporary, it numbs the anxiety and fear of knowing they likely will never be able to have an intimate relationship with a woman, based on their circumstances and/or failures to marry or even establish a relationship with a girlfriend.
- Try explaining to a man whose life is filled with rejection, failure, and loneliness that it will be better without porn. That life will be more encouraging, brighter, and happier than with it. Especially considering God makes zero guarantees of provision for the intimacy and sexual desires He placed within each of us. So at the very least—in spite of its lies—pornography numbs the pain of real life; and without it, that pain grows in exponential intensity.

Pornography is therein so prevalent because we sense that it's the only alternative to the things we long for in real life—i.e. it's literally "as good as it gets" for most of us in terms of any kind of association, interaction, or connection with women (or for women, the opposite sex).

Many women, wives especially, justifiably hate pornography because they can't compete with the endless young and shapely women in the images and videos. However, most of these same wives refuse to let their husbands enjoy looking at them, because of body image issues, dislike of sex, etc. So husbands hear the "*Don't look at them!*" message. However, though no inherent fault of their own,

what complicates this is the accompanying message "...and don't you dare look at me!" that comes across in the lack of positive body image and self-confidence that many women struggle with. The women in porn don't *seem* to have that problem (I say "seem", because the eyes don't lie, and at times, many of them are actually communicating messages of anxiety, shame, worry, or fear).

Tough as it sounds, until the whole church, from the pulpit on down, is willing to get their hands dirty and face the slew of rotting issues below their sugar-coated exterior, they have nothing effective to say on the issues of sex and pornography. And the porn industry knows this only too well. No backbone on these issues means things continue getting worse.

The post-healing struggle

So what does life look like after you've been addicted to porn, and have experienced a measure of healing from it? How long does it last? After all, you know the lies it tries to sell, and that in the long term it's not going to make you feel any better. You know it's not an option, and don't want to hide anything. What do you do with women you see around you that you find to be beautiful? And I don't solely mean the temptation of 'ideal' (using that term loosely) physical female beauty via pornography—but the female form in general, wherever it exists and is encountered? It will always elicit some kind of response from us—even independently of lust—and we deeply long for the appropriate chance to express all the feelings of love, admiration, fascination, and desire we have felt (but were forced to suppress) for decades when we see it.

Yet your circumstances likely haven't changed, and your desire and search for worth, value, affirmation, acceptance, and longing to finally experience intimacy *as God designed you to* hasn't stopped—in fact, only increased in their intensity as the months and years go by. Deep down, each of us longs to know that we are somehow lovable, pleasing, and both physically and sexually desirable to members of the opposite sex. On their own, these are not sinful qualities or wanton traits that we crave fulfillment to. Yet in the absence of biblical sexual fulfillment, pornography presents itself as the purveyor of "*For you, this as good as it gets—and it's all you're ever going to get.*" And it's impossible to not believe that, because God makes absolutely no guarantees of sexual fulfillment whilst simultaneously being the creator of the unrelenting issue of sexuality.

The greatest challenge of our faith versus pornography is the virtual suppression of the truth of beauty inherent in the female form, as well as the denial of our desire to express that sense of overwhelming awe and longing for intimacy in a tangible way.

So you strive to focus on several truths in which God has used to spare you from a complete relapse:

- You want to be the same person on the inside that people may have believed you were from the outside. You want a clean conscience. That doesn't mean you've arrived or are "bulletproof."
- God's plan for sexuality is beneficial and beautiful. You simply cannot say that about lust and pornography.
- You receive daily, sobering news updates from multiple family organizations that act as continual reminders of the chilling path our nation (and world) is on because of our sin in rejecting God's laws and commands.

The church, in effect, tells us to use [sublimation](#) (the diversion of the energy of a sexual or other biological impulse from its immediate goal to one of a more acceptable social, moral, or aesthetic nature or use) in dealing with sexual temptation. Sublimation, incidentally, comes from [Freudian psychology](#)). The notion that if you [divert or burn off enough sexual energy](#), temptation will virtually

vanish. *Really?* In essence, what's being said is: *"You need to stay busy enough serving God and people so that you won't have time to be sexually tempted."* Let's check reality on that: know any [pastors or ministry workers](#) who caved to sexual temptation? Were they idle? They are, in fact, some of the busiest people on the planet, and frequently serve others with little thanks or gratitude in return. Sexual temptation, at its core, is both a perpetual **hard-wired physiology and heart struggle** that wrestles with the plight of men (and women) in regards to their propensity toward physicality and sexuality. Not a busy-or-not or exercise-or-not issue.

Because lust comes from our minds and hearts, it isn't limited to things we see. It can spring from sources other than a lewd image, website, or movie, and it can be just as easy to lust over someone who is fully clothed. It can hide in subtle thoughts, romance novels, or appear while walking in malls and parking lots, while driving, strolling down supermarket aisles, and in the middle of a church service. Whenever and wherever the 'trigger' for lust occurs, we are responsible for our own thoughts, and it's an issue that requires us to be completely honest with ourselves before God. We can lie to friends trying to keep us accountable, but we can't lie to God—only He knows what someone is, or is not, thinking. God always looks at the heart:

"But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."" — [1 Samuel 16:7](#) (NASB)

So I don't have a pornography filter on my computer. Why? First of all, because filters are inherently flawed. They simply cannot fully protect me against pornography. There are images on a number of sites that they can't easily guard against: image searches on the web (with unnamed or misnamed imagery) and Wikipedia (with increasingly pornographic imagery being used in various articles) are two such examples. When you're learning to ride a bicycle, at some point you remove the training wheels. You [cannot rely](#) on them for the long term. Filters also cannot protect me from my thoughts and the images already burned into my mind, nor can I escape living in a world that is rapidly becoming more invasive and aggressive in its opposition to God and His design for sexuality. Some examples? I've been bombarded with near pornographic images on the slew of TVs surrounding me at Applebees while simply waiting for my food with my family. In early 2012, Dawn Hawkins from *Morality in Media*, [spoke up](#) about a nearby passenger who was looking at pornography near her on a Delta flight. When she complained, another woman nearby stood up and told her, "Be quiet. Nobody cares."

The best filter is a changed heart—one that recognizes the ugly lies that pornography, lust, and immorality are, while esteeming the beauty of what God intended sexuality and marriage to be. Immodest dress/fashion, magazine covers at supermarket checkouts—even TV ads—aren't going to going away; in fact, they're going to get worse. You have to first and foremost recognize and disarm the motives and intent behind whatever you may encounter, and *God has to place within you* a repulsion for it. The answer lies in the completely different focus and perspective than simply avoiding or not doing. It's in living out the truth of God's Word: honoring Him, respecting women, and calling on the carpet the lies and intentional twisting of sexuality for what it is. But the component of female beauty (which ironically, God designed to have such an impact on us) is a very difficult one—perhaps the most trying challenge in making sure our perspective and hearts remain right before God.

My prayer is that God will never let me go back; but since the unanswered pain of being single is ongoing, so is the struggle.

Guarding against the push of immorality

There's simply no way to avoid being exposed to some form of pornography in our society—it's all around us, and it's rapidly increasing by the day. Despite what some may believe, being raised in a godly, Christian home is no guarantee against falling into lust and pornography. The best prevention however, is two-fold: first, be open and honest about the anatomical/medical aspects of sex with your children—appropriate to their age—and secondly, share the truth often of how and why sex can be either a tremendous blessing in marriage or a serious sin problem outside of it. We all need those frequent reminders.

Listed in chronological order, these reports and statistics are [sobering](#) when you realize the problem has only been increasing with the saturation of mobile devices and insidious media actively and aggressively promoting pornography and immorality in our world.

- Starbucks openly states that "[homosexuality is core](#)" to their corporate values.
- Apple, Microsoft, Chase Bank, and Google sponsor and promote homosexuality through sponsorship and financial donations to the so-called Human Rights Campaign—an organization notorious for their aggressive promotion of the homosexual agenda, socialism, and undermining of both religious freedom and national sovereignty.
- Amazon, Target, General Mills, Kelloggs, and J.C. Penney have given large sums of money to destroy biblical marriage and promote homosexual "marriage."
- Home Depot actively promotes homosexuality and sponsors gay pride parades.
- At the organizational level, the Girl Scouts of America promote both homosexuality and abortion, and are beginning to persecute believers for their faith that stands in opposition to their agenda.
- Sears continues to openly sell pornographic media on their website (including bestiality).
- Latest [statistics](#) from covenanteyes.com
- (date unknown) The average age of a child when she or he is first exposed to porn is 11 years old ([internet-filter-review.com](#)), and this age is shrinking.
- (date unknown) National Campaign Survey: More than one in five teenage girls (age 13-19) have participated in sexting (the act of sending nude or partially nude media electronically, usually via cell phone), and according to the same survey, over 35% of young adult women (ages 20-26) have sent nude or semi-nude material electronically.
- (date unknown) Family Safe Media:
 - The largest group of viewers of internet porn is children between the ages of 12 and 17.
 - Every day, there are 68 million pornographic search engine requests, which represent one-quarter of all requests.
 - Porn industry revenue is larger than the revenues of the top technology companies combined: Google, Amazon, facebook, Microsoft, eBay, Yahoo, Apple, Netflix and EarthLink.
- 2016, June: [Hilton Hotel advertises using two men together in bed](#)
- 2014, August: [Radio Shack tries using sexual innuendo to promote their products.](#)
- 2014, June: [Macy's department stores support the homosexual agenda](#)
- 2014, March:
 - [Major Christian charity announces it will hire 'gay Christians'](#). Although they have since reversed their decision, it is clear that it was due to the massive outcry against it—and potential loss of financial donors—rather than a genuine change of heart about the issue itself.
 - [The Smutty Professors: What Parents Need to Know About "Sex Weeks"](#)

- 2014, February: [Maine High Court: Boy may use girls' restroom](#)
- 2014: [Welcome to the Gay Agenda Reeducation Camp](#) ([additional link](#))
- 2013, December: [Girl Scouts and Planned Parenthood](#)
- 2013, December: [Blood donation safety doesn't matter](#) to liberal activists, who think Americans should ignore the science and risk exposing people to disease just to make a political point.
- 2013, September: [Christian businesses are being forcibly shut down](#) due to mob tactics and intimidation from homosexual activists.
- 2013, August: It is now [illegal](#) in California for minors to receive counseling for *unwanted* same-sex attractions.
- 2013, April: The FCC is [set to drop the ban on the f-word and full-frontal nudity](#) on television and radio stations nationwide.
- 2013, June: Kraft puts a full [two-page ad](#) in the June 2013 issue of *People Magazine* featuring a naked man lying on a picnic blanket with only a small portion of the blanket barely covering his genitals. A person has to look closely to see the item the company is supposedly marketing because the salad dressing bottle is so small next to the male model, picnic basket, and other food items. There is also a small Kraft logo in the upper corners with the words "Silverware Optional—Let's Get Zesty." The website [getmezesty.com](#) is listed in the bottom corner.
- 2013, January: Philadelphia Schools to implement [condom dispensers](#).
- 2012, August: The Democratic Party of the United States openly embraces homosexuality and [same-sex marriage](#) as one of its key "values."
- 2012: Though I cannot recommend her book *The Fantasy Fallacy: Exposing the Deeper Meaning Behind Sexual Thoughts* due to a lack of Scriptural support, Shannon Ethridge notes a chilling reality on page 11:

"In talking last year with the manager of one Cincinnati hotel, part of a chain that hosts some of the largest Christian conventions in our nation, I discovered that the hotel chain profits greatly from hosting these particular meetings. The conventions are attended each year by hordes of pastors, religious broadcasters, Christian writers, speakers, and musicians. Would you like to guess what is attributed to the hotel's bottom-line increase during these conferences? According to the manager, purchases of pornographic movies are tremendous!"

- 2012: Hardees aired an ad for one of their hamburgers—using a porn star, acting out sexual activity with the hamburger. This isn't a late-night TV ad; just a "run-of-the-mill" any-time-of-the-day ad for them.
- Around Christmas 2011, two stores at University Park Mall in Mishawaka, Indiana (one of them Abercromie & Fitch) had shirtless "buff" guys and skimpily dressed women standing in their doorways to "advertise" their merchandise.
- 2009: In an interview with Oprah, Theresa Flynt, vice president for a pornographic video chain said that women account for *over half* of the business at their stores. Not surprisingly, Oprah essentially goes on to ask "What's wrong with that?" ([CNN and Oprah.com](#), *Are women ok watching porn?*)
- 2008: 93% of boys and 62% of girls are exposed to Internet porn before the age of 18 ([covenanteyes.com](#)).
- 2007: A *Sydney Morning Herald* article stated that women compose 35% of porn site visitors and 42% of the clientele at sex shops. ([Teacher, mind expander, spice of life: porn's multiple positions](#))
- 2003: *Today's Christian Woman* found that of their female readers, 34% admitted to intentionally accessing Internet porn. (*Today's Christian Woman* poll, Fall 2003).

- 2002: The adult industry says traffic is 20-30% children (NRC Report 2002, 3.3)
- 2001: 70% of 15- to 17-year-olds indicated they accidentally viewed pornography online (Kaiser Family Foundation 2001 poll)

Like Jessica Harris said, "Sin thrives in silence." As individuals and churches, we can no longer avoid confronting it.

Related links and files: Jessica Harris's testimony [archived MP3 file \(74.3 MB\)](#), [original/broken link](#) and [video](#) (from the "Shamed" project) | [beggarsdaughter.com](#) | [Cries in the dark: calls for help from women who struggle with porn](#) | [The pornographic view of the body](#) | [pornharms.com](#) | [Why shouldn't Johnny watch porn if he likes?](#) | [Online pornography's effects, and a new way to fight them](#) | [Two big mistakes churches make when helping porn addicts](#) | [The truth about porn our teens need to hear \(from a mom who used to like porn a lot\)](#) | [Yes, porn is a big deal: a response to Elite Daily](#) | [License to lust: how porn trains objectification](#) | [Big fat lie: porn empowers women](#) | [Why I fight pornography](#)

Note: Some opinions expressed in various links above may not necessarily reflect my own. | [Comments?](#)