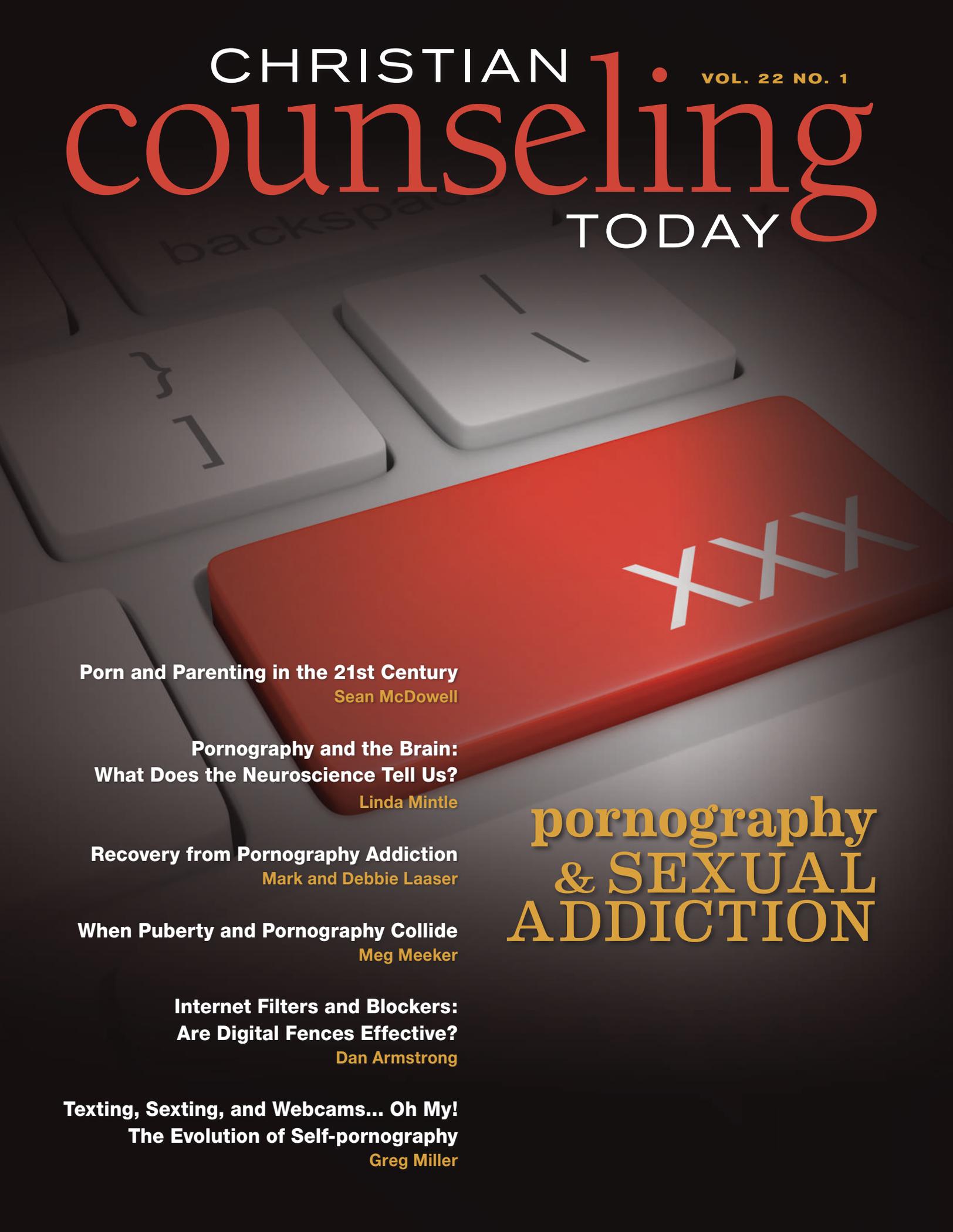


CHRISTIAN
counseling
TODAY

VOL. 22 NO. 1

A close-up photograph of a computer keyboard. The focus is on a large red key with the 'XXXX' symbol on it. Other keys like 'backspace', '}', and '[' are visible in the background. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the textures of the keys.

Porn and Parenting in the 21st Century

Sean McDowell

**Pornography and the Brain:
What Does the Neuroscience Tell Us?**

Linda Mintle

Recovery from Pornography Addiction

Mark and Debbie Laaser

When Puberty and Pornography Collide

Meg Meeker

**Internet Filters and Blockers:
Are Digital Fences Effective?**

Dan Armstrong

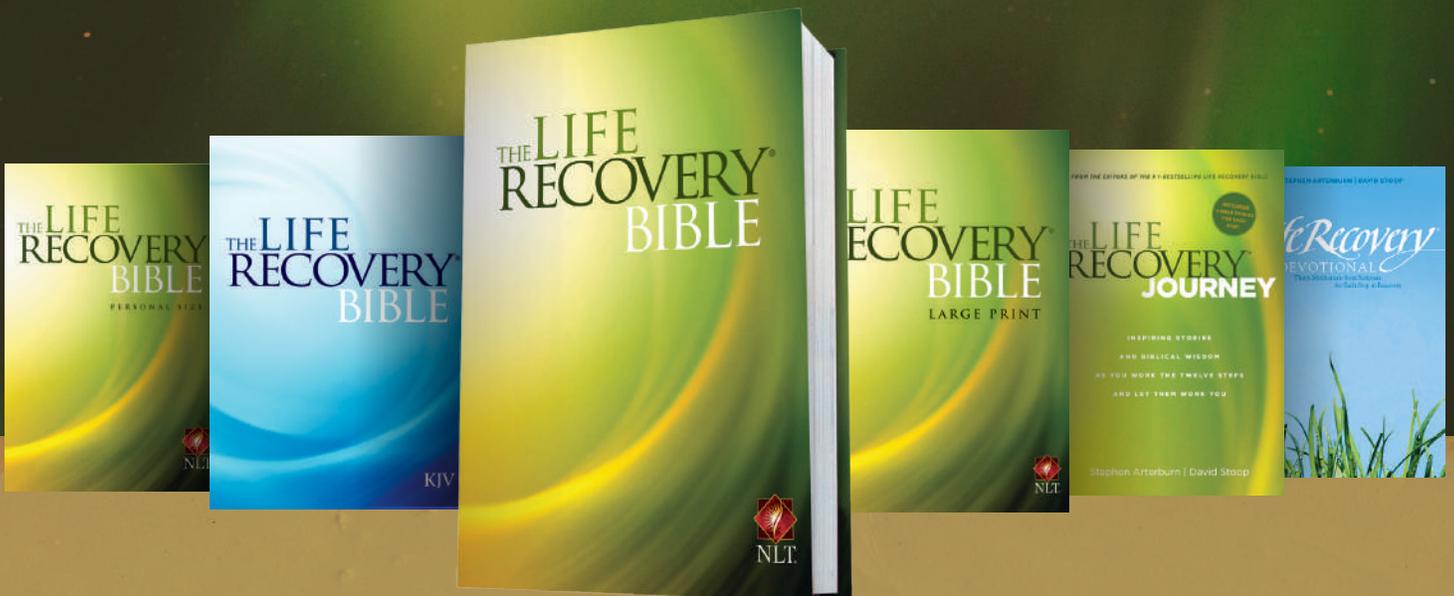
**Texting, Sexting, and Webcams... Oh My!
The Evolution of Self-pornography**

Greg Miller

**pornography
& SEXUAL
ADDICTION**



DISCOVER THE FAMILY OF RESOURCES
NEARLY 4 MILLION PEOPLE
HAVE USED TO TAKE THEIR LIFE BACK



FOR 25 YEARS,
Life Recovery Bible resources have been helping readers
find healing in the True Source of Recovery—**GOD HIMSELF.**

To learn more about the full line of Life Recovery Resources,
and place your order, contact your Tyndale Sales representative today
at (855) 277-9400 or visit us online at LifeRecoveryProducts.com





Do you
have an extra
\$47,900
laying around?

That's the average cost for a counseling professional to *defend* against a malpractice suit. Add another **\$129,900** if the claim is settled against you.*

The Counselors Professional Liability Insurance available through HPSO offers up to **\$1 million** each claim (up to \$5 million annual aggregate) of medical malpractice insurance, *plus* it pays your legal expenses.

- **66.7%** of malpractice claims involve face-to-face counseling with the client
- **39.7%** of allegations are due to 'inappropriate relationship' with the client
- **6.6%** of licensing board complaints result in loss of license
- **\$11 million** paid for counselors' malpractice claims over 10 years

Counselors Professional Liability Insurance

For rates and coverage details

800.982.9491
www.hpso.com/CT2015



Endorsed by:



When you add up all the numbers, HPSO equals *peace of mind*.

*Understanding Counselor Liability Risk, NSO and CNA, March 2014.

Healthcare Providers Service Organization is a registered trade name of Affinity Insurance Services, Inc.; (TX 13695); (AR 100106022); in CA, MN, AIS Affinity Insurance Agency, Inc. (CA 0795465); in OK, AIS Affinity Insurance Services, Inc.; in CA, Aon Affinity Insurance Services, Inc., (CA 0694493), Aon Direct Insurance Administrators and Berkeley Insurance Agency and in NY, AIS Affinity Insurance Agency. E-11308-0515 AACC

contents

FEATURES

- 10 Porn and Parenting in the 21st Century** by *Sean McDowell*. Pornography use, especially among minors, has been radically changed with the growth of certain technologies. Scholar and Christian apologist, Sean McDowell, discusses six indicators and their lasting impact on children today. Parenting tips are offered to help build communication and relationship.
- 17 Pornography and the Brain: What Does the Neuroscience Tell Us?** by *Linda Mintle*. Sexuality and brain functioning are closely linked and the research continues to expand our understanding of this important connection. From her work as the Department Chair of Behavioral Health at Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine, Linda Mintle examines the impact of pornography use on certain neurological processes, as well as the addiction cycle.
- 22 Recovery from Pornography Addiction: An Opportunity for Both Husband and Wife to Grow** by *Mark and Debbie Laaser*. Pornography use and sexual addiction can wreak havoc on a marriage. With nearly 30 years of professional and ministry experience in this field, Mark and Debbie Laaser share numerous insights that will help caregivers in their work with couples. Strategies and counseling tips are offered for effective treatment and recovery.
- 30 When Puberty and Pornography Collide** by *Meg Meeker*. Today's culture is exposing children to the devastating effects of pornography and early sexual experiences during puberty. The loss of innocence, disrupted brain development, and sexually transmitted diseases are just a few of the consequences. Pediatrician, Meg Meeker, addresses how to help teens during this important time in their lives.
- 34 Modern-day Sexual Craze and Chaos: The Facts** by *Jim Cress*. The national statistics on pornography use and sexual addiction are alarming, and they cross all gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic lines. The rise of new technologies and emergence of social media outlets have only fueled some of the cultural shifts we are seeing. Jim Cress provides a broad overview and offers several solutions for the Church.
- 38 Internet Filters and Blockers: Are Digital Fences Effective?** by *Dan Armstrong*. Parents are increasingly concerned about how to protect their children from the insidious and destructive influences of pornography. Many want to know if Internet filters and other computer monitoring programs are effective measures. Communications specialist, Dan Armstrong, reviews the different aspects of blocking software and online safety.





42 Sex as Icon or Idol? How a Biblical Theology of the Body Saves Us from the Idolatry of Porn by Christopher West. Sexuality was God's idea and part of His creation, but sadly it has become an idol for many. Best-selling author, Christopher West, looks at the biblical narrative as it pertains to this important human dimension. Spirituality and a theological perspective are discussed regarding God image, sin management, and winning the battle against pornography.

46 Protecting the Next Generation: Fighting the Porn Industry by Joel Hesch. Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry with a far-reaching impact on almost every aspect of society, including the family and the Church. Attorney and author, Joel Hesch, analyzes legislative and legal efforts, including the dynamics of combating this growing concern. The Church's role in preserving the next generation is also examined.

50 Women and Pornography Today: It's Way Past Mommy Porn by Marnie Ferree. Women represent one of the fastest rising demographics when it comes to pornography use and sexual addiction. Online venues and cyber-based sexual activity characterize just some of the emerging issues. Marnie Ferree outlines important treatment considerations for women that address the roots of the problem, as well as helpful resources that are available.

54 Texting, Sexting, and Webcams... Oh My! The Evolution of Self-pornography by Greg Miller. Self-pornography represents one of the nuances we are now seeing as a result of the ever-expanding influence of the porn industry. People are ignoring personal and potential legal risks through sexting and other Web-based outlets. Greg Miller explores this phenomenon and the impact it is having on our society.



departments

- 8 From the e-team**
- 58 The Word Applied** by H.B. London, Jr.
- 60 Looking Inward** by Diane Langberg
- 62 Reflections** by Gary Moon
- 64 Shrink Notes** by Michael Lyles
- 66 Law, Ethics & Liability** by John Sandy
- 68 Leadership Psyc** by Jared Pingleton
- 72 Research Digest** by Mark Yarhouse
- 75 CounselQuiz**
- 77 From the Heart** by Tim Clinton

Dan Armstrong, B.A., M.A., is the corporate communications specialist at *Covenant Eyes*. Prior to joining the team, he led the marketing department of a public policy think tank and anchored/reported television news for NBC stations in Michigan. Dan and his wife have four children.

Tim Clinton, Ed.D., LPC, LMFT, is President of AACC, Executive Director of the Center for Counseling and Family Studies/Professor of Counseling and Pastoral Care at *Liberty University*, and co-founder of *Light Counseling, Inc.*, a clinical practice serving children, adolescents, and adults. He is the author of several books, including *God Attachment, The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling*, and *Break Through*.

Jim Cress, M.A., is a conference speaker, Licensed Professional Counselor, and a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist. He is Founder and President of *Integrity Redeemed Workshops* in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Marnie C. Ferree, M.A., LMFT, is a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist and directs *Bethesda Workshops*, a Christian-based intensive program for treatment of sexual addiction. She is a pioneer in treating female sex and love addicts and has written extensively on the topic.

Joel Hesch, J.D., is an author, attorney, and founder of *Proven Men Ministries*. After breaking free from his own 20-year addiction, Joel developed the "Proven Path for Sexual Integrity" and a 12-week daily study. His mission is to equip the Church and leaders with the goal of helping one million people gain and retain sexual integrity.

Debbie Laaser, M.A., LMFT, is the cofounder of *Faithful & True*. She has been involved in recovery with her husband, Mark, for more than 29 years and is committed to helping couples find healing and transformation from the pain of sexual addiction and relational betrayal. Debbie counsels women individually, leads therapy groups for women, and counsels couples with Mark at *Faithful & True's* counseling center.

Mark R. Laaser, M.Div., Ph.D., is the President and Founder of *Faithful & True* and the host of the *Men of Valor* program, *Faithful & True's* online radio show. Dr. Laaser is nationally recognized as the leading authority in the field of sexual addiction and healthy sexuality with more than 29 years of recovery experience. He has written 15 books on the subject of sexual addiction.

Diane M. Langberg, Ph.D., is a practicing psychologist with *Diane Langberg and Associates* in suburban Philadelphia, chairs AACC's Executive Board, and is the author of *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse, On the Threshold of Hope*, and *Suffering and the Heart of God*.

Rev. H.B. London, Jr., D.D., has served 33 years in pastoral ministry—20 as Pastor to Pastors with *Focus on the Family*. He is the lead pastor at *Friendship Church* in Palm Desert, California. H.B. and his wife, Beverley, are now "retired" and live in LaQuinta, California, where he continues his ministry to the clergy through *H.B. London Ministries*.

Michael R. Lyles, M.D., is a board-certified psychiatrist, an AACC Executive Board Member and has a private practice with *Lyles & Crawford Clinical Consulting* in Roswell, Georgia.

Sean McDowell, Ph.D., is a gifted communicator with a passion for equipping the Church and, in particular, young people to make the case for the Christian faith. He connects with audiences in a tangible way through humor and stories while imparting hard evidence and logical support for viewing all areas of life through a biblical worldview. Sean is an Assistant Professor in the Christian Apologetics program at *Biola University*, the author, coauthor, or editor of more than 17 books.

Meg Meeker, M.D., is a pediatrician, mother, and best-selling author of six books. She is one of the country's leading authorities on parenting, teens and children's health. Dr. Meeker writes with the know-how of a pediatrician and the big heart of a mother because she has spent the last 30 years practicing pediatric and adolescent medicine. Her work with countless families over the years served as the inspiration behind several best-selling books.

Greg Miller, M.Div., D.Min., with his wife, Beth, started *Thrive Resources* in 2011 in Algonquin, Illinois, working with individuals and couples who struggle with various forms of coping and addiction and desire spiritual guidance. For seven years, Greg has also served as the Director of the *Men of Valor* workshops with *Faithful & True* in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

Linda Mintle, Ph.D., LCSW, LMFT, is the Chair of Behavioral Health at *Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine* in Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Mintle is the author of 19 books, a national news contributor, and hosts her own Web site (drlindamintle.com) and radio show on *Faith Radio*.

Gary W. Moon, M.Div., Ph.D., is the Executive Director of the *Martin Family Institute for Christianity and Culture* and the *Dallas Willard Center for Christian Spiritual Formation* at *Westmont College*. He founded, with David G. Benner and Larry Crabb, *Conversations Journal*; directs the *Renovaré Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation*; and has authored several books.

Jared Pingleton, Psy.D., serves as Vice President of Professional Development for the *American Association of Christian Counselors*. As a clinical psychologist and credentialed minister, Jared is dually trained in both psychology and theology and specializes in the theoretical and clinical integration of the two disciplines. In professional practice since 1977, Jared is the author or coauthor of six books, including *Making Magnificent Marriages*, and numerous journal articles.

Rev. John Sandy, J.D., M.A.B.C., M.S.J., is a licensed attorney in California and Illinois. He is also an ordained minister, a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor, and Board Certified Christian Counselor with the Board of Christian Professional and Pastoral Counselors and maintains a pastoral counseling ministry that is a Ministry Partner of the *Inland Empire Southern Baptist Association* in Ontario, California.

Christopher West, M.T.S., is President of *The Cor Project*, a global membership and outreach organization helping others learn, live, and share the Theology of the Body. He also serves as Senior Lecturer at the *Theology of the Body Institute* and his courses there attract students from around the world. Christopher is the best-selling author of multiple books and video programs.

Mark A. Yarhouse, Psy.D., is the Rosemarie Scotti Hughes Chair of Christian Thought in Mental Health Practice and Professor of Psychology at *Regent University*, where he directs the *Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity*. He is author or coauthor of several books, including *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*.

CHRISTIAN counseling TODAY

Christian Counseling Today is published by
the American Association of Christian Counselors, Inc.

PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER: Tim Clinton

MANAGING EDITOR: Mark Camper

SENIOR EDITOR: Eric Scalise

GRAPHIC ARTIST: Amy Cole

ADVERTISING: Randy Meetre

AACC NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Dan Allender, Ph.D.
Daniel Amen, M.D.
Steve Arterburn, M.Ed.
William Backus, Ph.D.
Gary Chapman, Ph.D.
Chap Clark, Ph.D.
Mark Crawford, Ph.D.
Glen Havens, M.D.
Rosemarie Hughes, Ph.D.
Mark Laaser, Ph.D.
H.B. London, Jr., D.D.
James Mallory, M.D.
Sharon May, Ph.D.
Paul Meier, M.D.
Linda Mintle, Ph.D.
Gary Moon, Ph.D.
George Ohlschlager, J.D., BCPOC
John Ortberg, Ph.D.
Les Parrott, Ph.D.
Cliff Penner, Ph.D.
Joyce Penner, MRN
Daniel Sweeney, Ph.D.
Siang-Yang Tan, Ph.D.
John Trent, Ph.D.
Catherine Hart Weber, Ph.D.
Everett Worthington, Jr., Ph.D.
H. Norman Wright, M.A., MRE
Mark Yarhouse, Psy.D.



The American Association of Christian Counselors, Inc., is an organization of evangelical professional, lay, and pastoral counselors dedicated to promoting excellence and unity in Christian counseling. Membership in AACC in no way implies endorsement or certification of the member's qualifications, ability, or proficiency to counsel. The purpose and objectives of AACC and the publications that it sponsors are strictly informative, educational, and affiliative. Annual memberships in AACC are \$179.00.

Views expressed by the authors, presenters, and advertisers are their own and do not necessarily reflect those of Christian Counseling Today or the American Association of Christian Counselors. Christian Counseling Today and AACC do not assume responsibility in any way for members' or subscribers' efforts to apply or utilize information, suggestions, or recommendations made by the organization, the publications, or other resources.

Christian Counseling Today is published quarterly (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall). Individual, church, and institutional subscriptions to Christian Counseling Today are available at the annual rate of \$35 (pre-paid with U.S. funds, add 25% outside the U.S.A.).

Unsolicited manuscripts are not accepted and will not be returned.

Editorial Offices: AACC Editorial Office, P.O. Box 739, Forest, VA 24551, 1.800.526.8673. Postmaster: Send address changes to AACC Member Services, P.O. Box 739, Forest, VA 24551, 1.800.526.8673.
Copyright 2014 by AACC, Inc. All rights reserved. ISSN #1076-9668



While there's life, there's hope.



Timberline Knolls is a residential treatment center located on 43 beautiful acres just outside Chicago, offering a nurturing environment of recovery for women and girls ages 12 and older struggling to overcome eating disorders, substance abuse, mood disorders, trauma and co-occurring disorders. By serving with uncompromising care, relentless compassion and an unconditional joyful spirit, we help our residents help themselves in their recovery.

Timberline Knolls gives Christian women and young girls the opportunity to deepen their understanding of Christ and build on their relationship with Him. With an individualized Christian residential treatment program, women at TK work together to achieve lifelong recovery through a holistic 12-step-based clinical approach strengthening them spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally and socially.

TIMBERLINE  KNOLLS

40 Timberline Drive | Lemont, IL 60439
timberlineknolls.com | info@timberlineknolls.com | 877.257.9611



Pure and Undeclared: Sexuality and Holiness

It is no secret in today's media and technology-driven world that sex is used to sell almost *everything* and *anything*. What God created and designed to help illustrate that which He considers beautiful and holy, Satan has denigrated, demeaned, and used in destructive ways. As we see the world around us sink deeper into moral decay, the boundaries of decency and restraint are falling apart all around us.

Most of the statistics are very sobering, even alarming... and in many cases can feel overwhelming. For example: there are currently more than 300 million pornographic Web pages on the Internet, with an estimated six to eight percent of the United States population that could be diagnosed with some level of sexual addiction; there are an estimated 15 million new cases of a sexually transmitted disease (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV/AIDS, etc.) contracted every year, which translates to about one case every two seconds; of the top 11 reportable diseases in the U.S., five are STDs; reports of childhood sexual abuse have increased from 6,000 in 1976 to well over half a million today, and most specialists agree that the problem is far greater than the cases reported; over 60 million children have experienced some form of sexual abuse before they graduated from high school (approximately one out of every three to four girls and one out of every six to seven boys), while the risk of developing substance abuse problems in this demographic is nearly 400% greater; approximately one-third of all marriages have experienced an extramarital affair; the sexual exploitation and trafficking of minors has reached epidemic levels in our country, with anywhere from 300,000 to half-a-million children at risk.



Sexual addiction is often defined in terms of “false intimacy” and magnified when individuals try to meet a legitimate human need (i.e., connection and meaningful relationship) in an illegitimate way. There are several factors that all addictions have in common—they provide a form of escape; they serve the purpose of removing a person from his/her true feelings; they always involve pleasure; they override the ability and/or willingness to delay self-gratification; they involve psychological dependence and obsessive-compulsive behaviors;

they lead to a system of denial and/or minimization; they totally control the addict and that control transcends all logic or reason; they are destructive and unhealthy in the long run; and ultimately, they take priority over all of life's other issues.

Some believe the sanctity of human life and the institution of marriage also involve the sanctity of our sexuality. Let's take a closer look at the biblical narrative. Sexuality was God's idea. We see in the creation story that “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male

and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27). He also gave us the beauty of our sexuality: “God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good.... And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Genesis 1:31, 2:25). He, too, gave us the means to procreate and, in essence, “retell” the story: “God blessed them; and God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply....’ For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 1:28, 2:24).

One needs only to read the Book of Solomon to understand that God gave us passion and pleasure in our sexuality; however, it was also intended to remain within the confines of marriage: “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled...” (Hebrews 13:4). The Greek word for bed used here is *koite*, and can be translated as “cohabitation by implanting the male sperm.” *Koite* has the same meaning as the Latin word, *coitio*, and it is where we get the word, *coitus*, which describes the special relationship a married couple experiences in the bed that they “cohabit.” In that context, you could read the Scripture as, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let *coitus* be undefiled.”

Finally, the Lord gave us holiness in His design for sexuality. Most would acknowledge that God has what could be described as both masculine and feminine attributes. When He created Adam, it is as if He deposited all His attributes into His highest creation, making man in His own image. However, He fashioned Eve differently, taking her out of Adam... perhaps in one sense, taking those characteristics that were essentially female and putting them into her. When a husband and wife join together in the act of marriage, it can be viewed as bringing together all the attributes of God into a moment that should represent committed love, covenantal intimacy, and something

holy. No wonder Satan hates this imagery and will do anything he can to destroy its purity.

This issue of *CCT* attempts to tackle the broad continuum of human sexuality with an honest and engaging perspective. Sean McDowell and Jim Cress each provide an overview of the various issues, concerns, and treatment factors related to sexuality and culture, while Greg Miller zeroes in on the sexting craze we are currently seeing as the self-pornography phenomenon continues to grow. Christopher West offers a sound biblical theology of the body and Linda Mintle examines the research on the brain and the neurological impact of pornography. Several articles are specifically oriented to the challenges parents face when raising their children in a sexualized culture. This includes the use of Internet filters and blockers by Dan Armstrong, strategies to protect the next generation by Joel Hesch, and

an insightful look by Meg Meeker at what happens when puberty and pornography collide. The topic of sexual addiction is also the focus of national experts, as Marnie Ferree addresses female sexual addiction and Mark and Debbie Laaser offer their thoughts and wise counsel when pornography hits a marriage.

Counselors, caregivers, and ministry leaders are frequently confronted with many of the presenting problems discussed in this issue. Sadly, incidents are more likely to continue and grow in an increasingly secularized and amoral society. We must be aware, properly equipped, and ready to engage the enemy of our souls on one of the most important battlegrounds of the 21st century: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). ✘

TEACHABLE
moments
BUILDING BLOCKS of
CHRISTIAN PARENTING

Jonathan C.
ROBINSON, PH.D.

Available Online
and in
Bookstores Nationwide

Only \$17.99
Includes Free E-book

PARENTING IS THE TOUGHEST JOB for which most parents have no training. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to “train your children in the ways of the Lord, so that when they are old, they will not depart from Him.” *Teachable Moments: Building Blocks of Christian Parenting* is a source book for parents and helping-professionals who want both the spiritual context and step-by-step, practical tools for effective, engaged, Christian parenting.



Porn and Parenting in the 21st Century

The world has changed... and there is no going back. Gone are the days when pornography was considered culturally unacceptable. Gone are the days when people had to go to a seedy part of town to access pornography. And gone are the days when society largely supported the nuclear family. We live in a new era with new challenges and new culturally-accepted norms. We can mourn the loss of a culture that truly valued healthy relationships and the kids who came from them, but for the sake of our children, we *must* deal realistically with the world we now live in.

The porn revolution has left no part of our culture unaffected—including the Church. Before we can discuss how to parent in a pornified culture, it is critical we first understand how radically porn consumption has changed in recent years. Below are six indicators of how porn use has changed with the advent of modern technology:

1. Accessible: “It’s all mainstream now!” That’s what Zack, Seth Rogan’s character, says to his best friend and intended love about pornography in an effort to get her to make a pornographic film with him in the movie, *Zack and Miri Make a Porno*. Technological advancement has indiscriminately allowed people of all ages to encounter and consume sexually explicit content. Mobile devices have passed computers as the most common means of accessing pornography. And virtual porn is just emerging.

2. Affordable: Pornography used to cost money. People accessed porn through books, magazines, hotel rooms, videos, and other mediums that typically required some kind of fee. Even though the porn industry will make more than \$100 billion dollars this year worldwide (more than Apple®, Google®, Netflix®, Microsoft®, eBay®, and Yahoo® combined¹), much is still free.

3. Acceptable: Porn consumption simply does not have the stigma it once did. As a whole, porn use is much more acceptable than in the past. In fact, according to “The Porn Phenomenon,” a massive study released jointly by the Barna Research Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, teens and young adults rank not recycling as more immoral than viewing porn (56% vs. 32%).² Further, nine out of 10 young men ages 13-24 say that how they talk about porn with friends is encouraging, *accepting*, or neutral.³

4. Anonymous: In the past, people had to buy a porn magazine from a real person, such as a worker at a video store or a clerk. Purchasing porn often required at least some form of face-to-face interaction. Today, however, anyone with a cell phone can anonymously access endless free images with just a few clicks. People can now watch pornography entirely alone without any human interaction at all.

5. Aggressive: To compete for viewership and money, porn producers have turned to increasingly aggressive content. In her 2016 article for *TIME*, Peggy Orenstein notes, “Producers of porn have one goal: to get men off hard and fast for profit. That means eroticizing the degradation of women. In a study of behaviors in popular porn, nearly 90% of 304 random scenes contained physical aggression toward women, who nearly always responded neutrally or with pleasure. More insidiously, women would sometimes beg their partners to stop, then acquiesce and begin to enjoy the activity, regardless of how painful or debasing.”⁴

6. Active: Historically, most people have been *passive* consumers of pornography. There were limited numbers of people who controlled both production and distribution of pornography. However, now with the advent of social media, blogging, text messaging, and “oversharing” on the Internet, many people (including some youth) have become *active* producers *and* distributors of porn.



SEAN MCDOWELL

How Porn Affects Kids

Viewing pornography has a deep and lasting impact on children. Seeing porn affects kids relationally, emotionally, intellectually, neurologically, and spiritually. Let's consider each of these individually.

Relationally: Pope John Paul II once said, "The problem with pornography is not that it shows too much of the person, but that it shows far too little." In other words, pornography reduces sex merely to the physical and ignores the larger relational dimension in which God designed sex to be experienced. As a result, people are reduced to images—objects—that others *use* for their pleasure. Whether they realize it or not, porn teaches kids to view others as objects who exist for their pleasure rather than people who are to be loved in relationship.

Emotionally: Pornography tends to have one of two effects on the emotional state of children who view it. Either they live with the mental anguish—the guilt—from doing something they know is wrong... or they become immune to it and tend to feel less guilty over time. Regardless, pornography deeply harms the emotional state of children.

Intellectually: Porn shapes how kids view sex and relationships. In fact, it is the first place most children today learn about sex. Researchers have concluded that children (ages 13-18) who are exposed to pornography have more permissive sexual attitudes, accept the notion of casual sex, and have insecurities about their sexual abilities.⁵ Because of pornography, for instance, there has been an increase in demand for various forms of sex. The authors of *Premarital Sex in America* say, "Demand for it [anal sex] is largely psychological and the result of a porn-inspired script about the anticipated pleasures of anal sex."⁶

Neurologically: Viewing porn physically shapes the structure of the brain, and this is especially true for children whose brains are still developing. Like a passageway in the forest (carved from people walking on it), porn viewing develops neurological "pathways" of relating and attaching to others that get "wired" into the brain and repeated into adulthood. Kids who look at porn excessively become wired to respond sexually to an image and damage their ability to respond appropriately to a real person.

Spiritually: Pornography pushes a script of sexuality in direct contradiction to the biblical worldview. Rather than seeing sex as a gift from God to be expressed in a lifelong married relationship of a man and woman, porn discreetly promotes the idea that sex is about individual pleasure regardless of the cost to others. As a result, kids who view porn find their commitment to biblical authority undermined, especially today, since our culture praises individual feelings as the basis for moral truth.⁷

What Can Parents Do?

It is tempting to despair in light of how pornified our culture has become, but this is not an option for Christian parents. We live in difficult times, but we have truth, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the reality that we do, in fact, have influence on our kids. So, what specifically can we do?

First, *build relationships with your kids*. If we want our kids to talk to us, listen to us, and adopt our values, the most important step is to build intimate and emotional relationships with them. Studies consistently

We live in difficult times, but we have truth, the power of the Holy Spirit, and the reality that we do, in fact, have influence on our kids.



show that faith (and values) is passed on to kids when there are healthy parent-child relationships. And the relationship with the father is, perhaps, most critical.⁸

Second, *talk with your kids early about sex and pornography*. What parents say to their kids has probably never been more important than it is today. Kids have all sorts of sexual messages coming through the Internet; and if parents do not step in and provide loving guidance and perspective, kids will almost certainly adopt the ideas of our world (2 Corinthians 10:5). This is not necessarily accomplished best through the “talk” about sex, but seizing on the many little opportunities that naturally arise through the course of life. For practical tips, I would suggest the book my parents wrote, *Straight Talk with Your Kids About Sex* (Harvest House, 2012).

Third, *teach kids a holistic view of sex*. Recently, I asked a group of Christian high school students about the lessons they had learned in church about sex. One girl said, “Don’t have sex, it’s bad. If you do, you’ll get AIDS and die.” What a tragic response! Sadly, this girl failed to realize that sex is a beautiful gift from God that is meant for procreation (Genesis 1:28), unity (Genesis 2:24), pleasure (Proverbs 5:19), and to bring glory to Him (1 Corinthians 10:31). God

has given us guidelines not to steal our fun, but to protect and provide for us. Teach kids the purpose of sex and positive reasons for abiding by God’s design.

Fourth, *role-play with your kids*. My wife and I want our kids to be prepared for how to respond to the kinds of temptations that will come their way *before* they find themselves in those situations. Thus, we proactively role-play with them on how to respond to various situations that may arise. For instance, we have walked our kids through, and practiced, not indiscriminately looking at another person’s digital device without first knowing what is on it. And we’ve practiced having them instantly turn away when they do come across a pornographic image.⁹

Fifth, *have appropriate technological boundaries*. We have three family rules about technology. First, kids are only on computers and other digital devices in our front room. There is no use of technology in bedrooms—period. Second, we have installed Covenant Eyes® filtering on all our devices. Thus, we are able to filter out inappropriate content (for the most part) and also get weekly reports about what each person is viewing. Third, our kids are not guaranteed a digital device at a certain age. Rather, they have to earn trust by showing responsibility in other areas. And when you do give teens a device, you

might even consider giving them a contract.¹⁰

In summary, pornography, sexual addiction, and an unrelenting media influence, as well as their combined impact on today's youth and culture, are realities that parents must acknowledge and contend with in a strong, proactive, and courageous manner. There is much that should concern families and the Church. The good news is that we do not have to be passive bystanders to the onslaught, but can make a difference for future generations. ✦

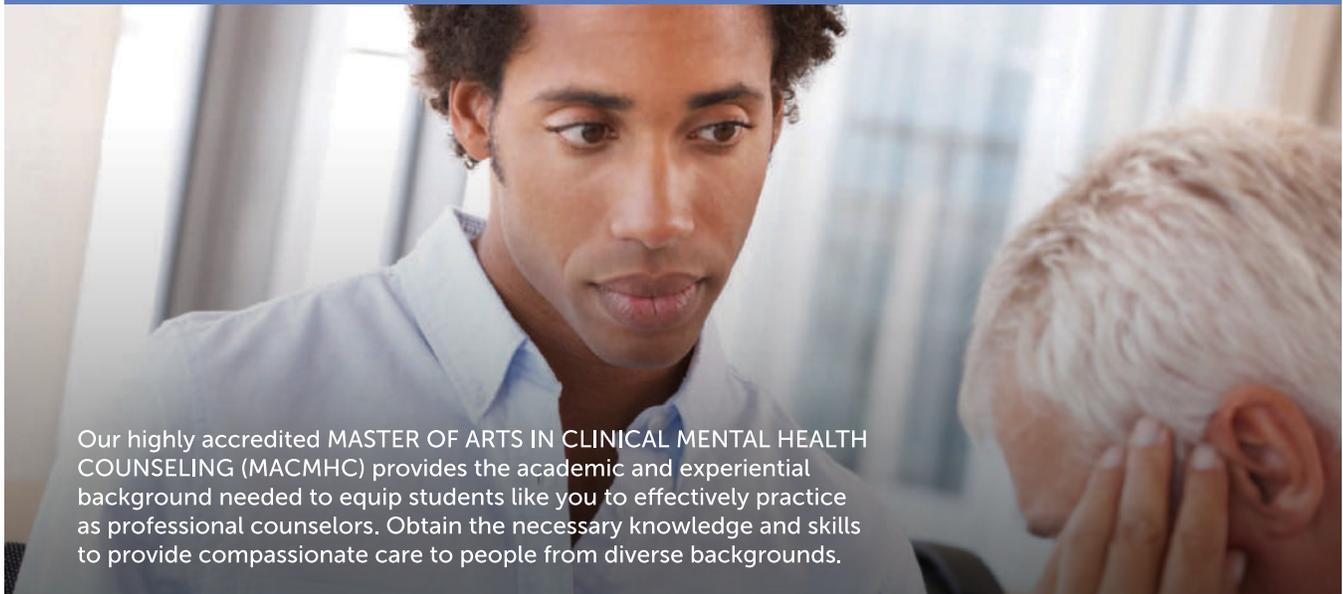


SEAN MCDOWELL, PH.D., is a gifted communicator with a passion for equipping the Church and, in particular, young people to make the case for the Christian faith. He connects with audiences in a tangible way through humor and stories while imparting hard evidence and logical support for viewing all areas of life through a biblical worldview. Sean is an Assistant Professor in the Christian Apologetics program at Biola University, the author, coauthor, or editor of more than 17 books. He has also written for YouthWorker Journal, Decision Magazine, and the Christian Research Journal. Follow the dialogue with Sean as he blogs regularly at seanmcdowell.org.

Endnotes

- 1 Forthcoming: Foubert, J.D. (2017). *How pornography harms: What teens, young adults, parents & pastors need to know*.
- 2 *The porn phenomenon: The impact of pornography in the digital age* (2016). A Barna Report Produced in Partnership with Josh McDowell Ministry, 85.
- 3 Ibid, 22-25.
- 4 Orenstein, P. (2016). "How porn is changing a generation of girls," *TIME*, April 11, p. 47.
- 5 Owens, E., Behun, R.J., Manning, J.C., & Reid, R.C. (2012). "The impact of Internet pornography on adolescents: A review of the research," *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* 19:99-122.
- 6 Regnerus, M., & Uecker, J. (2011). *Premarital sex In America: How young Americans meet, mate, and think about marrying* (New York: Oxford University Press), 94.
- 7 See McDowell, J., & McDowell, S. (2016). *The beauty of intolerance* (Uhrichville, OH: Shiloh Run Press), 18-20.
- 8 Bengston, V.L. (2013). *Families and faith: How religion is passed down across generations* (New York: Oxford University Press), 76.
- 9 If you want a helpful book on porn-proofing kids, I would recommend *Good Pictures, Bad Pictures* by Jenson, K.A., & Poyner, G.
- 10 For an example, see: <http://abcnews.go.com/US/massachusetts-mom-son-sign-18-point-agreement-iphone/story?id=18094401>.

A COUNSELING PROGRAM with A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW



Our highly accredited MASTER OF ARTS IN CLINICAL MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING (MACMHC) provides the academic and experiential background needed to equip students like you to effectively practice as professional counselors. Obtain the necessary knowledge and skills to provide compassionate care to people from diverse backgrounds.

Visit
SEMINARY.ASHLAND.EDU

Call
1-866-287-6446



ASHLAND
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

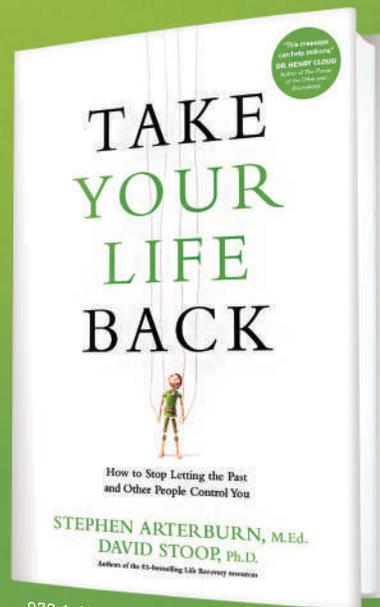
More than knowledge

ASHLAND CLEVELAND COLUMBUS DETROIT

It's time to stop letting your past and other people control you.



STEPHEN ARTERBURN M. ED. and DR. DAVID STOOP PH. D. know what you're struggling with. In their new book *Take Your Life Back*, the acclaimed psychology team from *New Life Ministries Radio* and the million-selling *Life Recovery*® series have created a resource that will help you respond to life instead of reacting, understand why you're failing at change, and give you the tools and resources to take new, positive steps that will heal the hurts, setbacks and broken relationships that affect you every day.



STEPHEN ARTERBURN

AUTHORS OF THE
#1 BESTSELLING
LIFE RECOVERY
RESOURCES

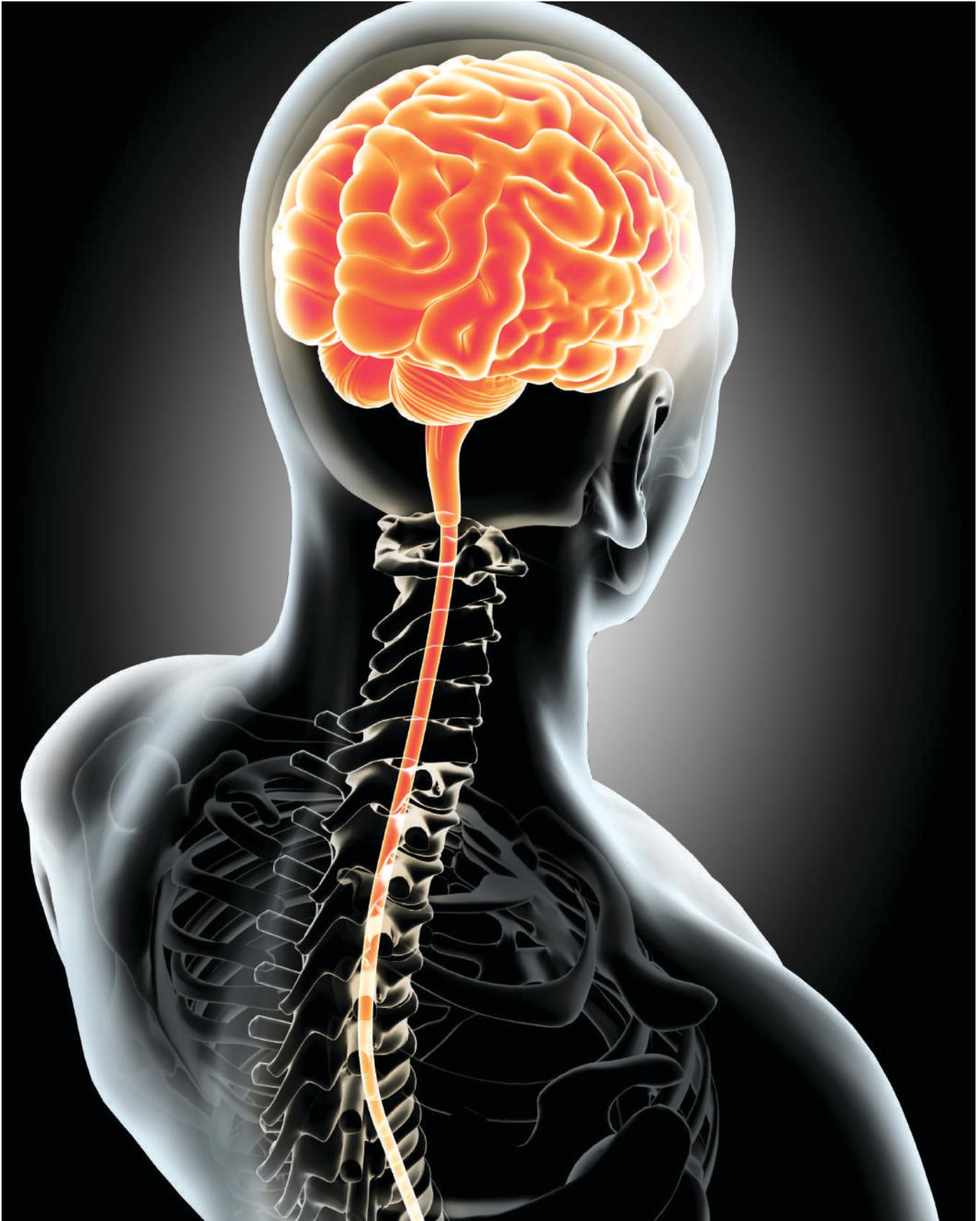


DR. DAVID STOOP

Look for the book, workbook, and devotional everywhere books are sold. A FREE VIDEO SERIES is also available on www.takeyourlifeback.tv



“THIS MESSAGE CAN HELP MILLIONS.” —DR. HENRY CLOUD



PORNOGRAPHY AND THE BRAIN

What Does the Neuroscience Tell Us?

Ross is a healthy 26-year-old male who recently married and is struggling in his sex life. Although he and his wife attend church, Ross is one of the 64-68% of young adult men who uses pornography at least once a week (based on the research of Covenant Eyes). During college, Ross used pornography as one way to address his sexual needs. Pornographic material was readily available and utilized by most of the men in his fraternity. His use of pornography has continued into married life.

Ross was referred by his physician because he was having sexual difficulty in his current relationship. He was diagnosed with Delayed Ejaculation, a *DSM-5* male sexual dysfunction disorder. His physician believed that Ross's high rate of masturbation while viewing pornography was a psychological factor contributing to the diagnosis. When questioned, Ross admitted to high speed and frequent masturbation with a fantasized partner while viewing pornography. According to Ross, one of the consequences of this regular behavior is that he has not been able to duplicate the experience in real life and is frustrated. In fact, Ross tells his physician that while he craves pornography, he does not particularly like it. Yet the cravings are intense and he can feel them just by thinking about his computer. Furthermore, thinking about sex with his wife, he feels less attracted and realizes he has developed an appetite for new sexual tastes.

Ross and others who regularly use pornography may be told that behaviors regularly reinforced in the reward, memory, and motivation circuitry of the brain can become addictive. With pornography use, specific pathways in the brain are triggered that prompt the neurological response of pleasure and reward. These pathways are the same as those seen in drug addiction. Yet, there remains controversy as to whether or not pornography use is truly an addictive behavior. The data has yet to establish sexual addiction as a *DSM-5* diagnosis.

LINDA MINTLE



The human libido is not a hardwired biological urge, but one that can be changed by our behaviors and experiences. Sexual tastes can be acquired. Our brains were created to respond to sexual stimulation in a specific way. During a sexual encounter, the neurotransmitter, dopamine, is released, leading to a sharpened sense of focus and sexual craving. Dopamine is responsible for giving us a thrill when we accomplish something as it connects neurons in the brain.

Dopamine also plays a central role in addiction, where it is triggered without the goal accomplishment, a change that is of concern. Pornography alters this reward system and brings a compulsion to seek out the activity in order to trigger the dopamine discharge. The release of dopamine helps reinforce the memory of the experience so the brain remembers where to return for the next encounter.

Behaviors like pornography use reinforce the reward, motivation, and memory circuits of the brain that are part of any addiction.¹ The thrill of the dopamine surge while viewing pornography consolidates neural connections. Because of the similarity to other addictions, the American Society of Addiction Medicine expanded their definition of addictions to include both behaviors and substances. Pornography is included on that list because of the dysfunction to brain circuitry that leads to biological, psychological, social, and spiritual manifestations.

Dr. Valerie Voon, a neuropsychiatrist at the University of Cambridge, is one of many researchers exploring the question of pornography classification. Using brain scans, Voon studied whether subjects who viewed pornography showed the same brain activity as substance users. In the 2013 British documentary, “Porn on the Brain,” she concluded that the brain activity of habitual pornography users looks the same as those of alcoholics, but was quick to add that more studies were needed before we could classify pornography use as addictive.

Not everyone agrees that those who regularly use pornography are truly addicted in the classical sense of the definition. Research neuroscientists at UCLA published a study in *Biological Psychology* concluding the opposite—that the activity of the brain on porn looks different than other addictions and should be treated differently. What they observed, using brain wave monitoring (EEG), was decreased brain activity when viewing porn—the opposite of what drug addiction does to the brain, at least in terms of this electrical impulse measure.² However, their findings are problematic in that the study lacked a clear hypothesis in terms of which addiction model was being tested.

In a landmark paper written by Dr. Eric Nestler (2005), Chairman of the Department of Neuroscience and Director of the Friedman Brain Institute at the Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York, he describes any addiction as a dysfunction of the mesolimbic reward center of the

brain. He notes how addictions cause a down regulating of dopamine receptors in the nucleus accumbens structure of the brain (where reward and pleasure are processed) as being similar in sexual addictions and drug addiction, giving credence to the neural basis for all addictions.³ Rather than providing relief for sexual tension, pornography can deliver addiction, tolerance, and eventual decrease in pleasure.

In all addictions, the core structures of the brain include the nucleus accumbens (NAc), ventral tegmental area (VTA), and parts of the cerebral cortex. The VTA, located in the midbrain, extends axons to the NAc. It is in the VTA that dopaminergic neurons are housed. These neurons communicate as to whether or not a stimulus is rewarding or aversive. The release of dopamine in the VTA-NAc circuit facilitates reward seeking. When this system is activated, it tells the person to repeat what just happened in order to get that reward. Even cues about a substance can mobilize brain centers to begin pleasure experiences through this pathway. These cues result from a process of sensitization that takes place.

The mesolimbic dopamine pathway also connects with the larger reward pathway that includes the amygdala (positive and negative emotions), hippocampus (memory), and frontal cortex (judgment). The anterior cingulate cortex (ACC), along with the orbital frontal cortex, navigates reward and consequence expectations. Characteristic of both substance and pornography use is the hypoactivity (lowering) of the ACC that is responsible for moral and ethical decision making and willpower.

Also, due to the release of the hormones, oxytocin and vasopressin, during the porn experience, the person bonds to the pornographic experience. The brain remembers where this sexual reward was experienced. The surging of dopamine from viewing porn eventually subsides, leaving the person wanting more. More novel and intense pornography is then needed to achieve the same excitement as before.

Other, more recent, studies have supported this neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to reorganize itself) and pornography as sexual addiction.⁴ In fact, the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), Dr. Nora Volkow, supports the inclusion of sexual addictions with its contributor of pornography to the larger field of addictions.



Volkow and her colleagues describe a three-stage model of neurobiochemical addiction. The three stages include: 1) binge/intoxication, 2) withdrawal/negative affect, and 3) preoccupation/anticipation.⁵ This process includes a flood of dopamine in the NAc. Thus, the behavior that leads to this flooding is reinforced, learning takes place, and neuroplasticity occurs. Tolerance builds through an increase in dynorphin levels that decrease the dopaminergic function of the reward system. In other words, more stimulation is needed to get the rush.

Due to stress, the amygdala is signaled and a decreased sensitivity to rewards takes place. To avoid negative affect and withdrawal, the person engages in more behavior (negative reinforcement). Addictive behavior is reinforced. Impulsivity becomes compulsivity. In fact, a 2013 study at the University of Leicester, UK, lends support to the idea that pornography use may be more compulsive than addictive. In that study, researchers found that certain traits making people more vulnerable to compulsivity were correlated with pornography use.⁶

In his book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Dr. Norman Doidge, psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, also discusses how viewing pornography results in the continued release of dopamine into the reward system stimulating neuroplastic changes that then reinforce the experience. As noted, these changes result in brain maps for sexual excitement. The more these pathways are used, the more they dominate mental space. These newly established brain maps create tolerance for “normal” sexuality,

explaining why people progress to more explicit and graphic pornography for stimulation.

In order to help prefrontal functioning, it is important to starve the old neural pathway and create new ones. This is why abstinence from viewing pornography is so important. The “rest” from viewing helps to strengthen prefrontal control. The brain has to rewire and needs time to do so.

The use of pornography changes the brain not only chemically, but anatomically. The result can be cerebral dysfunction known as hypofrontal syndromes. Put simply, these syndromes damage the braking systems of the brain.⁷ This results in little willpower to regulate desire, as the prefrontal cortex erodes and executive functioning is weakened (disinhibition). The person becomes compulsive. As a result, impulse control is too weak to battle the cravings.

Neurologists know these syndromes from their work with stroke, tumors, and trauma. Over time, a series of MRI scans show that these syndromes result in a loss of frontal control systems noted by atrophy in the frontal lobes. What is interesting is that these hypofrontal states indicate the same symptoms as addiction—impulsivity, compulsivity, emotional lability, and impaired judgment.

In their work with pedophiles, researchers Schiffer, Peschel, Pul, Forsting and Leygraf (2007) conclude that a sexual compulsion correlates with anatomical changes in the brain.⁸ Specifically, pedophiles showed decreased gray matter volume in the ventral striatum. Basically, hypofrontality results in the loss of impulse control and mastery of passions is lost because willpower is a function of the prefrontal lobes of the brain. However, 2 Corinthians 12:9 reminds us, “... My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

In the last decade, molecular explanations for addiction have emerged that are helping to contribute to our understanding of brain function. These explanations focus on the roles of CREB (Cyclic AMP-responsive element-binding protein), DeltaFosB, and glutamate. Basically, when dopamine floods the reward system, an increase in the production of cyclic AMP (cAMP) is produced, and releases CREB (a protein that regulates gene expression). This results in the release of dynorphin that dampens the reward system and leads to tolerance. DeltaFosB is involved in the sensitivity to addiction⁹ and glutamate is associated with the learning component.¹⁰

This process helps explain what Paul proclaims in Romans 7:15, “For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.” This brain process of the compulsion to seek and use, the loss of control, and the emergence of a negative emotional state when access is prevented is beginning to be explained by neuroscience.

The good news is that God built the capacity for change

into our brains. Change is possible when one starves these negative and destructive pathways and rewiring occurs. Using the power of the Holy Spirit in us, we can change our brains through the use of distraction when we feel the urge to use pornography. We can also avoid external triggers that have been carved into the neural circuits of the brain, substitute other behavior to respond to the internal triggers of loneliness, anxiety, and negative influences, and take captive the fantasy that begins to develop in the mind. Starving the brain and meditating on things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and admirable change the brain whether we classify pornography as addiction or not. ✠



LINDA MINTLE, PH.D., LCSW, LMFT, is the Chair of Behavioral Health at Liberty University College of Osteopathic Medicine in Lynchburg, Virginia. Dr. Mintle is the author of 19 books, a national news contributor, and hosts her own Web site (dr.lindamintle.com) and radio show on Faith Radio.

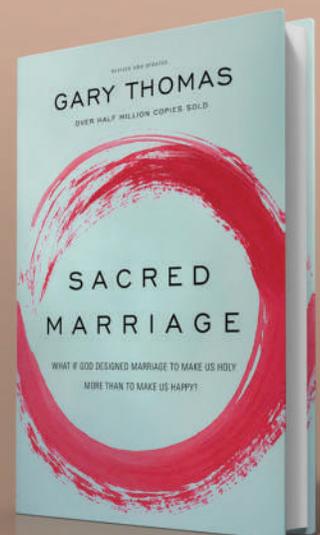
Endnotes

- 1 Love, T., Laier, C., Brand, M., Hatch, L., & Hajela, R. (2015). Neuroscience of Internet pornography addiction: A review and update. *Behavioral Sciences*, 5, 388-433.
- 2 Prause, N., Steele, V., Staley, C., Sabatinelli, D., & Hajcak, G. (2015). Modulation of late positive potentials by sexual images in problem users and controls inconsistent with porn addiction. *Biological Psychology*, Vol. 109, pp. 192-199.
- 3 Nestler, E.J. (2005). Is there a common molecular pathway for addiction? *Nature Neuroscience* 9:1445-9. [PubMed].
- 4 Pitchers, K.K., Frohmader, K.S., Vialou, V., Mouzou, E., Nestler, E.J., Lehman, M.N., et al. (2010). DeltaFosB in the nucleus accumbens is critical for reinforcing effects of sexual reward. *Genes, Brain, and Behavior* 9:831-40. [PMC free article] [PubMed].
- 5 Volkow, N.D., Wang, G.J., Fowler, J.S., Tomasi, D., & Telang, F. (2011). Addiction: Beyond dopamine reward circuitry. *Proc. National Academy of Sciences* 108, 15037-15042.
- 6 Egan, V., & Parmar, R. (2013). Dirty habits? Online pornography use, personality, obsessionality, and compulsivity. *Journal of Sex and Marital Therapy*. Vol. 39, Issue 5.
- 7 Hilton, D.L., & Watts, C. (2011). Pornography addiction: A neuroscience perspective. *Surgical Neurology International*, 2, 19. <http://doi.org/10.4103/2152-7806.76977>.
- 8 Schiffer, B., Peschel, T., Paul, T., Gizewski, E., Forsting, M., Leygraf, N., et al. (2007). Structural brain abnormalities in the frontostriatal system and cerebellum in pedophilia. *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 41:754-62. [PubMed].
- 9 Nestler, E.J. (2012). Transcriptional mechanisms of drug addiction. *Clinical Psychopharmacology and Neuroscience* 10, 136-143.
- 10 Kalivas, P.W., & O'Brien, C. (2007). Drug addiction as a pathology of staged neuroplasticity. *Neuropsychopharmacology*, 33, 166-180.



WHAT IF GOD DESIGNED MARRIAGE
*to make us holy more than
to make us happy?*

That's the question that's posed, pondered, and answered in *Sacred Marriage*—a contemporary classic that's helped hundreds of thousands of couples look at marriage in a whole new light. With clarity and purpose, Gary Thomas' words will draw you into a new understanding and appreciation for marriage—all so that happiness can give way to holiness. Available wherever books are sold. Visit garythomas.com to learn more.





Recovery from Pornography Addiction:

An Opportunity for Both Husband and Wife to Grow



It is difficult for any of us to accept that traumatic experiences can lead to anything positive or healthy. Trauma, it seems, leads only to pain and suffering. When the secret life of a pornography addict is exposed to a marriage partner, we clearly see the crisis and despair it creates in the relationship. Our first counseling session with such a couple is often full of shame, anger, sadness, and hopelessness. It is difficult and full of pain. As we invite couples on the journey of healing, however, we share with them that we have great hope that there will be redemption and transformation along the way—that this pain will not be wasted.

One of the truths we hold is that the pain of pornography addiction and betrayal to a spouse can lead to great growth—post-traumatic growth. Scripture reminds us of this, too. “Consider it pure joy... whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything” (James 1:2-4). Trauma AND transformation can coexist, we are told. Something can be very traumatic AND lead to great growth. This we know to be true in our own personal story, as well as the stories of many clients we have counseled over the years. We hold this expectation for all those we see with these struggles, although we also know there is much work to be done to arrive at this place of hope.

The Problem

With the introduction of the Internet, pornography addiction has grown to epidemic levels around the world. It is destroying the very fabric of marriages. Christian counselors must be equipped to guide couples through a recovery journey that we believe has amazing opportunities for emotional and spiritual growth. We, ourselves, have traveled this path now for 30 years, starting when Mark went to treatment for his sexual addiction in 1987. Today, we believe our marriage has not just survived, but it has also thrived. We have experienced growing closer to God and each other and are stronger individuals because of our commitment to a journey of healing.

MARK R. LAASER AND DEBBIE LAASER

Addicts confuse sex and love. They hold a core belief that sex is equal to love. Therefore, they believe that if their spouses love them, they will always be willing to engage in sexuality.

Disclaimer: while pornography addiction is present for both men and women, this article focuses on the experiences of men who struggle with pornography and their wives who have been betrayed, simply because this is the relational dynamic we counsel at our center. As a male recovering from sexual addiction, Mark chose to work only with a male population of sexual addicts... and Debbie's expertise was driven by her experience as a betrayed spouse. We share here from our own strengths and life experiences.

We must first understand how pornography affects marriage and, inherently, marital sexuality. Jesus teaches us in Matthew 5:28 that looking lustfully at another woman is an act of adultery. From this we must accept that "just looking" at pornographic images is adultery. When a pornography addict engages in sexuality with his spouse, he is bringing thousands of other images into the bedroom. Over time, he will find that he cannot function or "perform" without allowing his mind to be aroused by those images. He is, therefore, not able to be present. Since masturbation has been the regular result of looking at porn, he may also not be able to achieve or sustain an erection. This has come to be called "Pornography Induced Erectile Dysfunction." The spouse will sense the addict's emotional absence and often be frustrated with the sexual experience. All too often, she will personalize this as being about her, her attractiveness, or her sexual abilities.

When we talk with couples who first come to us with pornography addiction or infidelity issues, struggles with sexuality and feeling disconnected have often been present for a very long time. Neither one of them has had the ability to talk about the feelings and beliefs that accompany that tension. We believe both spouses share similar vision for their relationship: emotional and spiritual intimacy and healthy

sexuality. And along the way, sex—how often, who initiates, how passionate it has been, and what kind of closeness is experienced before or after—has led to feelings of sadness, frustration, anger, rejection and beliefs that, "I am not loved." Of course, these emotions and perceptions transpire with little communication.

An Addict's Distorted Messages and Core Beliefs

Addicts confuse sex and love. They hold a core belief that sex is equal to love. Therefore, they believe that if their spouses love them, they will always be willing to engage in sexuality. Sex, they believe, is the way they are affirmed, accepted, loved, and nurtured. Addicts will interpret any touch and sexualize it, as they have lost the ability to appreciate healthy, non-sexual touch as being life sustaining. The arguments that we hear in our counseling office about sexuality are often based on this fundamental confusion and fear. In short, the pornography addiction will be brought into the bedroom in several different ways and does create significant problems.

Sex addicts also have negative core beliefs about themselves. Many of them are the survivors of early life trauma. This can take two forms. They can be invaded sexually, physically, and emotionally. We believe that while invasion is true for some addicts, the second form of trauma is pervasive. Over our years of experience with addicts, we have not known one who has not been abandoned or neglected of his/her basic needs and desires. They believe: "I am bad and worthless," that "No one will love me as I am," and "No one will take care of my needs except me." Many have said that addicts have an "intimacy disorder." This can show up as being avoidant. It can also show up in anxiously pursuing relationships. In addition to the neurochemical high of sexuality, addicts are on a "quest" to find love and nurture.¹

A Spouse's Distorted Messages and Core Beliefs

We have often heard it said that sexual addiction is uniquely painful to a spouse because it seems so personal. Unlike other addictions to alcohol, drugs, gambling or food, a husband's use of pornography shatters the core beliefs of most wives on a personal level. Her thinking about herself, ability to trust, and vulnerability to live with someone who has broken marriage vows and withheld the truth leaves her with great pain. She can quickly start believing that there is something wrong with her, that she will never be enough, that she will never be able to trust her spouse again, and that her life is ruined. This shattering of her core beliefs is what creates the trauma of pornography addiction.



There are additional distorted core beliefs that can develop for any woman prior to her marital relationship. As mentioned for the addict, childhood experiences of abuse or neglect will certainly lead to beliefs that “I am not worthy,” “I am not desirable,” “I need to take care of myself because others are not safe,” etc. It is true that some of the wives who come to us have been sexually abused as younger girls and may have some level of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that they bring into the marriage. Others have simply grown up and experienced extremely protected, sexually naïve lives. For these women, any sexual touch may create resistance, even unconsciously. Because of this, some wives have a core belief that sex is “dirty” or simply “bad.” One wife we worked with told the story of her mother’s warning that, “Sex is bad, save it for marriage.”

Many women married to men who are addicted to pornography may have a core belief that, “My marital relationship is my most important need.” This core belief may lead her to believe that it is her duty to sexually submit to her husband at all times to keep him pure and happy, even if she does not feel emotionally or spiritually connected with him. When she agrees to this commitment, and yet experiences him to be distant or distracted sexually because of his addiction, she usually feels objectified or used in the relationship. This can lead her to feel rejected, sad or angry,

and she will eventually find her own ways to medicate or cope with these emotions.

The truth is that addicts have developed addictive neurochemical tolerance through their own masturbation and pornography experiences, and no amount of sex would be satisfying. Tolerance means the addict’s brain adapts to the neurochemical sexual stimulation of organic molecules, like adrenaline and dopamine (which are produced through sexual arousal), and it will need more and more sexual arousal to achieve the same effect.

Many wives also have self-image issues, believing “I am not enough”—I’m not beautiful enough or sexually proficient enough. These self-image issues may long precede the marriage, but the husband’s activities confirm them in her mind.

Finding Purpose in the Pain

In this article, we want to look at how both husbands and wives can grow and heal as individuals and couples. We know that both spouses may suffer from PTSD—at the very least, they both experience great pain and have been unable to be truthful and talk about feelings, thoughts, and needs in their relationship. Post-traumatic growth is a model of counseling that we believe will help. Tedeschi and Calhoun, two psychologists from the University of North Carolina, describe post-traumatic growth as an increased appreciation of life,



development of more meaningful relationships, increased sense of inner-strength, new priorities, and spiritual growth.² With effective Christian counseling, we know this growth is possible and will allow couples to not only survive the pain of addiction and betrayal, but also thrive.

His Growth from Pornography Addiction

When people are addicted to something—whether it is a substance or a behavior—they live in bondage to that addiction. God teaches us to idolize nothing other than Him. That is the first commandment, “You shall have no other gods before me.” If a man struggling with pornography addiction is to grow and be well, he must stop his addiction. Finding sexual purity or sobriety is the key to marital healing. We define sobriety by the acronym LAMP. There will be no Lying, Adultery, Masturbation, or Pornography. Notice that we include lying as an essential part of the definition. We have found over the years that truth telling is a vital part of reestablishing trust in marriage, just as important to wives as sexual sobriety. Mark has written a number of books about healing from addiction (see resources). There are several key elements to what is called a “program” of recovery:

- The male addict must establish an accountability network of more than one person. He will need to attend support groups and participate in regular community with other men. Increasingly, churches and Christian organizations are creating material for church-based support groups and we find ourselves relying less and less on traditional 12-step groups.
- Ongoing therapy for all emotional issues can take several forms. Therapy can be very helpful and proceed from a variety of therapeutic modalities. We are very strong believers in group counseling and often see that growth happens ever faster when in community. Intensive workshops or short-term therapeutic intensives can also be very helpful in facilitating the healing journey.
- Treatment for any mental health issues that may be present is essential. The number one diagnosis that we see in our practice is ADHD. There is also the possibility of anxiety, depression, and mood disorder. With so much trauma in our population, we

see a fair amount of PTSD as well. Getting an accurate diagnosis is vital. As Dr. Daniel Amen, a double board-certified psychiatrist and founder of Amen Clinics, has stated to us personally, “Your brain must be able to cooperate with your recovery.”³

■ Spiritual direction is very critical in achieving post-traumatic growth. It can happen in a variety of ways and is not just reserved for meeting with a pastor or trained spiritual director. Christian counseling in one-on-one, group, or intensive therapy can also provide a spiritual component to the work being done.

Post-traumatic growth means the addict will:

- Recognize how his addiction was the way he coped with his pain. As he grows, he will find out how God can use that pain to mold and shape his character. He will find meaning in the journey.
- Be internally motivated to be sexually pure and not motivated by fear of external consequences.
- Grow closer to God. He will learn how to “take every thought captive and make all of his thoughts obedient to Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5). He will learn how to get his deepest desires met in his relationship with God.
- Learn how to participate and grow in community understanding that he must be around truth tellers to remind him of spiritual truth.
- Develop a vision for his life and understand God is the source of that vision. Gradually, the mental pictures of his vision will come to replace his fantasies.
- Learn that he can be alone and okay as long as he has a relationship with God and choose to be in relationship not out of his anxieties of being all alone, but his capacity to love. This will, of course, include his relationship with his spouse.

Mark knows as a recovering addict himself that today he is grateful for the spiritual opportunities the process of recovery has given him. Being intervened on and going to treatment in 1987 was the beginning of growing closer to God and being able to have the spiritual and emotional intimacy with Debbie that he has always wanted.

Her Growth from Betrayal

We often hear that betrayed women may have never entered counseling or community had it not been for the pain they were suffering. The beautiful result is it not only brought understanding and healing from pornography addiction, but also many other life skills and spiritual experiences with which they may have never been exposed. The following may be elements of her growth:

- A wife can work to reframe her shattered core beliefs—beliefs that lead to great pain. She can learn how to

explore her old core beliefs about herself and others and gradually acknowledge new ones that are based on fresh experiences and truth.

■ A wife can participate in her own community of other wives who have also experienced the trauma of betrayal. She will have others hear her pain and know that she is not alone. Deep relationships can develop in these shared experiences.

■ Through counseling and community, she can “find her voice” for things that matter to her. Historical coping often included avoiding conflict or giving up when she did not feel important enough to share feelings, thoughts or needs.

■ A wife can eventually depersonalize her husband’s pornography use by getting educated about addiction. She will know that the betrayal is about her husband’s attempts to find solutions for his pain and not about her (which does not excuse it, by the way, or infer that it should continue).

■ A process of counseling can help a wife become more authentic and congruent—in all her relationships.

■ A wife can learn how to safely talk about her emotions and needs and be a woman of integrity even when she is hurting.

■ Rather than trusting her husband implicitly, as she may have done initially, a wife can learn to trust her spouse by needing him to work on *being* a trustworthy person, by learning to trust herself and her intuitions (which she probably ignored historically), and by trusting God with her life and marriage.

■ A wife can learn how to live for today, letting go of her need to control others and plan for all possible outcomes. Surrendering to God’s timing and trusting His process is a new way for her to live.

■ A wife can develop a closer relationship with God and depend on Him to provide for all her needs. While she has studied God’s Word and knows life with Him is richer, now she can experience it personally and finally know she can be alone with Him and be okay.

Debbie experienced a complete change in the person she was through the process of healing from Mark’s addiction. She says today that she is a better spouse, mother, friend, daughter, employer, counselor, and beloved child of God because of her personal path. Also, she agrees that if it had not been so traumatic, she would have never chosen to spend the time or money on such a journey—life was good enough, she thought!

The Couple’s Growth

When two hurting spouses enter a healing journey and mature emotionally and spiritually, they have much more

to bring to their relationship with each other. We see these elements of post-traumatic growth when couples grow together:

- Both own their individual feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.
- Both will value and include each other in information, plans, and decisions.
- Both will know the addiction is not THE problem, but a symptom of the underlying emotional, spiritual, and relational issues.
- Both will find resources and safe ways to get needs met when their spouse is not willing or is unable.
- Both will desire to be “for” each other and develop empathy for one another’s pain.
- Both will become safe emotionally, spiritually, sexually, and physically.
- Both will surrender the idea of a perfect spouse.
- Both will learn how to develop a vision for their relationship in a variety of areas in their lives, including vocationally, financially, family and significant social relationships, and recreationally. We have lots to teach couples about having fun together.
- Both will seek to develop healthy sexuality in their relationship—sexuality will become the expression of emotional and spiritual connection.
- Both know the other spouse will only sometimes be able to meet their needs, so they will look to God as the ultimate source for meeting their desires.
- Both have established post-traumatic growth will depend on God and His will for their relationship.
- Both will find others to serve out of their own story, creating new passion for serving God together.

While we would never be grateful for pornography addiction itself and the despair it brings, we do know that facing something this shattering can lead to amazing changes—post-traumatic growth. Pain has a way of getting our attention. It can make us so uncomfortable that we are willing to invest in something different. If we find others who have walked through this before us and can hold hope for us that there is a better way, we can find purpose in our pain. Our other choice is to live a bitter, lonely life as a victim. Trauma and transformation are

available to us. We thank God for using all of our trials so we “... may be mature... not lacking anything” (James 1:4). “Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12). ✠



MARK R. LAASER, M.DIV., PH.D., is the President and Founder of Faithful & True and the host of the Men of Valor program, Faithful & True’s online radio show. Dr. Laaser is nationally recognized as the leading authority in the field of sexual addiction and healthy sexuality with more than 29 years of recovery experience. He has written 15 books on the subject of sexual addiction, including *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*, *Becoming a Man of Valor*, *Taking Every Thought Captive*, *7 Principles of Highly Accountable Men*, and his most recent, *The Fight of Your Life*, with Dr. Tim Clinton.



DEBBIE LAASER, M.A., LMFT, is the cofounder of Faithful & True. She has been involved in recovery with her husband, Mark, for more than 29 years and is committed to helping couples find healing and transformation from the pain of sexual addiction and relational betrayal. Debbie counsels women individually, leads therapy groups for women, and counsels couples with Mark at Faithful & True’s counseling center. She is the author of the highly-acclaimed book, *Shattered Vows* and, together with Mark, authored *The Seven Desires of Every Heart*.

Endnotes

- 1 Laaser, M. (2011). *Taking every thought captive* (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, KS).
- 2 Tedeschi, R.G., & Calhoun, L.G. (2004). “Conceptual foundations and empirical experience,” *Psychological Inquiry*, pg. 1.
- 3 Amen, D. (2015). *Change your brain, change your life* (Harmony Books, New York, NY).

Resources

- Janoff-Bulman, R. (1992). *Shattered assumption: Towards a new psychology of trauma* (The Free Press/Macmillan, New York, NY).
- Laaser, D. (2008). *Shattered vows* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI).
- Laaser, M. (2004). *Healing the wounds of sexual addiction* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI).
- Laaser, M. (2011). *Taking every thought captive* (Beacon Hill Press, Kansas City, KS).
- Laaser, M., & Clinton, T. (2015). *The fight of your life* (Destiny Image, Shippensburg, PA).
- Stephen, J., & Linley, P.A. (2008). *Trauma, recovery, and growth* (John Wiley & Sons, Hoboken, NJ).
- Tedeschi, R.G., & Calhoun, L.G. (1995). *Trauma & transformation: Growing in the aftermath of suffering* (SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA).

PRE-MARRIAGE MADE EASY

BY AUTHORS OF THE WORLD'S MOST TRUSTED BOOK ON
SAVING YOUR MARRIAGE BEFORE IT STARTS

SYMBIS ASSESSMENT

More than a million couples have used the award-winning *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* book (SYMBIS for short) and now—through the new SYMBIS Assessment—you can help couples prepare for lifelong love like never before. Grounded in research and infused with practical applications, SYMBIS guarantees edge-of-your-seat engagement with couples and countless new insights.



LEARN MORE NOW AND ENJOY \$20 OFF

SYMBISASSESSMENT.COM/AACC

♥ USE CODE: F32DCD6



DRS. LES & LESLIE PARROTT
Authors, *Saving Your Marriage
Before It Starts*

“THE SYMBIS
ASSESSMENT IS RIGHT
ON THE MONEY.”

- DAVE RAMSEY -

“DON'T MISS OUT
ON THE INCREDIBLE
SYMBIS ASSESSMENT.
IT'S FANTASTIC.”

- JUDAH SMITH -

“WHAT SYMBIS DOES
IS NOTHING SHORT
OF REVOLUTIONARY.”

- DR. GARY CHAPMAN -



When Puberty and Pornography Collide

A mere two decades ago, a 13-year-old boy had limited choices when it came to seeing pornography. He would probably come across glossy pages with women making sexually provocative poses in a magazine like *Playboy*. Now, an eight-year-old boy can find video clips of women having sex with other women, men or both at the same time, and much of that sex will be laced with violence. Today, pornography is not only more graphic, easily obtainable, and harder to avoid, but it is also far more traumatizing for children than ever before. Parents, counselors, and pediatricians must now be prepared to help children navigate this toxic sexual material because, sadly, most children will see something sexually disturbing.

... the dirtiest and darkest secret in America is this: teens are currently experiencing an epidemic of sexually transmitted infections.

Many children see their first pornographic images before they enter puberty. With little curiosity or understanding about sex, the images create confusion and shame—two feelings that young children simply do not know how to handle. Children who view pornography during puberty, however, struggle with multiple issues because of hormonal changes that make their physical reactions and emotional reactions more intense. And since many children now enter puberty at earlier ages than in years past, this means those of us who care for them must be ready to deal with these issues around pornography sooner than we would like.

Puberty and Pornography... a Volatile Pairing

The average age of the onset of puberty has dropped to 9.96 in Caucasian girls and 8.87 in African-American girls; boys enter puberty slightly later at age 10 and 9 respectively. This means that boys and girls in the third, and even second, grade will have classmates who have started puberty. Aside from the physical changes that come with puberty, there are emotional challenges for children who enter puberty so young. When you couple these changes with a first exposure to pornography, parents and healthcare professionals have their work cut out for them.

Puberty brings hormonal shifts in children that affect their moods, feelings, and perceptions of themselves. Girls have mood swings because of fluctuations in estrogen and progesterone levels, but boys also have mood swings. They, too, may experience teariness and increased sensitivity during puberty. These emotional changes make boys and girls more vulnerable to psychological trauma from viewing pornography. Most young children who see pornography on the Internet do so unwittingly—it simply appears on their screens. As they search the Internet for a resource for homework, a cartoon, or even a YouTube® clip on how to play something, too often the image suddenly appears and shocks them. The reaction may trigger many painful feelings of disgust, shame, and fear. Again, these feelings will be exaggerated because of fluctuating hormones circulating around their young brains.

The physical sensations that pubertal girls and boys feel when they see pornography can be equally confusing. Boys (and girls) will feel sexual stimulation. Of course, while they usually like the physical sensation, they may feel repulsed by

the images that caused the arousal. Then they connect the arousal with shame and disgust. This is very confusing and can set children up to have twisted feelings about sex in the future.

Pornography Puts Teens at Risk for Increased Sexual Activity

Marketing professionals have long realized that when children are exposed to repeated, stimulating images, they will adopt different behaviors (i.e., buy their products). If pubertal children with intense emotions and physical sensations view certain products (pornography here), it stands to reason these same kids will engage in sexual activity earlier than those who have not had the same exposure. This is a hotly debated dynamic with researchers, but the correlation between repeated exposure to pornography and early sexual activity in teens simply follows a well-established association used by marketers... and it is a reasonable conclusion.

As pornography leads children to early sexual activity and experimentation, we face very serious problems. Children who begin sexual activity in their teen years (especially their early teen years) are at a substantially higher risk for acquiring sexually transmitted infections. In fact, the dirtiest and darkest secret in America is this: teens are currently experiencing an epidemic of sexually transmitted infections. However, the general public is unaware because bringing this truth into the open causes financial, political, and social ramifications that most do not want to face. As a pediatrician, however, teaching medical truth is front and center to my work.

Here is what we know. Teens and young adults comprise about 30% of the American population, but live with over 50% of the more than 20 million sexually transmitted infections that *arise new every year*. There are over 30 sexually transmitted infections currently circulating and, according to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), condoms do a poor job at reducing the risk of a person getting human papillomavirus (HPV) or herpes. Speaking of herpes, according to the *New England Journal of Medicine*, one in five people over age 11 tests positive for HSV-2. I could go on and on and I reference this in detail in my book, *Your Kids at Risk*. Suffice it to say that when kids start having sex under the age of 16, the problems they contend with can be life threatening.

MEG MEEKER



That is why pediatricians now immunize children as young as 11 against HPV.

From my perspective, kids who see pornography during their pubertal years are not only at risk for engaging in early sexual behavior, they are also in jeopardy of acquiring life-altering infections. Needless to say, when children acquire these infections, many have to deal with the psychological fallout—depression, poor self-esteem and even lower self-confidence. I see this all the time in my practice among children who are sexually active. Preventing pregnancy from a medical standpoint is an easy task; however, what is far more difficult is avoiding the emotional pain associated with early sex and sexually transmitted infections.

Sex, Pornography, and the Growing Brain

We know from the excellent work of Drs. Joe McIlhaney and Freda Bush that when children engage in intercourse, hormones surge in the young brain—specifically serotonin, norepinephrine, and dopamine, which flow differently in girls and boys. Together, these key neurotransmitters are called the “bonding hormones.” This means that when children engage in sex and experience the surge of one or two of these hormones, they “bond” with their partners. This poses problems for children because, of course, most of them end up breaking up with their sexual partner. When they break up, they feel an emotional “tearing” if you will. When this happens, they feel pain, sadness, loss, and grief. The tough part for

them, however, is that they do not expect to feel this way. They learn from peers and other adults they admire that sex is natural, healthy, and having multiple partners is good. Children are encouraged to experiment with sex; therefore, when sadness or grief is experienced as a result of having sex too soon, they feel something is wrong with them. So, what do many of them do to erase these feelings? They have sex again so that “this time it will feel better... the way it is supposed to feel.” Thus, they are set up for entering an obsessive repetition—compulsion cycle of the sexual experience. This is especially true for boys who believe their macho peers, or other men whom they admire, have far better sexual experiences than they do, so they repeat sex in an attempt to have it feel the way they believe it does for these other boys.

Sex, Teens, and Depression

As pornography clearly leads to early and high-risk sexual behavior, it follows that it also leads to an increased risk for depression. Studies have shown that teens who are sexually active are at higher risk for depression. This makes sense. If depression in kids is fundamentally about losses that have not been grieved, we can see that sex can incur many losses in the adolescent psyche. If a boy has sex with a girl and then they break up, he may experience loss of trust if she tells her friends that he wasn't good at it... or a loss of self-control if he had promised himself that he was going to wait until he was older or married to have sex. He may lose self-esteem if he believes his experience was subpar for boys or could feel hurt because he lost his virginity (and yes, this still counts for boys and girls). As teens experience multiple losses and fail to acknowledge or grieve them, these losses dive deep into his psyche. When he has sex with additional partners (as we know teens who start sex early in life do), he then experiences more losses... and these simply pile on top of one another year after year. We can see how this young man may experience some serious issues with depression by the time he is in his 20s.

Teens, Pornography, and Addiction

Studies show that boys are more visually oriented than girls. If you hold a picture of a face and a moving mobile above an infant boy's face, his



eyes will immediately look toward the moving mobile. Do the same with an infant girl, and she will focus on the picture of a person's face. This propensity to be visually oriented continues as boys mature. When puberty arrives, teen boys are more visually stimulated by sexual images than girls. This puts them at a much higher risk for addiction to viewing pornography because not only are the images visually catching, they are also physically stimulating. The combination of visual stimulation with sexual arousal proves a double-whammy to pubertal boys. Then, add to this the curiosity and newness of the experiences and one can see how terribly vulnerable boys are to becoming addicted to pornography.

Most adult men have an understanding of how they to respond to unwanted to dangerous stimuli. A married man may see an attractive woman and become aroused, but immediately refocus his eyes and thoughts in another direction. He has learned to avoid rumination in areas that lead to his demise. These techniques require maturity and time, and young boys do not have the skill to handle temptations. This is why it is critical for parents, healthcare workers or counselors to help young boys with issues potentially leading to addiction.

We know that teen boys and girls spend about 10 hours per day with electronics. Many of these hours involve use with two or more devices at a time. Imagine the struggle now for teen boys to avoid viewing pornography when it is merely a click or two away. The temptations for boys can be simply overwhelming. I have personally worked with teen boys who

have become addicted to online gaming. Some of them play games for 12-15 hours at a time. When a parent tries to take the device away from them, they literally scream, hit, and become violent. They have become genuinely addicted in every sense of the word. When a boy, who is visually charged, becomes addicted to pornography, he faces more challenges than a boy addicted to video games. He not only feels the pull to engage and watch, but he also feels the added pull of sexual arousal, which causes his addiction to become far more serious and strong.

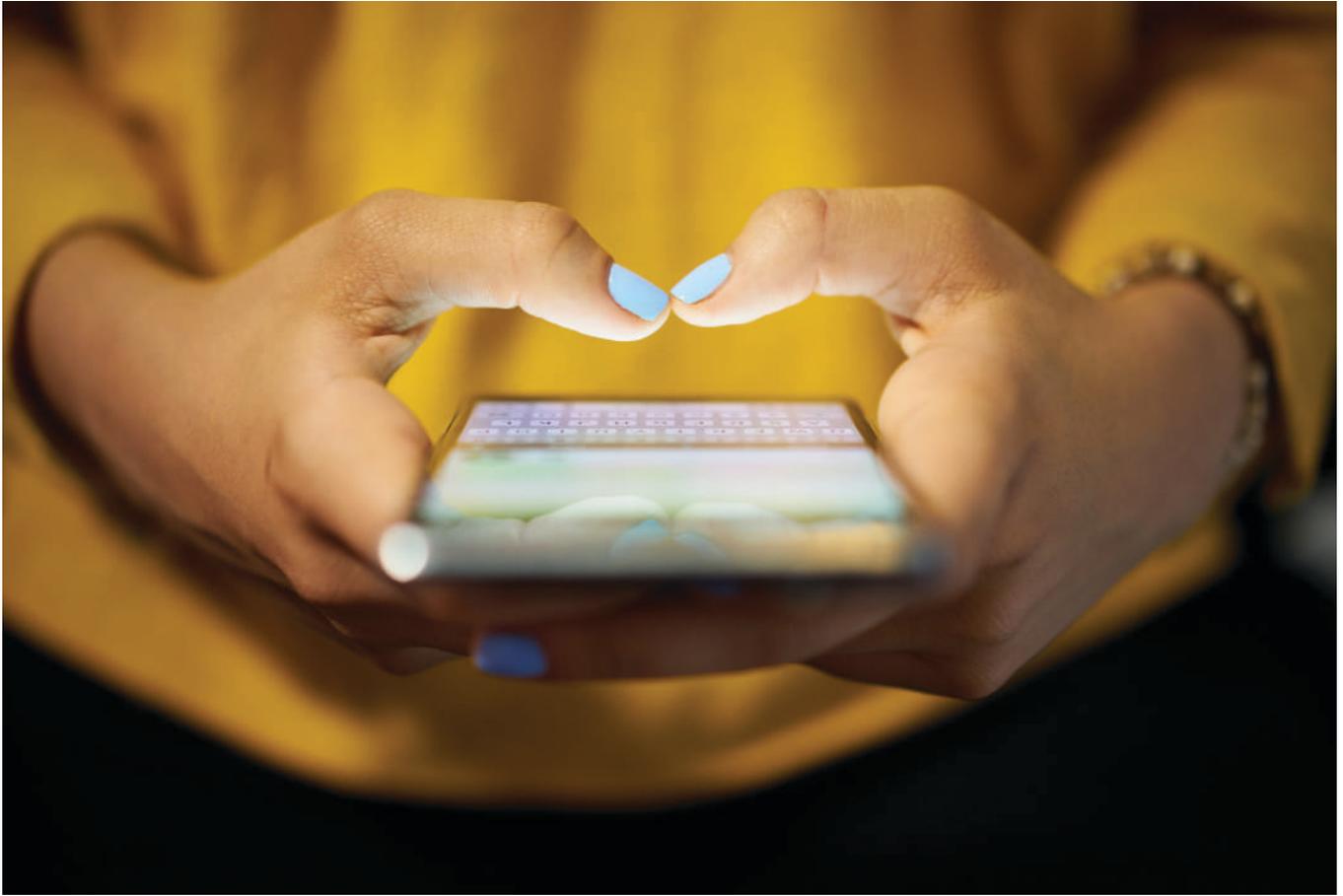
Can We Help?

Yes! I have worked with teens who have struggled with pregnancy, STDs, depression, and addiction of all types, and I can say this with certainty: helping parents can navigate a toxic sexual culture very well with teens who have engaged. When parents talk openly about what their kids may see and let them know they are there to help—not criticize—most children will listen. In addition, it is important for parents to tell their kids that pornography will come across their screens even without them searching for it. They should tell their kids that the feelings of shame, disgust, and embarrassment they will experience when seeing pornography are not only normal, but also good. These feelings are there to show kids that viewing pornography harms them. Children who are only made to feel guilty that they saw pornography may guard themselves from talking to parents, which can lead to poor communication. The most important factor is for parents to address the issue openly and calmly. They should communicate that their job as parents is to help their children navigate a world of electronics that is tough and potentially very harmful.

In my experience, it is rare when a teen does not want help. They want to know how to avoid pornography and combat its tempting force. Even teen boys are more than willing to deal with issues surrounding pornography because they know it makes them feel terrible once the initial thrill is gone. The truth that pornography harms is real and it resonates with the vast majority of teens. That is why I recommend to all parents in my practice to address issues of pornography early in life. ❖



MEG MEEKER, M.D., is a pediatrician, mother, and best-selling author of six books. She is one of the country's leading authorities on parenting, teens and children's health. Dr. Meeker writes with the know-how of a pediatrician and the big heart of a mother because she has spent the last 30 years practicing pediatric and adolescent medicine. Her work with countless families over the years served as the inspiration behind her best-selling books: *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters*; *Strong Mothers, Strong Sons*; *The Ten Habits of Happy Mothers*; and *Boys Should be Boys*.



MODERN-DAY SEXUAL CRAZE AND CHAOS: THE FACTS

It is the Church's not so well-kept secret. Pornography and sex addiction are destroying the lives of men, women, marriages, and families at an alarming rate. If you think the problem is severe now, take a look at the sobering reality according to nationally recognized expert, Dr. Patrick Carnes, "The tsunami of sex addiction has not yet hit America."¹

This is not our fathers' sex culture. When King Solomon proclaimed, "There is nothing new under the sun," he was not able to see into the future and warn us about the nuclear threat of the Internet. Historically, "old school" pornography was typically accessed through static magazines, low-quality videos, and premium cable and satellite channels. There was this seemingly self-imposed cultural barrier that limited how, when, and where pornography was accessed. As technology advanced, there was soon to be birthed a new superhighway that had more exits to the clandestine, underground, crack cocaine-like sex addiction world than anyone could have ever imagined. That is, other than the producers of pornography—they knew they had found their holy grail with the World Wide Web.

The Numbers

Juniper Research found that by 2017, a quarter of a billion people are anticipated to use their cell phones and tablets to access pornographic content. This statistic represents a more than 30% increase since 2013.²

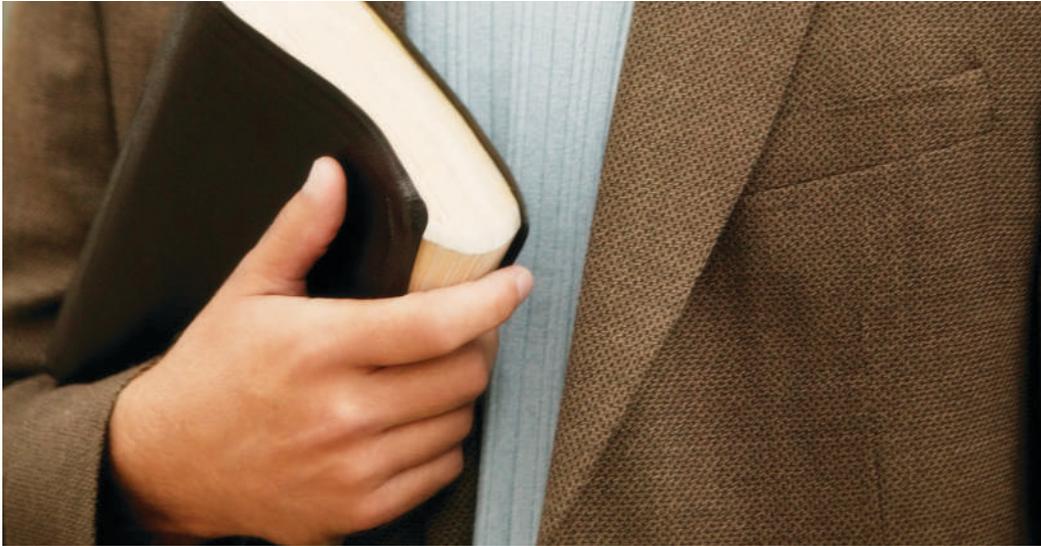
The Barna Group conducted a survey in the United States in 2014 regarding the consumers of pornography. This survey found that 64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month. Some 37% of Christian men and 7% of Christian women view pornography at least several times a week.

One of the sobering findings in the Barna survey was that teenagers and young adults are taking a non-judgmental attitude and position when they are engaged in conversations about pornography with others in their respective peer groups. The Barna report states, "When they talk about porn with friends, 89% of teens and 95% of young adults say they do so in a neutral, accepting, or encouraging way. That is, only one in 20 young adults and one in 10 teens say their friends think viewing pornography is a bad thing." Obviously, this significant statistic points to the serious shift in our youth culture where there is a loss of the personal and social barrier to what is openly acceptable and even celebrated.³ Welcome to the 21st century's new sexual revolution.

Another "sign of the times" avenue of pornographic connection is the use of video chat, which has grown exponentially. Whether in cyber chat rooms or private "person-to-person" individual video chat connections, this virtual sex experience has upped the ante... and raising (or lowering) the bar even more is the developing field of "teledildonics" or "cyberdildonics." These robotic sexual devices are allowing individuals to virtually simulate sexual intercourse and other sex acts through the Internet by means of mutual masturbation. One wonders what the next 10 years will reveal in the realm of technological opportunities for new levels of sex addiction and the lives devastated by its impact.

The "sexting" phenomenon has enabled young people, especially, to shoot from the hip and send graphic sexual pictures and messages to practically anyone, whether they know them or not. The Barna survey found that 62% of teenagers and young adults have received a sexually explicit image from someone, and 41% of those surveyed acknowledged

JIM CRESS



Out of those surveyed, 21% of youth pastors and 14% of pastors admitted they are currently personally battling with the use of pornography.

they had not just received a “sext,” but had sent their own sexual image through texting.⁴ Not only is “sexting” a problem of on demand sexual acting out, it is also, sadly, a new technological method of sexually abusing or harassing people. The legal issues surrounding “sexting” are serious and typically not considered by the underdeveloped brains of teenagers and young adults.

Social Media and Apps

While social media is certainly being used for good purposes, this platform has also provided pathways of connection for adultery, emotional affairs, and casual sexual hookups. I have worked with a number of clients who, through Facebook,[®] Twitter,[®] Instagram,[®] and Snapchat,[®] were able to reconnect emotionally and sexually with old classmates and former love relationships from their younger years. Apps such as Tinder[®] and Ashley Madison[®] allow people to find someone in close proximity to hook up with sexually, often without having to leave the building or area where they live.

Behind the Ashley Madison Curtain

Back in July and August of 2015, a security breach rocked the Internet and, more importantly, the personal and private lives of some 32 million people. A group known as “The Impact Team” hacked the Ashley Madison Web site and eventually exposed the names, personal data, and credit card information of the site’s users. Ashley Madison was known for providing a “secure” playground for people to intentionally arrange extramarital affairs. Suddenly, several Web sites popped up with the names and personal data of these Ashley Madison users. It did not take long for the word to spread, informing people everywhere that they could quite easily search for the names of someone they knew to see if that person had ever utilized the services of Ashley Madison. Many of our counseling offices began to see an increase in new clients seeking immediate help. Their presenting problem: They had been discovered to be connected to the Ashley Madison scandal and, in some cases, while not yet having their secrets exposed, feared the inevitable trauma of their “other life” being found out.

Dr. Ed Stetzer is an expert on culture and serves as the Billy Graham Distinguished Endowed Chair for Church, Mission, and Evangelism and

the Executive Director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at Wheaton College. In August of 2015, Stetzer published an article titled, “My Pastor is on the Ashley Madison List.” In this piece, Stetzer revealed some shocking news based on personal conversations with church leaders. He wrote: “Based on my conversations with leaders from several denominations in the U.S. and Canada, I estimate that at least 400 church leaders (pastors, elders, staff, deacons, etc.) will be resigning Sunday. This is a significant moment of embarrassment for the Church—and it should be. To be honest, the number of pastors and church leaders on Ashley Madison is much lower than the number of those looking to have an affair. Yet, there is still much that we must consider in the midst of the embarrassment.”⁵

The impact of this well-publicized sex scandal was not just the devastation to churches and ministries whose pastors and leaders were involved in the Ashley Madison web. Even more painful was the trauma and tragedy of the people, including pastors, who committed suicide in the midst of deep shame, guilt, fear, and regret. This is a sobering reminder that in a profound way, pornography, adultery, and sex addiction are not victimless problems.

Pastors and Pornography

The Barna survey found that a staggering 57% of pastors and 64% of youth pastors admitted to a struggle with viewing pornography, either in the past or currently. Out of those surveyed, 21% of youth pastors and 14% of pastors

admitted they are currently personally battling with the use of pornography. It is no surprise, then, that 55% of these pastors admit to living in constant fear of their secret lives being found out.⁶ These numbers may, indeed, be even higher because it is common for men and pastors to underreport. The shame factor is incredibly high for pastors and Christian leaders who struggle with pornography and sex addiction. I have counseled many pastors who find the safe sanctuary of a confidential counseling office to be the only place they would dare risk the vulnerability of opening up and disclosing their secret struggles with pornography. These pastors are convinced, and probably rightly so, that if they get honest with their elders, deacon boards, or other staff members about their secrets, it will mean a fast track out of the ministry and the livelihood with which they have given their lives. It follows that if the pastor cannot or will not open up and be vulnerable about his own sexual struggle, the chances are low that the men in that church will feel safe enough to do their recovery work in the local church setting. As a result, we have a staggering volume of men sitting in our churches on Sunday who will leave the light of the brick and mortar “sanctuary” to spend much of each week compulsively wading through the stronghold and cesspool of cyber darkness.

While statistics are important, the sobering numbers do not truly seem to make a significant impact on getting the serious problem of pornography and sex addiction, and a proven treatment plan, on the front burner of our churches. Our mission here must not be to merely curse this literal darkness. Indeed, we must access and put into practice the brilliant light that illumines the clear path for these men to come out of the darkness, the shadows, and the virtual graves through which they are stumbling.

A Vision for the Church and Counselors

While the struggle and devastation of pornography, adultery, and sex addiction is epic, the truth remains that we have more help and hope than people have problems. We must increase our efforts to educate, inform, and provide resources for local churches to begin to carefully address the 21st century version of broken sexuality. Wisdom is crucial to not break open the proverbial Pandora’s box of sexual disclosure without the proper container. Counselors, especially those trained in sex addiction treatment, should be on the front line of providing training and support for churches in their geographical areas. Professional counselors can invite pastors to come to the confidentially-safe refuge of the counseling office to open up about their personal struggles with pornography and sex addiction. I believe if pastors cannot do their own therapy work to address their sexual struggles, there is little chance that a recovery ministry for pornography and sex addiction will be able to thrive in that local church setting. Certainly, local churches can partner with area counselors to have a

trusted network base to which they can refer church members and attendees.

The powerful resource known as “Covenant Eyes” (www.covenanteyes.com) is a vital component to successful recovery from pornography and sex addiction. This Internet monitoring, filtering, and accountability software provides a massive protective wall for computers, tablets, and smart phones to help keep people safe from the destructive aspects of the Internet. Like Nehemiah, strong Internet accountability and filtering like this can practically help people rebuild the broken down walls in their lives. Echoing Saint Paul in Romans 13:14, let’s provide the tools to “... make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”

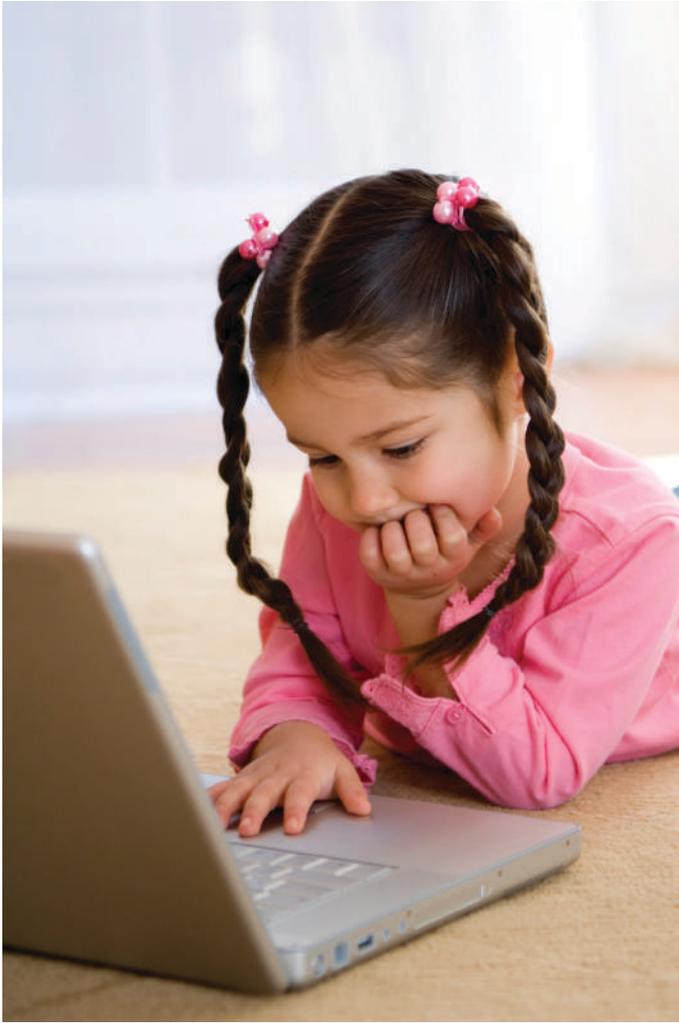
From my many years working in the field of sex addiction recovery, the most effective mode of successfully addressing the problem is the setting of a several-day sex addiction workshop or intensive. While the standard hour certainly can be helpful in addressing pornography struggles and sex addiction, we are dealing with a multifaceted problem that needs a comprehensive solution. The several-day workshop model provides the time and space to address the deep complexities of sex addiction. Our Integrity Redeemed Workshops and Intensives explore the impact of family of origin, trauma, neurochemistry, the foundations of sex addiction, understanding the cycle of addiction, and a proven sex addiction recovery plan that offers real hope for a life of freedom. This intensive model provides the foundation for people to go back to their therapists and local churches significantly more prepared to continue and succeed in their sex addiction recovery. ✕



JIM CRESS, M.A., is a conference speaker, Licensed Professional Counselor, and a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist. He is Founder and President of Integrity Redeemed Workshops in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Endnotes

- 1 CSAT Training with Patrick Carnes.
- 2 Juniper Research, “250 million to access adult content on their mobile or tablet by 2017, Juniper report finds.” Sept. 2013. <http://www.juniperresearch.com/viewpressrelease.php?id=628&pr=401>.
- 3 Barna.com, “The porn phenomenon.” February 5, 2016. <https://www.barna.com/the-porn-phenomenon/>.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Christianitytoday.com. “My pastor is on the Ashley Madison list.” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/august/my-pastor-is-on-ashley-madison-list.html>.
- 6 Barna.com, “The porn phenomenon.” February 5, 2016. <https://www.barna.com/the-porn-phenomenon/>.



INTERNET FILTERS & BLOCKERS

Are Digital Fences Effective?

A mother made several phone calls to recommended babysitters in the area, asking candidates what they would do in given situations. One candidate intrigued her.

Mother: Would you keep my kids in my yard?

Candidate: Absolutely. In fact, I'm excellent at that.

Mother: Great! Would you keep strangers away?

Candidate: Yes, as much as I can.

Mother: Are you a pushover?

Candidate: No, I stand firm.

Mother: Wonderful! Is there anything you don't do well?

Candidate: Yes. Your kids might climb all over me. I can't do anything about it. I'm not very effective with older kids. Over time, I can become a pushover. The more your kids test me, the more I give in. I'm not a very good teacher. In fact, I'll unintentionally teach them to go around my back. I won't discipline them either. I won't teach them right from wrong. You don't want to leave your kids with me too long unsupervised. I give clear boundaries but, practically, they're on their own.

Mother: What kind of babysitter are you?

Candidate: I'm not a babysitter. I'm a fence.

This frustrated parent is the same one who might believe an Internet filter or blocker alone can keep her child from ever intentionally or unintentionally seeing online pornography. In fact, a recent national survey¹ of nearly 4,000 people suggests that those using only Internet filters and blockers are more likely to seek out pornography than those who do not have any anti-porn software at all. More than 29% of general population adults admit to looking for pornography at least once a month. For those who have blocking technology installed, 39% of the general population say they actively seek out porn monthly.

More sobering is the statistic that 54% of the general population says it never seeks out pornography, while 0% of those using only online filters said they never seek it out. Did you catch that? All of the filter users in the study admit to seeking out online pornography! Why is this? It could

be that the user is struggling with looking at pornography in the first place. Also, a filter or blocker presents a challenge that the user may want to defeat. They think, "Who can stop me? I'll outsmart you." The question we should be asking is what's the motivation or incentive to stop looking for porn for someone who simply has a filter installed? Does anyone else know what Web sites they're trying to access? Not likely.

Are filters and blockers effective? It depends on what you want. For small children, you may prefer having a fence as opposed to not having one. However, your involvement as a parent is critical no matter what Internet safety strategy you choose. The answer lies in accountability. More on that later. So how do filters and blockers work? They all use similar techniques to try to stop the bad stuff and allow the good stuff, but none of them are perfect.

... your involvement as a parent is critical no matter what Internet safety strategy you choose. The answer lies in accountability.

Category Blocking

Some filters allow or restrict Web pages based on categories. These filters are set to block anything that involves sex, violence, guns, hate, or any number of categories. However, they can be tricked, worked around, allow bad content through, and restrict good content. For example, if you search for "breast cancer research," the results may be blocked since it can be seen as a sexual term. Looking for a gun for your next hunting trip? Those results may be blocked as well.

DAN ARMSTRONG

Content Blocking

Web sites and Web pages are made up of several puzzle pieces. There is content that can be seen on the screen and content that is hidden within the Web page. You can see the text, advertisements, videos, links, and images on the screen, but there are also hidden elements like layout and formatting details, colors of headlines, and CSS files (style sheet language) that control the size of the text which, together, make it difficult to effectively block all inappropriate content.

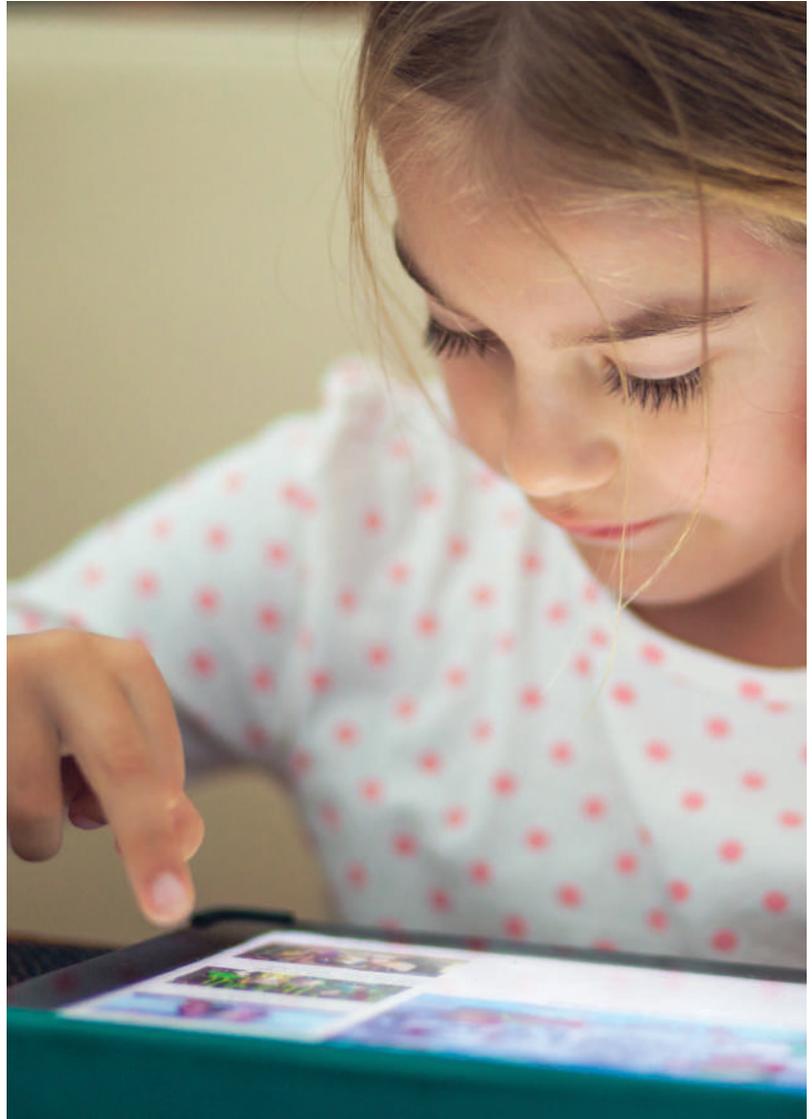
Word syntax can trick content blockers. Recently, a national news Web site misspelled an item in a URL at the bottom of its Web site that could easily trick a content blocker. It featured a female celebrity appearing “topless.” By hovering over the image, the URL said “topless.” The “l” had been removed. It could have been unintentional, but it could have also been a programmer who wanted the content to get through a filter.

List Blocking

Another technique used in filters bases its blocking on lists that are created. There are blocked lists and non-blocked lists, which can be good or bad. For the good, we know certain Web sites and pages are pornographic. When added to the blocked list, these sites will always be blocked. Non-blocked Web sites can also be created to always allow them. However, billions of URLs are created daily. Keeping up with these is difficult and cannot be relied on with a great amount of certainty since more Web sites are created than can be sorted into lists on a daily basis.

If filters alone are not enough, what steps can non-techy parents take today? A parent’s commitment to intentionality with their children is much more important than their tech-savviness. Free options abound for restricting what a child can see online. Safe searching, basic filtering, and account monitoring are great steps in beginning the conversation between parents and children about Internet usage. A few hours searching for safe browsing tips and tools are tremendously valuable to parents who feel ill-equipped.

A famous infomercial catchphrase is Ron Popeil’s, “Set it, and forget it!” It is used to describe how easy it is to bake a chicken with his products. However, effective parenting



requires constant involvement. A “set it, and forget it” filter, blocker, or other product is useless if there is no follow-up or accountability. Any product, tool, or strategy to keep kids safe must also have a component of involvement including honest, safe conversations. These get at the center of training young people to be accountable and address the heart issues of filling a void only God can occupy... not simply salving a symptom. ❖



DAN ARMSTRONG, B.A., M.A., is the corporate communications specialist at Covenant Eyes. Prior to joining the team, he led the marketing department of a public policy think tank and anchored/ reported television news for NBC stations in Michigan. Dan and his wife have four children.

Endnote

- 1 “The Porn Phenomenon” Barna Group (2016). <https://www.barna.com/research/porn-in-the-digital-age-new-research-reveals-10-trends/>.



MASTER OF ARTS IN COUNSELING

BE EQUIPPED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE AS A LICENSED
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELOR.

LEARN MORE ABOUT CORBAN AT [GRAD.CORBAN.EDU/COUNSELING](https://grad.corban.edu/counseling)

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.’ This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.”

Ephesians 5:31-32

SEX AS ICON OR IDOL?

How a Biblical Theology of the Body Saves Us from the Idolatry of Porn

From Genesis to Revelation, the union of man and woman serves as the main icon of divine love. As Bible scholar, Dennis Kinlaw, put it, “If history began with a wedding in Eden and closes with one in the New Jerusalem, the biblical story runs from wedding to wedding, from temporal symbol to eternal reality.”

God wants to marry us. And He wanted this eternal “marital plan” to be so plain that He stamped an image of it right in our bodies by making us male and female and calling the two to become “one flesh.” This means our bodies are not only *biological*, they are also *theological*. They reveal the logic of God and tell His story... and *this* is why the enemy of our souls is hellbent on profaning our bodies.

Icons are “windows to heaven,” as they say in the Christian east. Sex-as-icon opens that window, leading us into the “great mystery” of Christ’s eternal union with the Church. Sex-as-idol closes that window, exchanging, “... the glory of the immortal God for images of mortal man...” (Romans 1:23).

Welcome to our pornographic world. However, let us be clear: the solution to all this sexual idolatry is not the *rejection* of the body, but the *redemption* of the body (see Romans 8:23)—the “untwisting” of what sin has twisted so that we can recover the true splendor of the body’s iconography. And this is precisely what the late Pope John Paul II offered—not just to Catholics, but to *all* Christians—in an extensive Bible study called, “The Theology of the Body” (TOB).

CHRISTOPHER WEST



Image of God

The astounding claim of Christianity is that the invisible God has made Himself visible *through the human body*. For in Christ, “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” (Colossians 2:9). John Paul’s thesis statement proclaims that “only the body is capable of making visible what is invisible: the spiritual and the divine. It has been created to transfer into the visible reality of the world, the mystery hidden from eternity in God, and thus to be a sign of it.”

This mystery refers to inner life of the Trinity and our privileged invitation in Christ to share in it. As Dennis Kinlaw, past President and Chancellor of Asbury College, observes: “Salvation is a gift of the Father through the Son

... the union of the sexes here on earth is only an icon that is meant to point us to heaven. When we get there, the temporal icon will give way to the eternal reality.

and by the Spirit to bring [us], not just to forgiveness and reconciliation with God but, into participation in the very communion that the three persons of the triune Godhead know [among] themselves.”

In chapter 5 of Ephesians, Paul reveals that this “mystery” isn’t far from us. It is as plain to us as the bodies God gave us when He created us male and female and called the two to become “one flesh.” Furthermore, in the normal course of events, the union of the “two” leads to a “third.” Here, in a way, we see a Trinitarian image. Thus, John Paul concludes that we image God not only as individuals, but also through the union of man and woman. Of course, God Himself is not sexual, but our sexuality, by way of analogy, hints at His Trinitarian life.

Beyond “Sin Management”

On this side of the Fall, men and women are blind to the deepest truth about their bodies and plagued in their unions with all kinds of tensions and conflicts. John Paul reminds us of Christ’s words that, “in the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8). And the “good news” is that Christ came into the world to restore creation to the purity of its origins. This is what the “new wine” of Cana is symbolically speaking about.

In the beginning, man and woman were “naked without shame” because they experienced sexual desire as God created it: as the power to love as He loves. The entrance of shame indicates the dawn of lust, of erotic desire cut off from God’s love. We cover our bodies in a fallen world not because they are bad, but to protect their inherent goodness from the degradation of lust, even a “lustful look.”

Christ’s words are severe in this regard. He insists that if we look lustfully at others, we have already committed

adultery in our hearts (see Matthew 5:28). John Paul asks whether we should fear Christ’s words or have confidence in their power to save us. To use Christian theologian and philosopher Dallas Willard’s expression, Christ did not die on a cross and rise from the dead to give us a program of “sin management.” Christ died and rose to save us from sin so that we, too, could live a new life (see Romans 6:4). This means our sexual desires can be effectively *transformed* through the “redemption of the body” (Romans 8:23).

Of course, on this side of heaven we will always be able to recognize a battle in our hearts between love and lust. Only in eternity will the battle cease, as will marriage as we know it today. However, when Christ said we will no longer marry

in the resurrection (see Matthew 22:30), this does not mean our longing for union will be obliterated. It means it will be *fulfilled* in the “Marriage of the Lamb” (Revelation 19:7). *That* is the union we truly crave.

As we said at the start, the union of the sexes here on earth is only an *icon* that is meant to point us to heaven. When we get there, the temporal icon will give way to the eternal reality.

Winning the Battle

It is no mere coincidence that Paul follows his presentation of the “great mystery” of sexuality with a call to take up arms in the spiritual battle. The first thing he says we must do is “gird our loins with the truth” (Ephesians 6:14). Hmmm.

We are not fighting flesh and blood. Rather, powerful spiritual forces are at work that do not want us to see the “great mystery” revealed through our bodies. Pornography, we must be clear, is a hellish mockery of a heavenly reality. We will be liberated from the culture’s pornographic vision of the body only in as much as we reclaim the Bible’s iconographic vision of the body. ✨



CHRISTOPHER WEST, M.T.S., is *President of The Cor Project*, a global membership and outreach organization helping others learn, live, and share the *Theology of the Body*. He also serves as Senior Lecturer at the *Theology of the Body Institute* and his courses there attract students from around the world. Christopher is the best-selling author of multiple books and video programs, and his work has been featured in the *New York Times*, on *ABC News*, *Fox News*, *MSNBC*, and countless Catholic and Protestant media outlets.

WHERE
STRUGGLES
SEEM ENDLESS,
GOD'S HOPE
IS INFINITE.

INTRODUCING
THE BEYOND SUFFERING BIBLE
FROM TYNDALE HOUSE
PUBLISHERS AND
JONI EARECKSON TADA.



BEYONDSUFFERINGBIBLE.COM

THE *BEYOND SUFFERING BIBLE*
IS THE FIRST STUDY BIBLE MADE
SPECIFICALLY FOR THOSE WHO SUFFER
AND THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM.

*"I'm so excited about the **Beyond Suffering Bible**. It's designed to help the reader—especially those affected by disability—grasp the goodness of God amid critical questions about suffering."* — JONI EARECKSON TADA



Bible features © 2016 by Joni and Friends. New Living Translation, NLT, and the New Living Translation logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

THE CENTER A PLACE OF HOPE

Hope and Healing for the Whole Person

For over 30 years, The Center • A Place of HOPE has been helping people change their lives for good. Our treatment programs are unique and life-changing. We look at the "whole person", not just the parts they want us to see. We dig deeper, walking alongside our clients with customized care and treatment plans aimed at healing them emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

CHANGING LIVES FOR GOOD

We understand pain and, more importantly, recovery.

We specialize in the treatment of:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Eating Disorders
- Addiction
- PTSD
- Co-occurring Issues

Faith-Based Track for Your Clients

The Center • A Place of HOPE provides a dedicated faith-based track for all clients who desire it.

Are you a professional counselor or clergy? We would love to visit with you about our referral program and how we can be the right solution for your clients who need intensive, compassionate care. Call our referral specialists today to learn more.



 **1.888.771.5166**
 info@aplaceofhope.com
 aplaceofhope.com

For I know the plans I have for you, "declares the Lord."
Plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

PROTECTING THE

NEXT GENERATION:

FIGHTING THE PORN INDUSTRY

How do we fight back? What are the legislative options and the Church's role in protecting the next generation?

Although once shunted from public discussion, the topic of pornography and its harm are now becoming a mainstream debate. Political parties at the federal and state levels have identified pornography as a public health crisis that is destroying millions of lives. Even Hollywood actors and actresses are beginning to step forward and reveal its high cost, both personally and upon the lives of others.

Can we win the battle of protecting the next generation from the fallout stemming from porn? The solution involves a two-front approach. First, there are some potentially powerful legislative fixes. However, to win in this area requires more than convincing various legislatures to act; the laws must be crafted to sustain scrutiny by the courts. Second, the Church has a vital—and even pivotal—role in transforming the culture. Victory requires a radically different approach. The Church must become the safe haven for sinners that Christ Himself advocated. This article provides a road map for winning the battle that cannot be lost for all of our sakes—especially our children.

JOEL HESCH



Legislative Fixes

Whether we like it or not, the courts are treating pornography as a freedom of speech issue and granting the industry extensive First Amendment protections. That does not mean that there can be no legislation that will pass muster, but courts typically apply the highest level of protection to pornography viewing (at least by adults). This means the law will be overturned by a court unless a legislature demonstrates that it: 1) furthers a “compelling governmental interest” (i.e., protects against a specific and provable harm), and 2) is “narrowly tailored” to ban only what is necessary to prevent that specific harm.

The best legislative approach is to limit or restrict access to pornography for minors. Just like cigarettes cannot be purchased or used by minors, legislatures could craft laws that prevent children from accessing porn. For instance, the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) is able to ban smoking by children because it is a science-based decision, which courts have upheld.

Likewise, any statute prohibiting Web sites from allowing children to access porn will only be sustained by courts if it is tied to science. Courts

will reject any porn restriction tied to morality alone. The key is being able to prove that children are actually harmed in specific ways from specific types of exposure to porn.

Therefore, there are two factors needed to win in the legislative realm. The first is enlisting the support of a community of counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists. The scientific community must demonstrate that certain types of porn viewing by children result in real, not hypothetical, harm. Courts will not blindly accept a legislature’s word that pornography hurts kids. It must have data to back it up. That means there needs to be research papers and studies with findings that will survive scrutiny of not only the porn industry, but also other professionals in the field who will evaluate the study, protocols, and findings. We cannot simply wish this into action—hard work must take place.

Second, the law must be carefully crafted to only address the harm established by science. It must also be crafted in a way that can be enforced through reasonable efforts, such as requiring a credit card to access Web sites containing the types of science-based harmful images, even if there is no charge for viewing, because most children do not have credit cards.

It is time for a community of counselors, psychologists, and psychiatrists to do what Congress cannot—prove that certain types of porn actually harm children. If you can do that, we can win the legislative battle.

The Church’s Role

The other, and most important, battlefield is influencing the culture because merely outlawing pornography will do nothing to make a person



want to stop looking at it. The key is helping facilitate a heart change, not simply attempting behavior modification.

In the past, pornography was simply the white elephant in the Church that no one talked about. Today, it has become an unleashed, roaring lion that is destroying relationships as it gets its claws into—and then devours—men, women, and children alike.

The good news is that the Gospel is the hope of the world. It has the answers and solutions. Christians are the instruments God works through to reflect that Gospel to those inside and outside of the Church. As with any unhealthy habit or influence, Christians know that it requires putting off the old and putting on the new. However, when it comes to porn, the problem is magnified one-hundred fold. Pornography creates pathways in the brain that become superhighways over time because chemicals, such as dopamine, are released and become tied to certain thoughts or behaviors. In time, a person's mind not only suggests, but craves, the next porn, lust or fantasy fix.

The Church must learn to confront this problem in a radically different way. The root issues are so deep that people need more than a life vest; they need a total makeover and retooling of the brain pathway. What works? We have found that those who have broken free from porn addiction start with a mindset that it is *no longer an option* and they are *willing to do whatever it takes*.¹

What most do not understand, however, is that doing “whatever it takes” does not mean pulling harder at your bootstraps. It means switching masters. It is doing things God's way this time. The proven path involves laying aside selfish practices and living for a larger purpose. That is where real change takes place. Just like it took a long time to dig the hole, it will take much effort to climb out. Again, people need to remap their brain pathways. They also need to emerge from hiding in false forms of intimacy and begin building real, healthy relationships... and that takes not only time and energy, but also proper tools and a fellow sojourner.

One of the best tools for fostering change consists of a daily, biblically-based workbook focusing on sexual integrity. The goal is to equip people to be able to dig up the roots that feed lust and replace them with godly character and relationships. Therefore, the study should intertwine daily homework assignments that build healthy relationships. Because it takes at least two

months to drop old habits and form new ones, the study should be at least eight weeks (and ideally 12 weeks). In addition, the study should teach a person how to deal with setbacks—both because they happen and responding to setbacks is an integral part of the growth process.²

The biggest reason why most people throw in the towel or give up fighting for sexual integrity is the lack of an accountability partner. There are two problems with going it alone. First, secrets kill; whereas exposure to the light clears the path to victory. Second, the enemy loves it when a person tries to go it alone because he or she will stumble and fall! Without support, a stumble quickly spirals out of control. What people actually need most is a *network partner*—someone who both encourages and holds them accountable.³ God's plan for everyone is to forever remain connected with another brother or sister, regardless of their level of struggle. Churches and counselors can advance the mission by guiding the wounded down a proven path by encouraging them to engage with network partners.

It is time for the Church to step into its vital role of being a safe haven that not only accepts that change will be hard fought, but also purposes to equip its members with

the tools and encouragement needed to swim against the stream of this sexually saturated society. That means the Church must embrace that building and maintaining sexual integrity is messy and takes time. It also means the Church must use a radically different approach for both equipping and encouraging its congregation that consists of open conversations, holding support groups using intensive sexual integrity studies, and linking others for life with network partners. ✦



JOEL HESCH, J.D., is an author, attorney, and founder of Proven Men Ministries (www.ProvenMen.org). After breaking free from his own 20-year addiction, Joel developed the “Proven Path for Sexual Integrity” and a 12-week daily study. His mission is to equip the Church and leaders with the goal of helping one million people gain and retain sexual integrity.

Endnotes

- 1 Hesch, J. (2016). *Proven Path to Sexual Integrity*, Chapter 11.
- 2 Id. at 117-21.
- 3 Id. at 70, 184-86.

Everyone who serves is changed in significant ways.

Moody and Trogdon offer help to navigate the new normal.

PRICE: \$4.99 13-ISBN: 9780892659920

TO ORDER: 1-800-877-7030 or www.randallhouse.com

randall house

FIRST AID
for YOUR Emotional Hurts
Edward E. Moody Jr., Ph.D.
with Lieutenant Colonel David Trogdon

NEW!

++ VETERANS



Women and Pornography Today

IT'S WAY PAST MOMMY PORN

The ubiquitous digital landscape has ushered today's women into the darkness of online pornography just as much as it has captured men. For over a decade, statistics have held steady that approximately one-third of visitors to adult Web sites are female. What is changing is the kind of pornography these women are viewing and the age when they begin viewing it. This is not your mom's erotica or softcore images couched within some kind of pseudo relationship. Even the edgier *Fifty Shades of Grey* material, which contains stark depictions of BDSM (bondage, dominance, and sadomasochism), is set within an unfolding relationship story. As surprising as it may sound, *Fifty Shades* is considered vanilla "mommy porn" by the younger generation.

A consistent difficulty for female sex addicts is a lack of role models for the healing process. The vast majority of literature about sex addicts only describes men, and the Christian-based material is especially prone to this oversight.

Leading anti-pornography feminist, Dr. Gail Dines, a professor of sociology and women's studies at Wheelock College in Boston, has written a powerful and disturbing book called, *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality*. Dr. Dines describes how the cybersex landscape, the primary sexuality shaper of today's digital natives, has become decidedly violent. The Internet accountability and filtering organization, Covenant Eyes, sees a similar scenario and reports that 88% of sex in porn films depicts violence.

According to an April 2016 Barna study commissioned by Josh McDowell Ministry, teens and young adults are the largest consumers of online pornography—almost all of it free. Thus, an entire generation is being conditioned from an early age to believe that sexual violence, including demeaning acts and misogynistic attitudes toward women, is normal. Dr. Dines and others assert that this steady exposure fuels our rape culture, where males are desensitized to think women want and enjoy sexual violence, and females believe they must participate in painful sexual acts in order to have or keep a partner.

Unfortunately, online pornography is only one platform snaring women. Cyber-based sexual activity has many other avenues, especially sexting or even live video streaming. Approximately 22% of girls ages 13-19 and 36% of women ages 20-26 have sent pornographic pictures or videos according to the 2012 book, *The Social Costs of Pornography* (edited by Stoner and Hughes). Today's technology enables such behavior by providing a sexual smorgasbord unthinkable to the older generation, including helping professionals. Christian counselors must not be naïve. Today's female sex addict is just as likely to be consumed with hard-core pornography and other stereotypically male behaviors as she is to be a love, fantasy or relationship addict. The line between men's and women's sexual addiction has largely disappeared.

Treating Female Sex Addicts is Different

Like their male counterparts, female sex addicts need multi-dimensional help that includes the basics of addiction treatment. Psychoeducation

about addiction is a good starting point that assists with shame reduction. Identifying triggers and rituals around acting out helps a woman deconstruct her behavior and recognize where she can implement boundaries to interrupt it. Participating in a healthy healing community, like a 12-step or support group, fosters connection, as well as accountability. Developing a spiritual center and genuine connection with an all-loving God provides security and meaning.

Women's treatment for pornography and sexual addiction, however, differs in key ways from treating men. First, the therapeutic relationship is unusually important. Women's brains are typically more relationally-attuned, and a female sex addict needs a strong connection to her therapist. This means the pace of therapy will be slower to establish sufficient trust that the shame-bound client will dare to tell her sexual secrets. Further, the therapist needs to be especially attuned to any relational breaches that need attention and repair. The female sex addict is likely to test the helper to see if she will be judged, shamed or rejected. The counselor must recognize these difficulties as part of the healing process and not take the challenges or theatrics personally (or jump to diagnose the client as having a borderline personality disorder).

A consistent difficulty for female sex addicts is a lack of role models for the healing process. The vast majority of literature about sex addicts only describes men, and the Christian-based material is especially prone to this oversight. Like the trend for recovery from chemical addiction, those seeking help for sexual addiction are predominately men, which means a woman will likely be the only female in most 12-step recovery meetings. Fewer women in active "S" recovery make it extremely difficult for a female to find a same-gender sponsor.

Women almost always benefit from initial gender segregated treatment, which allows them to focus without distraction. Equally important, a gender specific environment fosters the creation of intimate relationships

MARNIE FERREE

with other women, which are crucial to a female's recovery. Group therapy provides a proven training ground for women to practice relational skills that foster healthy connections. Eventually, though, a mixed gender therapy or support group allows women to practice safe interactions with men.

Address the Roots of the Problem

While the impact of our culture cannot be overestimated, other roots also drive women's engagement with pornography or additional forms of sexual acting out. We have long understood the correlation between childhood sexual abuse and later addictive behavior. Current clinical focus considers disrupted or impaired attachment as another key etiological factor. Early caregiver attunement shapes the infant's neurological system... and without secure attachments, she lacks the self-regulation required to function as a healthy individual. Combined with culture messages about sex and relationships, a woman is prone to soothe her desperate need for "love" or approval in illicit and destructive ways.

Resources for Women

Christian-based books, such as *No Stones: Women Redeemed from Sexual Addiction* (Ferree, 2010), the *Every Woman's Battle* series by Shannon Ethridge, and *Dirty Girls Come Clean* by Crystal Renaud, offer some of the few guides for women who struggle with pornography or sexual addiction. Clinicians may also benefit from *Making Advances: A Comprehensive Guide for Treating Female Sex and Love Addicts* (Ferree, 2012), which is the only clinical treatment manual available for this population.

There is an urgent need for Christian helpers who are equipped to address the exploding problem of sexual addiction in women, as well as for the Church to recognize and support them in their healing process. ✖



MARNIE C. FERREE, M.A., LMFT, is a Certified Sex Addiction Therapist and directs Bethesda Workshops, a Christian-based intensive program for treatment of sexual addiction. She is a pioneer in treating female sex and love addicts and has written extensively on the topic. Contact her through www.BethesdaWorkshops.org or 615-467-5610.

The FIRST AID KIT every church needs



All 9 booklets for **\$2999**
*Red case not included

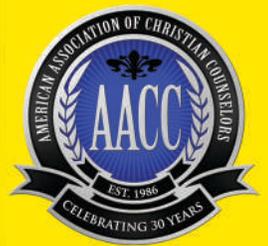
TO ORDER: 1-800-877-7030 or www.randallhouse.com



MAKE
YOUR HOTEL
RESERVATIONS NOW!
CALL 1-888-777-6779

The World's Premier Christian Counseling Event!

"For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore,
and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." - Galatians 5:1 ESV



**SELLOUT CROWD
OF 7,000
EXPECTED!**

AACC 2017 BREAK EVERY CHAIN WORLD CONFERENCE

**SEPTEMBER 27-30, 2017
OPRYLAND HOTEL • NASHVILLE, TN**



THE EVENT OF A LIFETIME!

- Distinguished Plenary and Workshop speakers
- 23 dynamic Tracks
- Over 160 Professional Workshops
- 54 Pre-Conference Workshops
- Incredible music and entertainment
- Filled with prayer, praise and worship
- 200+ Exhibitors and Speakers

FEATURING CHRISTIAN LEADERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, INCLUDING...



**ANNE GRAHAM
LOTZ**



**SAMUEL
RODRIGUEZ**



**JOHN
ORTBERG**



**RICHARD
BLACKABY**



**ERIC
METAXAS**



**MARK
MCMINN**



**CAROLINE
LEAF**



**TED
CUNNINGHAM**



**GREGORY
JANTZ**



**SIANG-YANG
TAN**



**HAROLD
KOENIG**



**MICHAEL
LYLES**



**CURT
THOMPSON**



**TIM
CLINTON
... AND MORE!**

Texting, Sexting, and Webcams...

Oh My!

The Evolution of Self-pornography

Recently, my wife and I became empty nesters. With one son in college and another studying internationally, we find comfort in our ability to connect with our children through technology. Because of text, e-mail, and Webcams, we have the resources to stay in contact with each of our sons. These tools help nurture our relationship and create a certain sense of comfort knowing that a quick connection through a text or a conversation where we are able to see their faces is possible.

What is also true is that in the field of sexual addiction, these same technologies have significantly increased the opportunity to engage in the creation of self-pornography. What can begin as simple texts may become more sexual and graphic. This may include nude selfies that can eventually create the boldness to get behind a Webcam for greater exposure.

How does this evolve? How does a person move from texting to sexting to photos to Webcams?

Contributing Factors

One of the factors that contributes to the choices an addict makes is risk. Even when we were young, we experienced the excitement of crossing boundaries and exploring new territories. This concept of risk plays directly into the progressive nature of sexual acting out. Using any text app to connect to another person creates a false sense of relationship, and the more vulnerable and direct one is in the text, the more excitement over the possibilities.

If one uses sexuality in an addictive way, it is an easy path to begin using texting as a method to express sexual desires and curiosities. This may lead to sexting, which can be described as creating erotica and sexual invitations using a texting app. Eventually, this can open the door to sending

sexually suggestive photos with partial nudity, which can then lead to sexually explicit photos, and finally exposing one's self to using a Webcam. With each step, there is new opportunity, excitement, adrenaline, and risk. For the addict, the progression is natural because the pursuit of adrenaline and risk is primary. Risk produces adrenaline, one of the neurochemical components of addiction.¹

The second factor is safety. Safety is the space where we are free from injury and harm. I have heard safety described as the absence of anxiety and fear. Some sense of safety is essential for most people to be willing to take a risk. It is why we jump off a bridge with a bungee cord; we want a safe risk. The problem arises when our distorted thinking causes us to believe something will keep us safe when it cannot.

We live in a culture where we can hide behind technology and pretend we are safe. Electronics create a false sense of safety by temporarily distancing us from reality and consequences. One of the lies of addiction is, "No one will ever know." A person's words on a cell phone screen can seem disconnected from reality in such a way that it is easy to push "send" even though he/she knows there could be consequences if caught.

People can also create the illusion of safety by distancing themselves from the receiver. Since readers of the text are not physically present and senders do not have to immediately experience their response, they may have a greater sense of boldness. Most of us, when vulnerable, desire to know the other person's response and fear the reaction. The distance of technology creates a buffer from the receiver's response. Sexting gives the opportunity to express desires and perceive one is safe in doing so.

When people send risqué photos, oftentimes they do not include their faces in images with their bodies so their

identities can be hidden. In time, even those boundaries can be crossed. With apps that promise the image will be lost in just a few seconds, people can believe their actions are temporary, forgetting about the permanence of a screen shot.

The technology of Webcams can also create a certain false perception of safety, as a person can stay at home and randomly and anonymously connect with others using alternative names and identities. Web sites exist based on the concept of speed dating where one person can quickly hook up with visitors who are on the site. One can rapidly move through several participants and reject those with whom he/she is not attracted. This combines safety and power. People can reject anyone who does not meet their expectations—stopping for someone they like or, even more dehumanizing, “seeing something they like.”

A third factor is curiosity. “I wonder what it would be like to...?” is the question of curiosity. God created us to be curious. If you show children the stars, they become curious about astronomy. Curiosity is not the enemy. Each of us must learn to steward our curiosity, not deny it. Addicts may live life with little or no restraint on curiosity. All questions demand answers, and their capacity to say no to destructive or hurtful curiosity is lost.

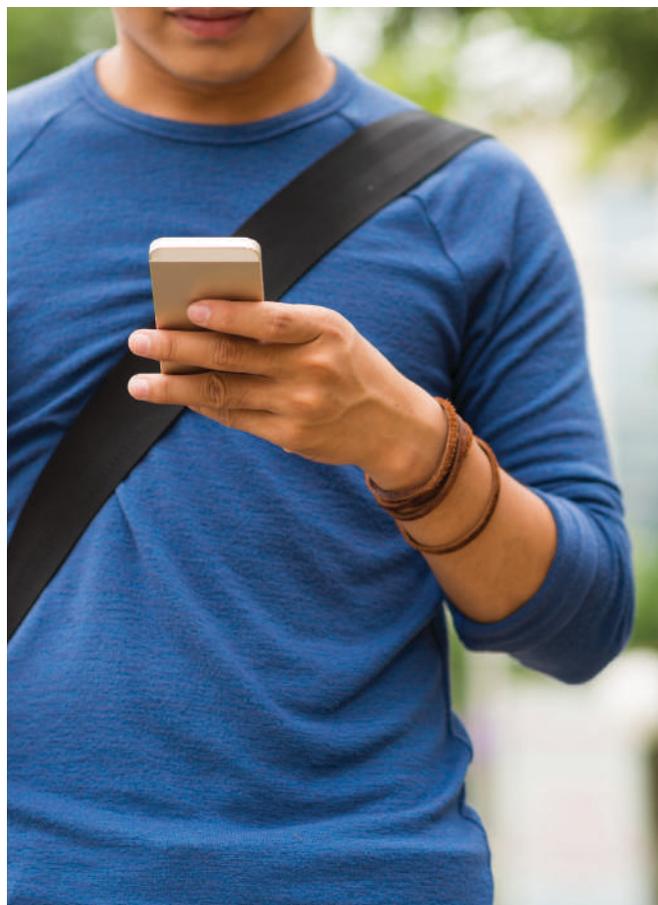
Availability is the fourth contributing factor. What is possible? The answer seems to change each day as technology creates more opportunity. Again, technology is not the enemy. For the addict, the challenge is about learning to live with restraint, which may include finding the resources that limit access, such as filters. Yet, external boundaries will never be enough if there is not an understanding of the internal drive.

Motivating Desires for Exhibitionism and Voyeurism

In their book, *Seven Desires*, Mark and Debbie Laaser define seven desires that are foundational for each of us, one of which is the desire to be heard and understood.² Another way to interpret this desire is the longing to be known and seen. Those compelled to expose themselves in images or through Webcams can be driven by the desire to be known and seen. Their thinking can be, “If I am seen naked and exposed, then maybe I can be fully known.” To be seen naked for some is to be known intimately.

Another desire the Laasers identify is the need to be chosen. To be chosen is to validate a person’s specialness. What we long to hear is we are so special that we are being chosen. We are driven to answer the questions, “Am I enough?” and “Am I worth being chosen?” Those sending images of themselves may be looking for validation from

GREG MILLER



someone else so they might be rescued from their insecurities and loneliness. I have heard many men indicate their motivation for sending photos of themselves is only to see what photos they may get in return.

Therapeutic Response

As with all acting out, there is a deeper desire that must be explored by counselors. Sexual addiction can be defined as “the attempt to meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way in a repetitive cycle using sexuality.” Recovery is identifying the legitimate need and meeting it in a legitimate way. Helping clients explore the questions—How do I want to be known? What am I afraid for others to know about me? What wounds cause me to believe I am not choosable?—encourages them to explore those deeper needs... knowing that, ultimately, it is God who is able to meet the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4).

If a person is driven by the need to be known, safe, and connected, it makes sense, then, to encourage him/her to be in safe recovery communities. When a person is known in a legitimate way, the desire for exhibitionism and false intimacy may begin to diminish. Ironically, the secrecy around the exhibitionism actually can increase the desire for exposure. The more secrets a person has, the more drive there can be for overexposure in exhibitionism.

People who are motivated to expose themselves using technology will need help exploring and understanding the core beliefs that are driving their behavior. This work can be done with a counselor, as well as participation in an intensive program focusing on sexual addiction. The Laaser’s ministry, Faithful and True, in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, provides workshops for men who have a sexual addiction. Accountability around the use of technology is also helpful. If a person’s recovery community knows the tendency to misuse technology, there can be additional support to avoid the temptation.

One factor that needs to be acknowledged is the legal implications of underage, nude selfies—both taken and sent. When a minor takes a photo of him/herself naked, it is considered the production of underage pornography. When the photo is sent or forwarded by someone, it is deemed as the distribution of child pornography. On a University of North Carolina government blog, LaToya Powell writes, “As a result, teens who engage in sexting are often charged with violating laws that prohibit child pornography and obscenity, which were designed to punish adult predators who sexually victimize children.” Powell goes on to write, “It appears that there are three categories of criminal offenses that can possibly be used to charge minors (under the age of 18) with sexting: obscenity, disseminating material harmful to minors, and sexual exploitation of a minor.”³

In a recent case in North Carolina, a 17-year-old boy and 16-year-old girl were charged with several counts involving images on their phones because they had taken and sent nude photos of themselves. The photos were discovered because of a search the police did in another case. It seems the courts are more likely to get involved when photos are discovered by an adult or family member or appear on social media... or in the case, mentioned or discovered because of another investigation.

One of the ironies and complexities of this case was that the two youths were charged because they were perceived as minors in the photos, yet they were being charged as adults. The male was charged with five felonies—two for taking nude photos of himself, two for sending the pictures, and one for having a photo of his girlfriend—and faced up to 10 years in prison. His girlfriend was charged with two counts—for taking and sending a nude selfie—and faced four years.⁴ Eventually, the charges were dropped.

As mandatory reporters, we may find ourselves in a situation where the law would indicate that we must report a minor who has been taking nude selfies. It is imperative that therapists understand the laws in their states and the ethical expectations of mandatory reporting.

The challenges of navigating self-pornography are complex. The new reality is people can create their own pornography with today’s technology. Understanding the motivation and deeper desires is the beginning of the stopping process. To be known is not an intellectual experience or the process of learning details about a person... it is to be intimate. In I Corinthians 8:3, the reader is reminded, “But whoever loves God is known by God.” When people are known, safe and connected, they are fully seen, not just exposed. ✨

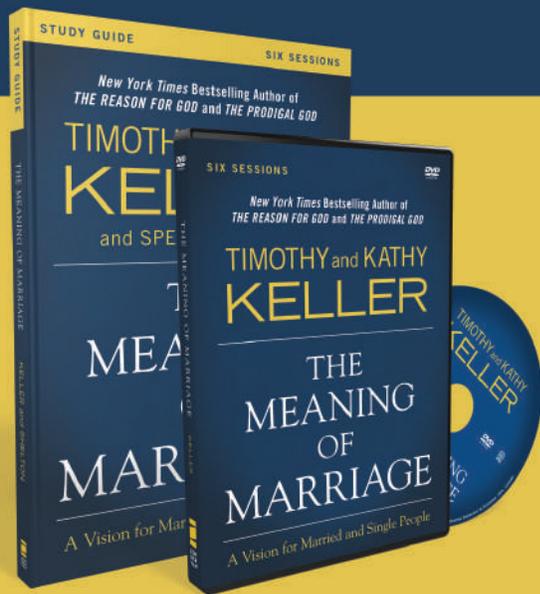


GREG MILLER, M.DIV., D.MIN., *with his wife, Beth, started Thrive Resources in 2011 in Algonquin, Illinois, working with individuals and couples who struggle with various forms of coping and addiction and desire spiritual guidance. For seven years, Greg has also served as the Director of the Men of Valor workshops with Faithful and True in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.*

Endnotes

- 1 Laaser, M. (2011). *Taking every thought captive* (Kansas City: Beacon Hill).
- 2 Laaser, M., & Laaser, D. (2008). *The seven desires of every heart* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan). pp 17-21.
- 3 Powell, L. (Sept. 8, 2015). Teen “sexting” is a problem, but is it a crime? nocriminallaw.sog.unc.edu/teen-sexting-is-a-problem-but-is-it-a-crime/.
- 4 Ibid.

A Vision for Married and Single People



In this **six-session** video study, **Timothy Keller** and his wife **Kathy** discuss practical wisdom for marriage with groups of single and married people.

 ZONDERVAN®
.com

 REDEEMER
CITY to CITY

WATCH THE
FIRST SESSION

FREE



zndr.vn/tmmstudy

MENTAL HEALTH & THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

“THE STRUGGLE IS REAL”

2017 SUMMIT

THE CHURCH • MENTAL HEALTH • COUNSELING

APRIL 27-29, 2017
THOMAS ROAD
BAPTIST CHURCH
LYNCHBURG, VA



JUNE 8-10, 2017
CALVARY CHURCH
NAPERVILLE, IL

800.526.8673 // WWW.CMHCSUMMIT.COM

With a Blink of an Eye

The telephone rang. At the other end of the line I heard sobs from a lady I barely knew. She said through the tears, “I have just discovered my husband owes thousands of dollars to a pornographic Web site.” I was across the table from a parishioner in a restaurant. His voice was hushed when he said, “Pornography has so dominated my life that I no longer have an attraction to my wife.” Another couple sat in silence for a moment, and then the wife exploded on her husband. “My husband has been hiding his ‘girly’ magazines from all of us until this week when my son found them. He said if his dad could look at the pictures, why shouldn’t he? His dad is a pastor.”

Well, I think you get the picture. Pornography has become one of the central players in the downturn of morals around the world, and especially in the United States. It breaks up marriages, changes our perspective on sex and its beauty, and acts as an airbrushed substitute for genuine, God-given relationships... but you know that. However, did you know that in the last few years, the revenues from the global porn industry have been cut in half? Do you know why? The answer is because pornography of any kind may be accessed by those of any age or sex just by the click of a button on a cell phone or computer. It is the silent destroyer of the very thing that God created for healthy communication between a man and a woman to be strong, genuine, loving, and committed.

Flee Immorality

In one translation (NLT), the writer of Proverbs warns, “Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life” (4:23). From I Corinthians 6:19, “... your body is



the temple of the Holy Spirit...” Ephesians 5:2, “Let there be no sexual immorality...”—not even dirty joking. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, “... Keep yourself pure” (I Timothy 5:22).

In our world, there have been many warnings for all of mankind to be alert to those things that can destroy the normal, natural functions of life. That is why the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body” (I Corinthians 6:18).

It becomes so simple to fall prey. Just consider the following. Very innocently and unexpectedly, a picture flicks across a media device of one kind or another. Rather than fleeing and moving on, a person becomes enamored with what he or she has just seen, and then becomes trapped. A once-seen image invades an unguarded mind and heart, and obsession sets in. What do you do? “... Therefore honor God with your bodies” (I Corinthians 6:20).

Do you know who is not fleeing? Nearly everyone, because pornography does not have a demographic. Consider the following from Covenant Eyes, an

Internet accountability and filtering organization. These statistics go back a few years, but I guarantee they are even more telling today.

- Men are 543% more likely to look at porn than females, but that percentage is shrinking.
- Those who have committed adultery are 215% more likely to look at porn.
- Those who are happy in their marriages are 61% less likely to look at porn.
- Those who are church attenders are 25% less likely to watch or be involved in porn than non-church goers, but get this...
- Self-identified fundamentalists are 91% more likely to use pornography.
- Sixty-four to 68% of young adult men and 18% of young adult women use porn at least once a week.

And so you say, I get the point. Pornography is a problem for all ages. Now what? Well, let me offer a few suggestions.

Living Above Reproach

In Titus 1, we are called to live above reproach, but that is much easier said than done. For 25 years as a pastor to pastors, I worked with members of the clergy who wanted to live above reproach, but they fell to temptation in spite of their endeavors. They would say to me after a failure, “I want more than anything to be a Christian leader of high morals and integrity.”

I would say to them, “To begin with, you must commit yourself to a set of guidelines that provide you with a sense of moral control. That integrity and morality are not achieved by practice, but by a lifestyle of godliness and humility. It is a commitment each of us makes to God, ourselves, and others who help hold us accountable so we will be what we are expected to be: ‘holy and acceptable’ to our Lord.”

I urge you to consider the following

simple steps to godly living:

- Maintain an intimate relationship with God (James 4:7, 10)
- Be vigilant... stand guard on your soul (Ephesians 6:10-11)
- Develop a meaningful relationship with a trusted friend (Romans 5:Value and protect your household at any cost (Colossians 3:18-21)
- Find joy in the precious gifts of God (Psalm 37:4-6; Psalm 118:24)
- Protect your physical and emotional well-being... stay rested (3 John 2; Mark 6:31)

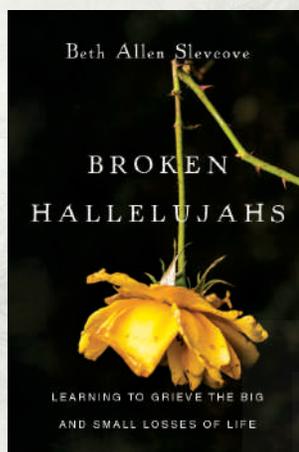
Living a life of integrity and moral health becomes a choice we make, and the expectation of the God who loves us. I pray this prayer for you, as well as for myself.

*Gracious Father,
Deliver me from the fascination of the forbidden, the seduction of sin and the need to satisfy my appetite for the make-believe in place of Your design. Give me an untainted mind, a pure heart, and a deep desire to be pleasing in Your sight. By grace, help me to live a life that can be admired by my family and those I have opportunity to influence. Amen. ✝*



REV. H.B. LONDON, JR., D.D., has served 33 years in pastoral ministry—20 as Pastor to Pastors with Focus on the Family. He is the lead pastor at Friendship Church in Palm Desert, California. H.B. and his wife, Beverley, are now “retired” and live in LaQuinta, California, where he continues his ministry to the clergy through H.B. London Ministries (hblondon.org). Focus on the Family has conferred on H.B. the title of Pastor-to-Pastors Emeritus.

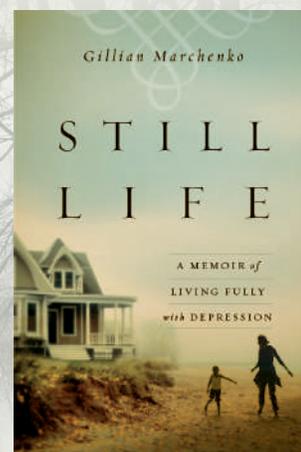
LIVING WITH MELANCHOLY and DEPRESSION



“Broken Hallelujahs is a beautiful reflection on loss and love and finding God again after God’s silence. . . . Beth gives us the tools we need to process our grief and help us connect to God and actually move on toward healing.”

LILLY LEWIN,
author of *Sacred Space*

ivpress.com/hallelujahs



“I’ve never read a more accurate book about depression and the toll it takes on the one who suffers, as well the impact on those closest to the sufferer. This book holds no cure, no magic wand, but it does extend hope.”

LUCILLE ZIMMERMAN,
LPC, author of *Renewed*

ivpress.com/stilllife



Addiction and the Deceived Heart



We all carry a great capacity for deception. The Scriptures say it is the most prevalent and profound characteristic of the human heart and telling us our hearts are unknowable. We are all human; so counselors are human hearts, working alongside other human hearts. *All* such hearts are exceedingly complex and fragile. They are knowable in limited ways and easily damaged.

Deception essentially functions as a narcotic, for it protects us from seeing clearly or feeling that which

is painful. A person who is skilled in deception is one who is effectively addicted to deceit. Deception deeply habituates the soul to look at things diametrically opposed to the way God sees, for He is a God of truth. Deception is about hiding, pretending, ignoring, and camouflaging. We use all manner of self-deceptions to protect us from information that would cause us to view ourselves in ways that we do not like. This mechanism enables us to turn a blind eye, commit wrongs, and feel justified when we ought to be facing our failures, abuses, and sins.

The maintenance of any destructive pattern in a human life—such as a sex addiction—requires a foundation, an infrastructure. Its cornerstone is deception.

There is a second phenomenon to consider that is also relevant to a discussion of sexual addictions. It is self-injury. Sometimes when people are distraught, full of self-hatred, and confused, they take it out on their own bodies. When someone does harm to him/herself, we say it is self-destructive; we know it is not healthy. It is pathological to injure the body in which you live... to harm the self *and* believe it is good. That is the essence of any addiction. We know from research that ongoing use of pornography shapes the brain. We know it cripples relationships. We also know that chronic use of pornography lowers inhibitions in a similar fashion to alcohol. It numbs the self to things that our God hates.

Let's consider the biography of deception in a life. We have said that deception's origin is in the human heart and that none of us are exempt. It is there—you and I know its presence in our own hearts and have heard its whisper. All of us have yielded to it. All of us know the heart experience of temptation and the response of self-deception, seemingly working in concert to convince us of its rightness or harmlessness. When we also have a fear of God in our hearts, then another powerful factor is introduced into this battle in the soul. If there is no fear of God or *we silence that fear*, then we can easily begin thinking what the enemy told Eve—you will not die... it will not hurt you. We convince ourselves we can stop at any time... one more time will not hurt... just one more look. If we engage in such self-delusion long enough, we will, over time, lose our

Merely repressing the darkness we have pursued is not sufficient. We must, instead, be full of light.

taste for the good *and* our power to loathe evil. We eventually silence the voice of God and our response of fear to that voice. The problem, of course, is that sin *will* hurt us; and contrary to what the enemy told Eve, it will lead to death. Once we begin removing our taste for good and our power to hate evil, then we only habituate that which causes our death; or as the psalmist says in Psalm 36:4, “He sets himself on a path that is not good.” As deception becomes a way of life, evil can be easily practiced by an increasingly dead soul that is presumptuous, planning, and

actively participating in evil. Over time, the possibility for penitence is destroyed and the habit ends in soul death. It is a sobering and frightening picture.

If we truly see the life-destroying capacity of such addictions, we will not settle for a mere discontinuing of the behavior. We will want to see—in ourselves and our clients—a transformation of longing. Merely repressing the darkness we have pursued is not sufficient. We must, instead, be full of light. Change and holiness are not just restraining old passions (that is simply the beginning)—they are the growth of a new passion that grips the soul more deeply than the former addiction. It is a long, hard road to go from addiction to deceit to habituated love and obedience to our God.

May we, as counselors, come out of the cold that has numbed us, from

the painlessness that deceives, and the sin that no longer stings in our own lives. May we stand before the Light of the World, whose scorching light will disturb us, but by whose stripes we will be healed. May our own injections of deception never become comfortable. May we who are His people eagerly look for the God who searches hearts so that out of us will pour, not deceit but, rivers of living water into the parched, deceived souls with whom we work. ✠



DIANE LANGBERG, PH.D., is a practicing psychologist with Diane Langberg and Associates in suburban Philadelphia, chairs AACC’s Executive

Board, and is the author of *Counseling Survivors of Sexual Abuse*, *On the Threshold of Hope*, and *Suffering and the Heart of God*.



REFLECTING ON INTEGRATION

FULLER studio premieres resources that examine the intersection of psychology and theology: video of candid stories shared around the dinner table, audio lectures on experiencing the divine, reflections on integration from our faculty, and more.

We invite you to access and use these free online resources in whatever context you choose—and, if you’d like to go deeper, look into the master’s and doctoral degrees offered by Fuller’s School of Psychology.

Explore now at
Fuller.edu/Studio/Integration



Becoming an Uber Monk

My friend, Calvin, is an Uber monk. He hasn't always been a monk. For many years, he was involved in a church planting movement among the Sukuma Tribe in Northern Tanzania that resulted in more than 100 new congregations. Then he moved close to Nashville, to serve a local church. However, that didn't work out and he found himself looking for a source of income to support his family of five. That is when he got the idea to become an Uber monk.

Calvin had taken a job driving for Uber.[®] He was drawn to what seemed like a “humble job” for an in-between time in his life. But during the early days of his driving, he got an idea. He had been praying for God to bring the type of people into his life who would never have walked through the doors of an established, traditional church. Real people. Hurting people. Rough around the edges. “Lord, bring me those people,” he prayed as he drove.

Then Calvin realized that his prayer was already being answered. What if his car became a place for ministry... what if it became a monastery on wheels?

He had heard of a group in New York City known as the “Taxi Cab Philosophers.” And philosophy is about wisdom for living, so he started thinking: “How can I use this work to give glory to God?”

So, Calvin bought a habit from an online habitry shop. He chose a gray one with a brown scapula and hung a cross from the rearview mirror and put signs up all over the car. One of his daughters helped with the design work that featured a likeness of himself as a monk and the words:

“Friendship with Jesus is one of the greatest opportunities and privileges in this life. So if there is any way

that I can be helpful as we drive, I'd like to do so—prayer, silence and solitude, listening... let me know.”

“Have you ever had anyone react negatively to your monking around without a license to wear a habit?” I asked.

“No, I really haven't had any push-back. I did have one guy who read the sign and said pretty quickly, ‘I'll take the silence, please.’ So, I gave him the solitude of a monastery for his ride, and a smile when he got out.”

And about the licensed part, it should be pointed out that Calvin is an ordained minister who is pursuing a doctorate in practical ministry with a concentration in desert spirituality.

“Have there been any significant surprises?” I asked.

“My biggest surprise,” Calvin continued, “is that so many people seem to welcome the chance to open up in this type of context. I don't know if it's just setting the tone or the randomness of the encounter, but most start telling me things they probably would only tell their bartender.”

“I've had people confess extramarital affairs,” he continued, “talk about divorce, trouble with their kids or spouses, and trouble in life of every type. And a lot of people have a ton of anger toward the institution of the Church. Those are the people my heart goes out to the most. I just listen and then apologize on behalf of the Church. I've had several men break down into tears telling their stories.”

What is the most common request? “Intercessory prayer,” Calvin answered. “And, that shouldn't surprise me. What gave me the idea to become an Uber monk in the first place was when a ‘real monk’ told me that the most frequent question he got while wearing his habit in public was, ‘Will you pray for me?’”

Calvin is a pretty creative monk. He's even started a program called, “Turning Back the Meter.” He is trying to memorize large blocks of Scripture, and if a person is willing to hold the memory card and correct his errors, he'll roll back some of the price. I couldn't help asking if he ever ended up owing money to passengers when he was memorizing long passages, like Psalm 119, but just as a good monk would, he discerned and answered only with silence.

“It helps me,” he eventually continued, “but my primary motivation is for the person to be exposed to some of the most beautiful and loving words about God ever written.”

And Calvin has had experiences in conversation where, “It felt like the car was electric with the presence of God, like I was in the pleasure of God in that moment.”

“And I had one man who began the 40-minute drive by announcing he was an atheist... but then he started talking about being excommunicated from the Church in a brutal way. And he made it clear up front, ‘I don't have room for God.’ By the middle of the ride, he began to talk about a recent interest in Buddhism... and by the end of the ride, he asked me to pray with him for healing in the rift that was present between himself and Jesus.”

“But, why the habit?” I asked, again.

“Well, I thought it was less invasive than a tattoo. And, while I've not taken any formal vows, I do try to live by commitment to simplicity, service, and chastity in my marriage. It also speaks to a deep desire I have for a committed way to live that is instantly visible to others. I have a burning desire to live very intentionally and more visibly as a Christian.”

“What has this experience taught



A real Christian is an odd number anyway.
 He feels supreme love One whom he has never seen;
 talks familiarly every day to someone he cannot see;
 expects to go to heaven on the virtue of another;
 empties himself in order to be full;
 admits he is wrong so he can be declared right;
 goes down in order to get up;
 is strongest when he is weakest;
 richest when he is poorest;
 happiest when he feels the worst.
 He dies so he can live;
 forsakes in order to have;
 gives away so he can keep;
 sees the invisible;
 hears the inaudible;
 and knows that which passeth knowledge.

— A.W. Tozer (*The Root of the Righteous*, First Christian Publications, 1955)

you about God and His Kingdom?” I asked.

“Just how grace filled it has been. I had felt like I was on the outskirts of the organized church I’m a part of, but I prayed and God provided some pretty significant ministry from right where I am. His presence and kingdom are all around us if you are looking for them.”

“And the most important lesson you’ve learned about people?” I asked.

“That beneath the surface of a person there seems to be a universal longing for meaning and having your story heard. People are looking to find someone to listen to their stories. I think it must be becoming so rare that when they find a place and a person to listen, they don’t want to stop. Sometimes I just have to turn off the meter and listen.”

So, why am I telling you a story about a car becoming a sanctuary, especially in this issue of *CCT* that is built around the theme of pornography and addiction?

Two reasons. The first is that it can be helpful to be reminded, as one writer put it, that church can leave the building anytime a person is open to creating a sanctuary wherever he or she is at the moment—in a car, office, home or neighborhood.

The second reason is because of what I heard from John Ortberg about awareness of God’s presence. “... if a person wants to commit a sexual sin, he or she first needs to find a place where his or her mother is not.” And since there is not a place where God is not, the person will need to block from awareness the presence of God.

However, what if a person struggling with, let’s say, an addiction to online pornography would simply surround his or her computer with images and icons of the Trinity and keep an empty chair right next to him or her as a symbol of Christ’s constant and loving presence? What if he or she made that workspace a sanctuary? Well, that might be a pretty effective deterrent to the addiction, could it not? It could

also be a pretty powerful reminder that from the time of the Garden of Eden, we leave God’s presence... not the other way around. God’s response to that initial fall and each of our daily tumbles is the same question: “Where are you?”—with the implication, “I’m still right here. Let’s talk. What’s going on inside? This place can still be a sanctuary.”

But isn’t all of this quite odd?

Yes it is; but why not be odd? As A.W. Tozer reminds us, “A real Christian is an odd number anyway.” ✦



GARY W. MOON, M.DIV., PH.D., is the Executive Director of the Martin Family Institute for Christianity and Culture and the Dallas Willard Center for Christian

Spiritual Formation at Westmont College. He founded, with David G. Benner and Larry Crabb, *Conversations Journal*; directs the Renovaré Institute for Christian Spiritual Formation; and has authored several books. Gary still teaches at Richmond Graduate University when they let him.

Words of Recovery



A pastor once told me he experienced three different sides to himself—a public side, a private side, and a secret side. His problems with addiction began in the secret side, as attempts were made to manage feelings and stress with mood-altering substances or behaviors. Recovery involves developing healthy patterns of life that replace the addictive patterns. The ultimate example of the healthy management of pain and trauma is Jesus at Calvary. His words, often called “The Seven Last Words,” offer a model of true recovery in the midst of any trauma. Let’s take a closer look at these seven statements.

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). These words were spoken about Jesus’ enemies, but also of His

disciples who had deserted Him. He was rejected, lied about, ridiculed, abandoned, and humiliated. Jesus had every reason to react and become angry and bitter, but instead He chose forgiveness. Forgiveness detaches us from becoming the emotional hostages of others and is key to recovery, even if those who hurt us knew what they were doing.

“Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). Jesus was literally in the middle of an argument between two thieves, while suffering Himself. We are often in the middle of conflicts between others while we are personally suffering. However, Jesus tells the thief that his suffering was not pointless or ignored, but would end that day in paradise, thus changing the context of his suffering. God was interested and with him in his pain.

We, like the thief, need to know we are not alone in our struggles. Recovery involves that glimpse of paradise God may provide through an encouraging text, phone call or a hug, giving us hope that is critical in recovery.

“Woman, behold, your son!... Behold, your mother!” (John 19:26, 27). John was the only disciple documented at Calvary with Jesus and His mother. It is tempting to ignore the impact of our addictions on our families. Jesus modeled the concern for His mother by His words to her and John. It would also be easy to focus on the many followers who were not there to support Him and His mother, but they were already forgiven. He had one authentic and reliable friend, and that was enough. Recovery is being grateful for what we have instead of complaining about what we do not.

“My God, My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). In the midst of Jesus’ ultimate trauma, He longs for intimate, spiritual connection with the Father that was built through much time in prayer in private places, like the Garden of Gethsemane before Calvary. Recovery requires incorporating daily alone time to cultivate a tangible and transforming intimacy with God. Sobriety is the event when someone stops using. However, recovery is a developmental process that occurs over time.

“I am thirsty” (John 19:28). Jesus owned His physical need as dehydration was setting in. However, thirst can be physical, social, psychological or spiritual. If ignored and not owned, thirst can become a craving for mood-altering substances or behaviors. Addiction teaches us how

to ignore and be cruel and abusive to ourselves. Recovery involves learning how to be kind and honest with ourselves.

“It is finished!” (John 19:30). To finish something suggests there was an intentional plan to complete, a calling to fulfill, and a challenge to meet. It is usually a transcendent purpose that often involves loving service to others and is found through daily spiritual disciplines and interaction with godly mentors.

“Father, Into Your Hands I Commit My Spirit” (Luke 23:46). Recovery involves trusting the safety and character of God... independent of people, places, and apparently defeating circumstances. For God’s strength is best demonstrated when we are powerless and weak—let go and let God (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

Silence. Much of recovery is embodied in the silence between the words... the waiting and trusting for God to intervene in us... doing the next right thing... being faithful in the little things that only God may notice. The words of Good Friday were not the end of the story, as resurrection Sunday was coming. However, much of life occurs during the quiet Saturdays where true recovery is built and sustained. It is the faithful silence between the seven last words. ✦



MICHAEL R. LYLES, M.D., is an AACC Executive Board Member and is in private practice with Lyles & Crawford Clinical Consulting in Roswell, Georgia.

REGISTER TODAY!

extraordinary women conference
EWOMEN 2017

TULSA, OKLAHOMA
MARCH 3-4, 2017
MABEE CENTER

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA
APRIL 21-22, 2017
PENSACOLA BAY CENTER

ROANOKE, VIRGINIA
OCTOBER 6-7, 2017
BERGLUND CENTER

SOUTHAVEN, MISSISSIPPI
OCTOBER 12-14, 2017
LANDERS CENTER

trust HIM
PROVERBS 3:5-6

ONLINE WWW.EWOMEN.NET OR CALL 800.526.8673

Pastors and the Fight for Sexual Integrity



Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. — 1 Peter 5:8 (ESV)

The Bible calls on pastors to be above reproach. Satan uses pornography, sexual addiction, and infidelity to destroy the ministries of pastors, with tragic personal consequences for ministry leaders and their families. When sexual misconduct involves a victim in the church congregation, there may be

costly litigation involving the pastor and the church that could potentially result in financial hardship or even ruin for the church, as well as emotional turmoil among the congregation.

Juniper Research reports that a quarter of a billion people are expected to be accessing mobile adult content by 2017 from their phones or tablets,

which is reportedly an increase of more than 30% from 2013.¹ Eric Reed, the managing editor of *Leadership Journal*, reports that surveys over the years show that up to 12% of pastors confess to inappropriate physical involvement outside of marriage—and in one poll *Leadership* found that 38% of pastors said Internet pornography was a temptation to them.² It is recommended that Christian counselors and local church governing bodies understand and help clergy guard against sexual misconduct.

Pastors Must Prepare for the Spiritual Battle

The Apostle Paul candidly explains in Romans 7:14-25 his battle with the sin nature, and joyfully explains in Romans 8:2 how the Holy Spirit sets a Christian free from the law of sin and death. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:12 (ESV), “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” Pastors should prepare for a battle for sexual integrity.

Pastors and Sexual Integrity: The Unique Challenges

Ralph Earle and Ken Wells, therapists at Psychological Counseling Services in Scottsdale, Arizona, in a *Christian Counseling Connection* newsletter article titled, “Sex in the Pulpit: Why Christian Leaders Fall,” discuss outcomes from a number of studies, as well as their own clinical experience with clergy who engaged in sexual misconduct. The studies evidenced a variety of issues that made clergy vulnerable to sexual sin, including: 1) emotional and physical exhaustion; 2) a lack of emotionally intimate relationships in their personal lives; 3) a struggle with boundaries and

poor control of sexual impulses; 4) limited education about the adverse effects of transference and countertransference; and 5) narcissism.³ Randy Alcorn explains in *Sexual Temptation: How Christian Workers Can Win the Battle*, “Those in full-time ministry often set their own schedules and lack the built-in accountability of most secular jobs, creating isolation and allowing considerable freedom to pursue an unhealthy relationship. Prime candidates for sexual sin are those who keep long hours away from home, are gone evenings and travel frequently.”⁴

Therefore an
overseer must be
above reproach, the
husband of one wife,
sober-minded,
self-controlled,
respectable, hospitable,
able to teach....
— 1 Timothy 3:2 (ESV)

The Value of Self-care

Pastors and local church governing bodies are encouraged to promote the concept of clergy self-care among church staff, and develop appropriate training with the help of a Christian counselor. Whitney Hopley, contributing writer for Crosswalk.com, discusses in her article, “10 Ways to Prevent Failure in Your Ministry,” a number of practical self-care ideas including: 1) don’t neglect your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health; 2) manage stress wisely; 3) set boundaries; and 4) remember it’s God’s ministry and rely on His unlimited power to work through you.⁵ H.B. London, Jr., former Pastor to Pastors with Focus on the Family, advises, “For years, I have been teaching there are at least three

things that lead to a failure, regardless of the category... limited time with the Lord, unresolved issues at home, and inadequate accountability.”⁶ It is recommended that Christian counseling be made available as needed to pastors and their families as an important self-care resource.

The Importance of Accountability and Legal Risk Management

Sexual misconduct liability can potentially result in verdicts in the millions of dollars for churches. Attorney Richard Hammar reported that child sexual abuse was the top reason churches went to court in 2015.⁷ Some states make sexual contact between clergy and a counselee a crime.

Church leaders are encouraged to develop policies and procedures for accountability pertaining to sexual integrity. Guidelines relating to employee personal conduct, Internet use, and church discipline can be developed in accordance with relevant law with the help of an attorney for placement in a church employee handbook. In addition, an attorney can help develop employment screening guidelines and application forms.

When there has been a reported incident of clergy sexual misconduct, church leaders are encouraged to consult with the church’s attorney, as well as its commercial liability insurance company for relevant guidance. A helpful resource for local churches that are navigating through issues pertaining to a pastor’s spiritual or moral failure is the 2007 Focus on the Family publication titled, “Pastoral Restoration: The Path to Recovery,” by Chris Fabry.⁸ ❖

The information is current as of the date that it is written. This article is provided solely for general educational purposes and does not constitute legal advice between an attorney and a client. The law varies in different jurisdictions. Consultation with an attorney is recommended if you desire legal advice.



REV. JOHN SANDY, J.D., M.A.B.C., M.S.J., is a licensed attorney in California and Illinois. John is also an ordained minister, a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor, and Board Certified Christian Counselor with the Board of Christian Professional and Pastoral Counselors and maintains a pastoral counseling ministry that is a Ministry Partner of the Inland Empire Southern Baptist Association in Ontario, California.

Endnotes

- 1 Juniper Research. “250 million to access adult content on their mobile or tablet by 2017, Juniper Report Finds.” (Sept. 2013). Retrieved October 10, 2016, from <https://www.juniperresearch.com/press-release/mobile-adult-pr1>.
- 2 Reed, E. (2006). “Restoring Fallen Leaders.” Retrieved September 27, 2016, from <http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2006/winter/22.21.html>.
- 3 Earle, R. and Wells, K. (2006). “Sex in the pulpit: Why Christian leaders fall.” *Christian Counseling Connection*, 2006, Iss. 4, citing, in part, Benson, G. (1994). “Sexual behavior by male clergy with adult female counselees: Systematic and situational themes.” *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2, and Irons, R. and Laaser, M. (1994). “The abduction of fidelity. Sexual exploitation of clergy: Experiences with inpatient assessment.” *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity Journal*, Vol. 1, No. 2.
- 4 Alcorn, R. (1989). *Sexual temptation: How Christian workers can win the battle*. InterVarsity Press.
- 5 Hopley, W. (2011). “10 ways to prevent failure in your ministry.” Adapted from M.T. Wilson and B. Hoffman. (2007). *Preventing ministry failure: A shepherdcare guide for pastors, ministers and other caregivers*. InterVarsity Press. Retrieved September 28, 2016, from <http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/how-to-prevent-failure-in-your-ministry.html>.
- 6 London, Jr., H.B. (2010). “Living a life of love: The defense against failure.” *The Pastor’s Weekly Briefing*, Vol. 18, No. 16.
- 7 Hammar, R. (2016). “The top 5 reasons religious organizations went to court in 2015.” Retrieved October 4, 2016, from <http://www.churchlawandtax.com/web/2016/july/top-5-reasons-churches-went-to-court-in-2015.html>.
- 8 Fabry, C. (2007). *Pastoral restoration: The path to recovery*. Retrieved September 28, 2016 at http://media.focusonthefamily.com/pastoral/pdf/PAS_PastoralRestoration.pdf.

Dastardly Dirty Deeds and Diabolic Deceptive Devices of the Devil



Newsflash... we have an enemy who hates our guts! Whether we realize it or not, we are in a war—an intensely private one with, inevitably, public ramifications. This unseen and unconventional war is nonetheless very real and deadly. It is just not the kind of war we see video clips of on the nightly news or read about on the Internet.

As a leader, you no doubt are cognizant that there are often red lasers targeted at your chest, if not your back. However, the most lethal shots fired at us are not from those we typically expect to attack... they are from our adversary.

Several thousand years ago, Israel was ready to fight a battle in which they were greatly outnumbered by the enemy. Elijah's servant was terrified, so being the effective leader he was, Elijah told him not to fear. When the Lord enlightened the servant so he could apprehend the thousands of angels on the battlefield ready to defend Israel, he grasped why Elijah had such unswerving and faithful confidence. See, our biggest battles are waged in the invisible spiritual realms, which are far more real than our sensate experiences enable us to perceive. Our vision must transcend our fleshly first glances.

The Bible emphasizes that our battle is not against "flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). However, it sure seems like it at times—especially when we experience "friendly fire" from someone we are leading. Every effective leader knows what it is like to be shot in the back by power struggles, personality conflicts, philosophical differences, and competing agendas. Many people we lead may not be the devil personified, but they sure seem to act like him

... the most damaging and destructive demons we wrestle with often reside within us.

at times! However, the most damaging and destructive demons we wrestle with often reside within us. Here is where the temptations of our private thoughts and fantasies, coping mechanisms, and unmet emotional and relational needs can wage a stealth attack and subtlety, but surely, wipe us out. Many leaders are lonely, vulnerable, do not prioritize their own needs first (think airplane oxygen mask) or humble themselves to be accountable to someone who cares enough about them to get in their face when needed.

If any leader ever “had it all,” King David did. He was handsome, heroic, and honored. Yet at a crucial time when he should have been out waging war against a public enemy, he stayed home and was nearly destroyed by a private, sexual encounter—one that went deathly viral. Peter warned us that our adversary prowls around like a roaring lion (I Peter 5:8), but predators are characteristically patient—they wait very long times to strategically pounce on their prey when least expected. Tragically, David did not humble himself to Nathan’s accountability until after several innocent people died.

We are commanded to not be outwitted by the devil’s evil, cunning traps (2 Corinthians 2:11). It is essential to be alert, aware, and advised of his strategies and schemes. We realize that he is totally hellbent on hurting God and His children as much as he can for as long as he can, yet we also need to be mindful that although Satan is *opposite of God*, he is not *equal to God* (I John 4:4). Learning to recognize his strategies helps us resist him and cause him to flee (James 4:7).

Try to identify which of these pronounced, purposeful, and progressively intensifying battle plans and spiritual warfare tactics the enemy of your soul activates to hurt you:

- **Distract.** The simplest way to effectively neutralize one’s opponent is to keep him/her preoccupied with something or someone else. This is the adversary’s most common weapon, and it saves from having to use the limited munitions supply of larger artillery. Whenever our attention is distracted from God, His plan, program, and purpose for our lives, often our energies are too. We are called to fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-2) so we can avoid the entanglements of sin.
- **Divert.** Once we are distracted, it is fairly easy to get us off track from pursuing and attaining our goal of living a righteous life. A commonly used military strategy is to create a diversion. After our attention is successfully diverted, we are not locked in on our targets and/or we can be tempted to drop our guards. If a bullet or missile is only a few degrees off, it will likely miss its intended target, rendering it ineffective. At best, when we are detoured in life, we are inconvenienced and delayed; at worst, we are vulnerable to attack and destruction. Sometimes all it takes for a martial arts combatant or an offensive lineman to win is to slightly redirect their opponent’s energies and efforts, thus successfully negating them. Again, it saves our enemy bullets when he/she can get us off track from accomplishing God’s will. Many times, he/she can “win” without even firing a shot.
- **Discourage.** Our adversary is exceptionally evil, yet patiently persistent, because he desires

to not just win the battles; he ultimately wants to win the war. The way he does that with many Christ-followers, especially leaders, is to sideline them with discouragement. When we are beaten, battered, bloodied, and bruised, it is natural to want to retreat from the front lines to regroup. When we are shot in the back from friendly fire, we understandably feel bad, betrayed, bummed, and bitter. War hurts. Battles are scary. Injuries take time to heal. We become exhausted and commonly experience Post-traumatic Stress Disorder from our battle wounds, which results in feeling down-trodden, depleted, dejected, and depressed.

- **Defeat.** Far from being content with merely taking us out of the battle emotionally, he wants to trounce us soundly, demoralize us, and deliver utter defeat. He keeps score. He brings up the past and functions as a well-informed tour guide for our guilt trips. He is personified as the accuser (Revelation 12:10), trying to always make us feel, act, and end up defeated. Nevertheless, remember... there is no more condemnation for those in Christ (John 3:17; Romans 8:1-2), and even in death we are promised victory (I Corinthians 15:54-58; I John 5:4). We are not the ultimate losers—our adversary is (Psalm 60:12).
- **Devour.** What just eats you up... or eats away at you? Do old hurts or fears gnaw at you? What negative or harmful thoughts

and behaviors consume you? Do you frequently swallow painful emotions? When you are leading on the battlefield, these are the heavy artillery the enemy of your soul launches in your direction. These missile strikes are designed not only to immobilize you, but also take you out. Like any cowardly predator, the enemy is slyly sneaking and slinking around looking for vulnerable, wounded, frail, stressed, burned out, sickly, damaged members of God's flock to launch a surprise attack on and chew up (I Corinthians 10:12).

■ **Destroy.** Finally, the devil is not content to merely distract, deter, discourage, defeat, and devour. John 10:10 gives an insightful job description of his motive,

methods, and mission—he comes to steal, kill, and destroy. Please understand this clearly: his devilish, diabolic design is to totally and completely annihilate you. He is ruthless, relentless, and reprehensible. Jesus defined him as a liar and murderer; that is who, what, and how he is (John 8:44).

So do not let yourself feel helpless, overwhelmed, and victimized. Put on the full armor (Ephesians 6:10-18), assume your position, take your stand in the battle, and wage war against what is destroying you. Instead of succumbing to the evil one and becoming a casualty, choose each day to live out the principles of life Jesus has fought so hard for on our behalf! We are overcomers (Revelation 12:10-11)! ✦

*Adapted from *Be Strong and Surrender: A 30 Day Recovery Guide* (2016) by Phil Dvorak, Paul Meier, and Jared Pingleton



JARED PINGLETON, PSY.D., serves as Vice President of Professional Development for the American Association of Christian Counselors. As a

clinical psychologist and credentialed minister, Jared is dually trained in both psychology and theology and specializes in the theoretical and clinical integration of the two disciplines. In professional practice since 1977, Jared is the author or coauthor of six books, including *Making Magnificent Marriages*, and numerous journal articles. He has served on the staff of two large churches, founded and directed two Christian counseling centers, and taught at several Christian colleges and seminaries.

EARN YOUR PH.D.
in **COUNSELING**
 AT LIBERTY UNIVERSITY'S
 CENTER FOR COUNSELING & FAMILY STUDIES

Designed to prepare counselors to serve as clinicians, educators, administrators, researchers, supervisors, and consultants, Liberty's doctoral program offers two concentrations — Advanced Clinical Skills and Counselor Education and Supervision. Both concentrations are available in an online format that includes weeklong residential intensives.

The program provides:

- Opportunity for career flexibility
- Training in advanced clinical interventions
- Experience using evidence-based practices
- Improvement of clinical practice skills

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY | CENTER for COUNSELING & FAMILY STUDIES

For more information,
 visit www.Liberty.edu/Counseling



INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF CHRISTIAN CARE

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING (3 AREAS TO CHOOSE FROM)

BOARD of CHRISTIAN LIFE COACHING



CHOOSE FROM 4 CREDENTIALS

- Board Certified Life Coach
- Board Certified Advanced Life Coach
- Board Certified Master Life Coach
- Board Certified Professional Life Coach

"Christian Coaching is about results. Our team of committed professionals is dedicated to coming alongside to add to your journey as a Christian Coach. The Bible has a lot to say about maximizing and stretching to reach our God-given potential. Credentialing is an important step in helping others realize their dreams and achieve their goals. We believe the Board of Christian Life Coaching will soon become the 'gold standard' in Christian coaching, exemplifying the highest level of excellence in competent practice and ministry. One strategic idea can change your world and equip you to be a world-changer for Jesus Christ."

Eric Scalise, Ph.D., BCPC
Executive Director, IBCC, BCLC



BOARD of CHRISTIAN CRISIS & TRAUMA RESPONSE



CHOOSE FROM 4 CREDENTIALS

- Board Certified First Responder
- Board Certified Crisis Response Specialist
- Board Certified Crisis Response Chaplain
- Board Certified Crisis Response Therapist

"The need for Christian Crisis Responders has never been greater. From the terrorist attacks of September 11th to Hurricane Katrina, the Virginia Tech shootings, and the BP Gulf oil spill, AACC's National Crisis Response Team has been mobilized to help meet the needs of those facing temible crisis, trauma, and loss. And beyond those large-scale events, there are crises in smaller communities that are equally devastating to those whose lives are impacted by the natural disasters, accidents, or acts of violence that have become a part of daily life in our modern age. Won't you join our growing team in providing consolation, comfort, encouragement and hope?"

Jennifer Cisney Ellers, M.A., BCCRT
Executive Director, BCCTR



BOARD of CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL & PASTORAL COUNSELORS



PROFESSIONAL/LICENSURE TRACK CREDENTIALS

- Board Certified Professional Christian Counselor
- Board Certified Christian Counselor

PASTORAL/MINISTRY TRACK CREDENTIALS

- Board Certified Pastoral Counselor
- Board Certified Biblical Counselor

SPECIALIZATIONS WITHIN YOUR CORE CREDENTIAL

- Sexual Addiction Specialist
- Post-traumatic Stress & Trauma Care Specialist
- Addictions & Recovery Specialist

"Christian counselors have the opportunity to be 'salt and light,' providing the rich counsel of God's truth as they minister to people who are overwhelmed with problems, pain, and suffering. Yet, the value and contributions of Christian counselors are not always recognized in the secular world. The BCPPC offers a merit-based credentialing system that promotes biblical competence and integrity in counseling, as well as an organizational voice within the faith-based community and the broader counseling world. Join us in supporting one another as co-workers in counseling to the glory of God."

Ian F. Jones, Ph.D., Ph.D., BCPPC
Executive Director, BCPPC



Call 1.800.526.8673 or visit www.ibccglobal.com

Pornography Use and Sexual Addiction

Religiosity & Internet Pornography Use

Short, M.B., Kasper, T.E., & Wetteneck, C.T. (2015). The relationship between religiosity and Internet pornography use. *Journal of Religious Health*, 54, 571-583. DOI: 10.1007/s10943-014-9849-8.

Mary Short and her colleagues at the University of Houston-Clear Lake conducted a study of the relationship between religiosity and Internet pornography use. Two hundred twenty-three college students participated in the study and had been recruited from the university participant pool or classroom announcements. The average age was 25 years (SD = 7.96). The sample was mostly female (85.2%) and heterosexual (93.3%). Over half (56.1%) were Caucasian, while 25.6% identified as Hispanic, 12.6% as African-American, and 5.8% as other ethnic backgrounds.

Most participants (64%) had viewed Internet pornography at some point and 26% currently viewed it. The researchers divided the sample into religious and non-religious groups. Participants who identified as either Catholic or Protestant were designated as religious, while those who identified as Spiritual, Agnostic, and Atheist were considered non-religious. Most of the sample (72.2%) was religious (44.8% Protestant; 27.4% Catholic), while 27.8% was non-religious (14.3% Spiritual, 9.9% Agnostic, and 3.6% Atheist).

Participants were asked about the effects of Internet pornography on various life domains. The domain cited as having the highest percentage of interference among participants was their relationship with God (16.1%), followed by their spirituality (14.3%), sleep (6.3%), and religious participation (4.9%).

The overall findings from the study were that participants who reported

greater religiosity also expressed less Internet pornography use. This included current use, past/ever use, and frequency of use. The researchers offered this: "... it may be that lifelong experience in a religion may establish a strong rejection toward [Internet pornography] use" (p. 580).

There are a few limitations to the study, one of which acknowledged the sample was comprised mostly of females. Although females can certainly present with struggles around Internet pornography use, it is unusual to see males underrepresented in a study of this nature.

In any case, Christian counselors may find it helpful to discuss ways pornography use may interfere with religion and spirituality, which are considered important domains of functioning and may be points of considerable distress for Christian clients.

Pornography, Body Image, and Well-being

Tylka, T.L. (2015). No harm in looking, right? Men's pornography consumptions, body image, and well-being. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity*, 16 (1), 97-107. DOI: 10.1037/a0035774.

Tracy Tylka at The Ohio State University conducted a study on the use of pornography among men, body image, and well-being. The sample was 359 male undergraduate students from a university in the Midwest. Participants ranged in age from 18 to 47 (M = 20.49; SD = 4.72). Most participants (82.2%) identified as white, while 5.6% identified as African-American, 4.5% as Asian American, 3.6% as multiracial, and 3.3% as other. First-year students were overrepresented (79.4%), and the sample was mostly heterosexual (96.7%).

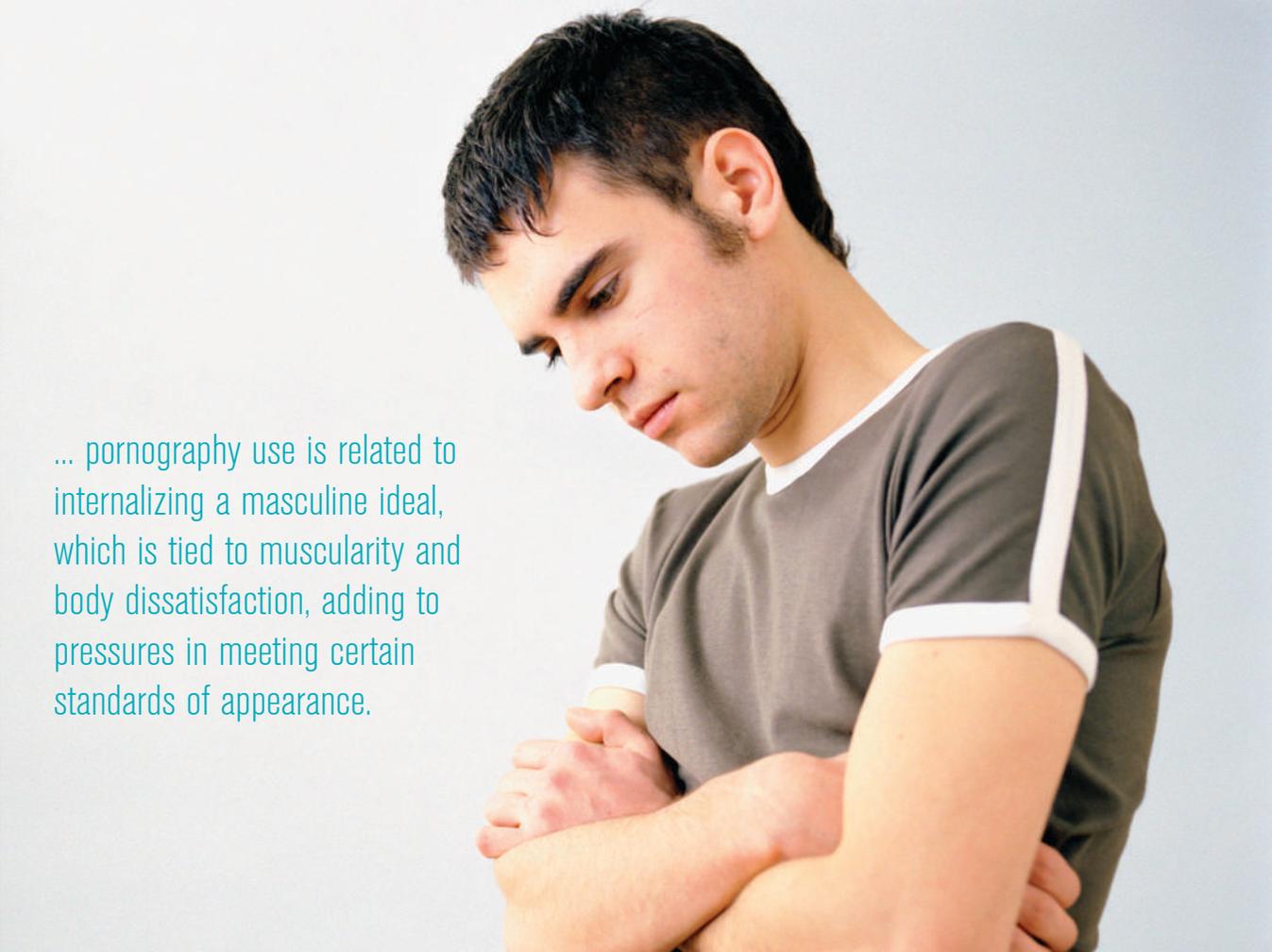
In terms of pornography use, 17.8% of participants in the study indicated *never* using pornography, while 27.6% indicated *rarely* looking at pornography. Nearly a third (32.9%) reported *sometimes* using pornography, while 13.6% reported *often*, 4.5% *usually* and 3.6% *always* using pornography.

In terms of analyses, Tylka looked at two models of men's body image and one model of men's emotional and interpersonal well-being. Regarding body image, pornography use was positively associated with muscularity and body fat dissatisfaction (by internalizing a masculine ideal referred to as a "mesomorphic ideal" of being "large, but not too large" in one's muscular build, p. 97). Pornography was also negatively connected to body appreciation through body monitoring.

Regarding men's emotional and interpersonal well-being, pornography use was positively connected to negative affect in an indirect manner via avoidance and romantic attachment anxiety. Pornography use was also negatively tied to positive affect through avoidance and relationship attachment anxiety.

These findings support the idea that pornography use is related to internalizing a masculine ideal, which is tied to muscularity and body dissatisfaction, adding to pressures in meeting certain standards of appearance. Body image can also be a concern because of the connection to body monitoring. According to the researcher, "This pattern of relationships indicates that men who view pornography are more likely to focus on how they look rather than what their body can do for them, and less likely to challenge cultural appearance ideals and engage in self-care behaviors for their body" (p. 103).

These findings also support a link



... pornography use is related to internalizing a masculine ideal, which is tied to muscularity and body dissatisfaction, adding to pressures in meeting certain standards of appearance.

between pornography use and romantic relationship avoidance and anxiety. The researcher notes that these findings are consistent with other suggestions of how “pornography scripts present gender-typed and sexualized working models of self and others, which could shape how men position themselves within their actual romantic relationships... By showing fleeting sexual encounters and noncommittal relationships, pornography may validate men’s fears that their real-life partners will cheat on, reject, and/or abandon them” (p. 104).

As the researcher suggests, counselors may want to consider, when working with men who use pornography, the extent to which pornography use may be tied to body image and relationship concerns, as well as their emotional well-being.

Clinicians’ Observations of Clients’ Addiction and Pornography Use

Short, M.B., Wetterneck, C.T., Bistrisky, S.L., Shutter, T., & Chase, T.E. (2016). Clinicians’ beliefs, observations, and treatment effectiveness regarding clients’ sexual addiction and Internet pornography use. *Community Mental Health Journal*, published online 27 June 2016. DOI: 10.1007/s10597-016-0034-2.

This is a study of the perceptions and experiences of clinicians who work with clients facing sexual addiction and use Internet pornography. The researchers obtained a convenience sample of clinicians through both online and in-person announcements, as well as the snowball technique. Participants were 183 mental health professionals, most of whom were licensed (84.7%). The mean number of

years in practice was 10.9 (SD = 10.8). Most practiced full-time (67.1%). Participants were primarily female (65%) and Caucasian (80.9%), with 8.2% identifying as African-American, 6.6% as Hispanic, and 4.3% as other. Most participants had their master’s degree (71.0%), while 24.6% had their doctoral degree.

Over a third (39.4%) of participants indicated ever working with clients with a sexual addiction, and 21.3% indicated they are currently seeing a client with a sexual addiction. About half (48.8%) of participants reported working with a client with Internet pornography use as their presenting problem (and 26.2% reported currently seeing a client who was using Internet pornography).

In terms of beliefs about sexual addiction and Internet pornography,

most mental health professionals (70.1%) indicated that they viewed sex addiction as a legitimate diagnosis, a view held by more clinicians who do not specialize in sexual disorders than those who do (72.2% versus 40% respectively). Most participants (68.3%) also thought problematic Internet pornography use “should be categorized as a sexual addiction,” with 81% of participants indicating that Internet pornography use can have negative effects. Also, most participants (63.9%) indicated they saw no benefits to Internet pornography use and most (68.5%) would not suggest the use of Internet pornography for therapeutic reasons. Those who specialized in this area were more likely to see potential benefits (70.0% compared to 34.4% of non-specialists) and would consider recommending it for therapeutic reasons (60.0% compared to 30.1% of non-specialists). Potential benefits of

Internet pornography use were to “facilitate assessment and treatment of sexual dysfunction and paraphilias, improve client-partner communication, and reduce client misconceptions, anxiety and shame about healthy sexuality.”

In terms of perceived competence, most mental health professionals (62.9% and 58.9%) did not believe they were competent to treat clients with sex addiction or problematic Internet pornography use, respectively. Specialists in sexual disorders were more likely to believe they were competent to treat both concerns. When asked what approach would be most effective for treating sexual addiction and Internet pornography use, participants indicated cognitive-behavioral therapy (43% and 58.8% endorsing it for sexual addiction and Internet pornography use, respectively). Next was an eclectic approach and a 12-step program.

As the authors suggest, sexual addiction and problematic Internet pornography use continue to be presenting concerns in clinical practice and many mental health professionals believe they have insufficient training to work with these concerns. Christian counselors may benefit from taking advantage of existing training programs and continuing education in these areas. ✦



MARK A. YARHOUSE, PSY.D., is the Rosemarie Scotti Hughes Chair of Christian Thought in Mental Health Practice and Professor of Psychology

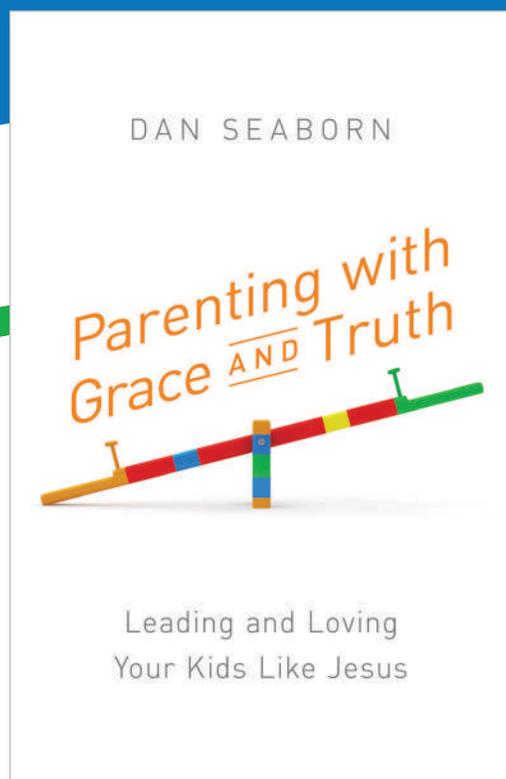
at Regent University, where he directs the Institute for the Study of Sexual Identity (sexualidentityinstitute.org). He is author or co-author of several books, including *Homosexuality and the Christian: A Guide for Parents, Pastors, and Friends*.

NEW from DAN SEABORN,
AACC's Marriage and Family
Division Leader

Helping Moms and Dads PARENT LIKE JESUS

*How could following
Jesus' example transform your
parenting and your relationship with your kids?*

Parenting with Grace and Truth is a timely book for parents who desire to live and lead like Jesus. In twelve chapters, author Dan Seaborn explores the notion of what parenting would be like if parents handled the delicate balance of speaking truth into their children's lives, while loving them with hearts full of grace.



Available Wherever Books Are Sold

LEARN MORE AT WinningAtHome.com

SHILOH RUN  PRESS

Answer the following questions from this issue of *Christian Counseling Today* by marking the appropriate circle. Once completed, you may send in this entire page or a photocopy with your payment to the address below. Please do not send cash. The quiz is open-book and you will need a minimum score of 70% to receive a letter of completion.

Modern-day Sexual Craze and Chaos: The Facts – Jim Cress

1. Sixty-four percent of men and 15% of women who say they are Christians
- a. view pornography at least once a month
 - b. use pornography several times per week
 - c. are involved in “sexting”
 - d. have emotional affairs on social media

Porn and Parenting in the 21st Century – Sean McDowell

2. Kids who view porn excessively
- a. become wired to respond sexually to an image
 - b. damage their ability to respond appropriately to a real person
 - c. develop damaging neurological “pathways” in the brain
 - d. all of the above

Pornography and the Brain: What Does the... – Linda Mintle

3. Viewing porn releases the hormones, oxytocin and vasopressin,
- a. causing decreased brain activity
 - b. arousing brain centers to facilitate reward seeking
 - c. causing the person to bond to the pornographic experience
 - d. relieving tension and lowering blood pressure

Protecting the Next Generation: Fighting the Porn... – Joel Hesch

4. Hesch believes the best legislative approach to limit porn is to
- a. call for a total ban on all pornography
 - b. restrict access to porn by minors based on science
 - c. argue in court on ethical and moral grounds
 - d. have local churches petition legislators for change

Recovery from Pornography Addiction: An Opportunity... – Mark and Debbie Laaser

5. In marital healing, the sobriety acronym LAMP stands for
- a. no Lying, Adultery, Masturbation, or Pornography
 - b. no Looking at, Approaching, or Meditating about People
 - c. Leave family, Avoid temptation, Marry, and Procreate
 - d. none of the above

Becoming an Uber Monk – Gary W. Moon

6. The most common request by Calvin’s passengers was
- a. to prove to them the existence of God
 - b. to explain why God allows tragedy
 - c. for intercessory prayer
 - d. for a discounted rate

Sex as Icon or Idol? How a Biblical... – Christopher West

7. In the Garden of Eden, the entrance of shame
- a. indicated the dawn of lust
 - b. brought erotic desire cut off from God’s love
 - c. drove people to cover their bodies to protect from lust
 - d. all of the above

Texting, Sexting, and Webcams... – Greg Miller

8. Those who expose themselves on Webcams are driven by
- a. the desire to be known and seen
 - b. the current standards of the prevailing culture
 - c. the peer pressure to please others
 - d. contempt for biblical standards and loss of shame

When Puberty and Pornography Collide – Meg Meeker

9. Teens and young adults comprise 30% of the population, but
- a. consume 90% of all online pornography
 - b. live with over 50% of the new infections of STDs
 - c. are 85% more likely to use sexting than others
 - d. are twice as likely to be depressed after seeing porn

Women and Pornography Today: It’s Way Past... – Marnie Ferree

10. The cybersex landscape has become...
- a. decidedly violent
 - b. insignificant as a shaper of sexuality for women
 - c. more love/relationship oriented for women
 - d. increasingly focused on liberating women

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

3 CE credits for NBCC or 1 CE for APA

Check one: \$25 AACC Member \$30 non-AACC Member

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail Address _____

Licenses/Certifications (type and #) _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Check Visa MC Discover American Express

Card# _____ Exp. _____

Name on Card _____

Signed _____
(exactly as it appears on card)



Mail To:
CE Coordinator
AACC, P.O. Box 739, Forest, VA 24551

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

1. Increase awareness and content expertise on current trends in mental health practice.
2. Be able to articulate a more comprehensive understanding of this issue’s core theme.
3. Be able to integrate spirituality and faith-based constructs into the delivery of care.

PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

Please rate the following on a scale of 1–5 (1 meaning **Poor** and 5 meaning **Excellent**):

1. _____ This issue of CCT is relevant to my practice as a mental health professional.
2. _____ The articles in this issue are comprehensive and well written.
3. _____ I would recommend this home-study program to other professionals.

The AACC is approved by the American Psychological Association (APA) to offer continuing education for psychologists, is a National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) Approved Continuing Education Provider (ACEP™), and meets the qualifications for continuing education credit for MFTs and LCSWs as required by the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (#3552). The AACC adheres to all APA and NBCC continuing education guidelines and maintains responsibility for this program and its content. Each individual should be aware of his/her state’s licensure/CE requirements. This Counsel Quiz also meets the ongoing CE requirements for counselors, life coaches, and crisis responders who are credentialed through the International Board of Christian Care (IBCC). Please allow 3-6 weeks for processing.

» **READER SERVICES**
WE WANT TO SERVE YOU!
1.800.526.8673

Planning to move? If you're moving, CCT wants to go with you! Call us at our toll-free customer service number. Please allow 2–3 weeks for the change to take place.

If you miss an issue, receive a damaged or duplicate copy, or would like to have another copy of our CCT, please call AACC Member Services.

Reader comments? If you have comments or questions about the editorial content of CCT, we want to hear about it. Please send them to Senior Editor.

Classified or advertising questions? Interested in placing an ad in our new classified section of CCT? Do you have a new program you would like others to know about? Just e-mail Randy Meetre, Director of Advertising, at Randy@AACC.net and he will offer guidance and instruction that will serve the needs of your growing business.

Address changes, renewal, delivery, magazine, and billing problems, write or call:

AACC Member Services
P.O. Box 739
Forest, Virginia 24551
or call 1.800.526.8673
e-mail: memberservices@AACC.net

Reader comments, reprint permissions, Letters to the Editor, write:

Senior Editor
Christian Counseling Today
P.O. Box 739
Forest, Virginia 24551
or call 1.800.526.8673
e-mail: publications@AACC.net

» AdVentures

■ **TIMBERLINE KNOLLS** is a residential treatment center located on 43 beautiful acres just outside of Chicago providing services to women with substance abuse, trauma, eating disorders and mood disorders. Responsible for providing family/primary therapy for residents and their families requesting Christian programming plans. Provides services as a member of the inter-disciplinary treatment team coordinating with the Attending Psychiatrist, Primary/Family Therapist and other team members. Provides spiritually integrated psychological care through use of Christian principals and interventions. You will have the opportunity to work with exemplary colleagues in a nurturing, residential milieu setting. LCSW, LCPC, LMFT, Psy.D. or Ph.D. licensed in the state of Illinois. Residential experience is helpful. For immediate consideration, qualified applicants should submit their resumes to jjaceres@timberlineknolls.com.

■ **CAPSTONE TREATMENT CENTER** is looking for high-quality therapists to join an awesome team in our great mission for a four-year Training Fellowship. We provide all expenses for training and certification as a CSAT (Certified Sexual Addiction Therapist), a CMAT (Certified Multiple Addiction Therapist), a CTT (Certified Trauma Therapist), and EMDR I and II. Capstone also provides paid supervision for licensures as an LPC and/or LMFT. In return, the therapist agrees to work for Capstone for four years from the first date of employment. Very competitive salary, 75% of health insurance for employee and family, matching retirement, 12-15 annual sabbatical days, and two to four weeks paid vacation. Qualifications include: strong Christian character and maturity; hard work ethic; minimum of a master's degree, preferably in Marriage and Family Therapy; a desire to learn how to treat core underlying issues—trauma, attachment, addictions and intimacy voids in relationships; and licensure potential as an LPC and/or LMFT. Apply online under the Employment page at www.capstonetreatmentcenter.com.

■ **DR. GREGG JANTZ AND THE CENTER FOR COUNSELING & HEALTH RESOURCES** welcome you to the world of opportunity that awaits! Our team specializes in treating individuals as a whole person, through individualized, comprehensive, world-renown healthcare methodologies unique to Dr. Jantz's approach. We are interviewing now for Mental Health Counselor/Therapist and an Admissions/Admitting Specialist. Please send cover letter and CV to: adam.m.taff@gmail.com.

The New
Christian Counselor
A Fresh Biblical & Transformational Approach
DR. RON HAWKINS
DR. TIM CLINTON

from Drs. Ron Hawkins and Tim Clinton
THE NEW CHRISTIAN COUNSELOR

amazon.com BARNES & NOBLE BOOKSELLERS HARVEST HOUSE

AD RATES \$1.75 per word, minimum 20 words; \$2.00 per capitalized BOLD word. \$50 minimum. TOPIC HEADINGS include Employment and Positions Wanted. E-mail Randy Meetre at Randy@AACC.net for deadline dates. Please e-mail ad copy to Randy@AACC.net. We are not responsible for errors in copy supplied to us. All copy is subject to publisher's approval. ALL ADS must have either (1) your NAME or (2) BOXHOLDER (or RESIDENT) if you don't use your name. Blind boxes are not available from CCT. INCLUDE your name and phone number, a street address if you use a P.O. Box in your ad, and full payment (check or credit card only). OTHER: In no event will the liability of the AACC or CCT exceed the ad cost.

Imaginary Lovers

Things really haven't changed all that much. Sexual sin and its destructive path have been around for a long time.

In the book of Genesis alone, there are numerous sexual sins listed. Since the beginning, the human heart seems to lust vivaciously and viciously for sex, love, and intimacy... no matter how it is defined. And in the New Testament, there are 25 references to the Greek term, *porneia*, referring to the human propensity for sexual immorality.

What has changed in our contemporary world is the accessibility and delivery systems that have put the lips of a strange woman/man within instant reach and touch—especially

for young men. Not many “mighty men” can withstand in their own strength the insane and tempestuous draw and enticement (James 1:13-16) with what is now available on one's preferred digital device, let alone 12-17 year-old boys who are the number one consumers of Internet porn. Alluring? Yes. Exhilarating? Yes. Consuming? Yes. Destructive? Yes.

Ask a man after God's own heart, David... the strongman, Samson... Onan... the daughters of Lot... Reuben... Absalom... the adulterous woman.

Proverbs 5:4-11 is clear about the seductive outcome: “... but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a

two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps follow the path to Sheol; she does not ponder the path of life; her ways wander, and she does not know it. And now, O sons, listen to me, and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your honor to others and your years to the merciless, lest strangers take their fill of your strength, and your labors go to the house of a foreigner, and at the end of your life you groan, when your flesh and body are consumed...”

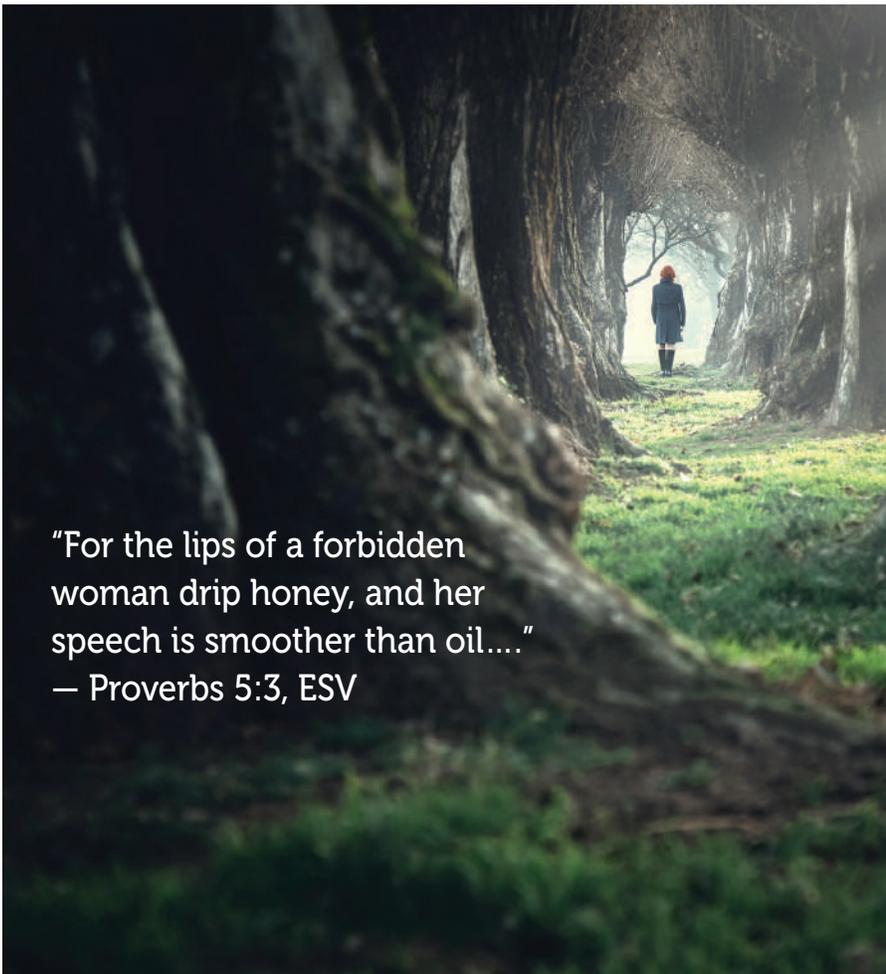
Even King Solomon, the wisest man to ever live, turned his eyes toward her and succumbed. His wives turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:3). As Proverbs prophetically describes, I believe we have yet to see the surging tsunami effect of this insatiable desire on the human condition and intimate relationships.

The Church stands in these hours overwhelmed and confused. Tragically, too often the Church stood by idly like a boy on a bicycle thinking that if he could just keep his eyes closed for one more second, when he opened them the storm will have passed.

Not so. A violent storm has been brewing for some time now. Christian apologist and author, Josh McDowell, recently proclaimed that the number one issue facing the Church and Christian family today is pornography. The imaginary lover rage is on.

And though porn is such a huge problem and creates so many others, all clinicians know that it is functionally a maladaptive symptom of some other, deeper problem within the porn user's heart. As with all addictions, pornography is simply a way to self-medicate one's deeper, underlying pain.

Spiritually, the problem with porn is



“For the lips of a forbidden woman drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil....”

— Proverbs 5:3, ESV

its idolatrous worship of an objectified, depersonalized body without a soul.

Relationally, the problem with porn is its (what Jesus called) adulterous violation of covenantal commitment.

Emotionally, the problem with porn is its false sense of intimacy and acceptance, resulting in self-perpetuating, self-induced, self-exacerbating shame.

Psychologically, the problem with porn is its creation of unrealistic expectations and comparisons with an unfulfillable, unattainable, narcissistically-indulged fantasy.

Neurologically, the problem with porn is its artificially-induced, biochemical high that becomes a norepinephrine-driven, habituating, insatiably-addictive cycle.

What's lost? Our cultural foundations are cracking. Love, intimacy, and meaningful marriage,

while desired, are seen as improbable. The heart of the matter is not that the yearning to be intoxicated with real love, intimate sex, and marriage will fade (Proverbs 5:19), but rather today's generations will believe and consume anything to fulfill the deepest longings of their hearts.

Sexual immorality of all kinds is a hijacked shortcut to meeting one's emotional and relational needs. It is like trying to quench one's God-given thirst with filthy, muddy, polluted salt water. Trying to meet legitimate human needs of the soul in illegitimate ways never works.

The resolution? The way forward? How to grapple with our flesh and its brokenness? The answers lie in humility... contrition... remorse... repentance... prayer... education... grace... forgiveness... mercy... deep, intoxicating love... romance

and friendship... faithfulness... an honorable bed... accountability... and personal discipline because "he dies for a lack of discipline" (Proverbs 5:23).

God help us. We need Your heart and strength to love and be loved. We have much work to do! ✕



TIM CLINTON, ED.D., LPC, LMFT, is President of AACC, Executive Director of the Center for Counseling and Family Studies/

Professor of Counseling and Pastoral Care at Liberty University, and co-founder of Light Counseling, Inc., a clinical practice serving children, adolescents, and adults. He is the author of several books, including *God Attachment* (Howard Books), *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling* (Harvest House), and *Break Through* (Worthy Publishing).



ENDORSED BY DR. JOHN TOWNSEND
CLINICAL PSYCHOLOGIST AND BEST-SELLING AUTHOR

Our clinical program is centered around the Growth Model, which is based on the work of Dr. John Townsend, and goes beyond symptom reduction to develop the internal character structure that adolescents need to face the challenges of life. Located in the Midwest, Compass Rose is a licensed long-term residential treatment center that works to redirect, rebuild and restore the lives of troubled girls ages 14-18 from around the country. As a Christ-centered organization, Compass Rose provides a positive, nurturing environment for teenage girls struggling with depression, anxiety, ADHD or bipolar disorder with a variety of acting out behaviors including running away, drug use, risky sexual behavior, self-harm and defiance. For more information about the program or to learn about our scholarship options, call **260-569-4757** or visit CompassRoseAcademy.org.



/CompassRoseAcademyOnline



@CompassRoseAca



/user/compassroseacademy



Help Couples Build Strong Marriages

Are you a pastor, church ministry leader, or simply someone who wants to help couples build and strengthen their marriage? We have marriage books, studies, and resources for every season of a couple's life together.

Preparing For Marriage ❖ Marriage Enrichment ❖ Marriage Restoration



Building strong marriages starts with having the right tools!

GET YOUR FREE COPY OF
Four Secrets to Building Lasting Marriages in Your Church
ChurchSource.com/HelpMarriages

or call **800-524-1588** to speak to one of our Ministry Resource Specialists

— While Supplies Last —



Jesus Is the Difference

Why Compassion?

Christ-Centered
Child-Focused
Church-Based

Visit our website at www.compassion.com/aacc.