



PORNOGRAPHY

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit?” (1 Cor. 6:18-19 NIV).

Definitions

Pornography is sexually explicit material designed specifically to cause arousal. While many people feel that pornography usage is a private matter, it becomes a social concern when private behavior has negative social consequences.

Sexting is a combination of the words sex and texting. Sexting is the use of a cell phone for sending sexual words and pictures.

Softcore pornography refers to still images and video footage that contain nude or semi-nude images and often depict simulated sexual activity. Media and advertising are filled with softcore pornographic images.

Hardcore pornography refers to still images and video footage that contain explicit depictions of sexual activity.

Child pornography is any visual depiction – including any photograph, film, video, picture, computer, or computer generated image or picture of sexually explicit conduct – where the production or visual depiction involves the use of a minor engaging in sexually explicit conduct. A minor is any child under the age of 18. Child pornography is illegal.

Pornography addiction is excessive pornography use that interferes with daily life. Pornography addiction is diagnosed when an individual engages in the overuse or abuse of pornography to the extent that he/she experiences negative consequences. Pornography’s addictive progression is usually one of early exposure, escalation, desensitization, and sexually acting out.

How can you become educated about this issue? Look for resources – websites, books, videotapes, audiotapes, blogs, and newspaper articles – that address pornography. Additionally, you will want to explore these resources:

- ❖ Woman’s Missionary Union, www.wmu.com/ProjectHelp. This site is WMU’s hub of information about human exploitation. It provides information and resources about all six areas of human exploitation, including pornography.
- ❖ Focus on the Family, www.focusonthefamily.com. Focus on the Family is a global Christian ministry dedicated to helping families thrive by providing help and resources for healthy relationships and parenting according to morals and values grounded in biblical principles.
- ❖ American Family Association, www.afa.net. The American Family Association is a pro-family organization that exists to inform, equip, and activate individuals to strengthen the moral foundations of American culture and to give aid to the church in its task of fulfilling the Great Commission.
- ❖ Enough Is Enough, www.enough.org. Enough is Enough is a non-profit organization that exists to make the Internet safer for children and families by raising public awareness about the dangers of Internet pornography and sexual predators and advancing solutions that promote equality, fairness, and respect for human dignity with shared responsibility between the public, technology, and the law.
- ❖ A Parent’s Guide to Internet Safety, www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/parent-guide/parent-guide. This guide was produced by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to help parents understand the complexities of online child exploitation.
- ❖ Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, SBC, www.erc.com. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission is an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention that is dedicated to addressing social and moral concerns and their implications on public policy issues from City Hall to Congress.

- ❖ The Witherspoon Institute, www.socialcostsofpornography.org. *The Social Costs of Pornography*, produced by the Witherspoon Institute, is an extensive report that presents the mounting evidence of pornography's deep impact on our social life.
- ❖ Pure Life Ministries, www.purelifeministries.com. Pure Life Ministries exists to serve Christian individuals and organizations dealing with sexual sin by providing biblically based counseling, teaching resources, and a public speaking ministry with the goal of leading Christians to victory of over sexual sin through deeper life in God.
- ❖ Convergence Summit, www.convergencesummit.net/pdf/Recommended_Resources.pdf. The Convergence Summit was a meeting focused on developing solutions to the challenge of educating and protecting young people and families from the harms of sexually graphic content and sexual exploitation through mobile devices and applications.
- ❖ *Solitary Confinement, The Isolation of Living in the "Secret" Sin of Pornography Use*, by Jimmy Tarrant. Written by a South Carolina pastor, this book seeks to help readers understand the pain, loneliness, and isolation that pornography brings to life and the healing that can come through hard work and an ever-deepening relationship with Christ.

What can you and your church do to combat Pornography? Here are some suggestions:

- ❖ Provide a class for your church and community about Internet safety and security. Share about the importance of monitoring online usage and ways to block inappropriate content. Include information on TVs, computers, phones, gaming systems, and all electronics that can be linked to the Internet. Talk about the need for supervision of children and teens whenever they are online and the importance of keeping electronics in open areas of the home.
- ❖ Find someone from your community who can share a personal testimony with your youth and college students on the dangers of pornography, and/or invite someone from a community center or police department who can share the effects of pornography as seen in their work.
- ❖ Discuss pornography in your young women's group. Talk about the book *Fifty Shades of Grey* and movies such as *Magic Mike* and what is being called "mommy porn." Discuss the effect these types of books and movies may have on marriage relationships. Also discuss how women might react if their husbands or boyfriends were to engage in this type of media. Current statistics show that more than one-third of visitors to all adult (pornography) websites are women and that more than 9 million women visit adult websites each month. (*The Alabama Baptist*, August 16, 2007)
- ❖ Provide open and honest talk times for teenagers inside and outside the church. Discuss issues of sexuality and include biblical perspectives on how God desires us to treat ourselves and others with respect. Include the dangers of sexting and pornography.
- ❖ Sponsor a "Sunday Off" when everyone in the church turns off the Internet and cell phones. Spend free time in family activities and prayer. SC WMU has produced a prayer guide that can help you pray against pornography, trafficking, and other issues of human exploitation. Prayer guides can be downloaded from www.scwmu.org.
- ❖ Plan a marriage retreat/class that will focus on healthy sexuality for couples in your church. Include discussions on pornography and its affect on marriage. Pornography usage can be a pathway to infidelity and divorce.
- ❖ Use the resources listed in this handout to share with parents the necessity of educating children about pornography and its effects. Children should understand that if someone tries to show them pornographic images then they should tell their parents or someone whom they trust immediately. It is crucial that parents keep open lines of communication with children so they will know if and when their child is in danger of pornography exposure and addiction.
- ❖ Prayerwalk your community or city where there are strip clubs and adult video/bookstores. Plan a "Let Your Voice be Heard" letter writing campaign sponsored at your church about a situation, bill, or local area of concern. Encourage your church to start a support group or accountability group for those struggling with pornography usage or sexual addictions. More information, instructions, and sample resources for each of these ideas can be found on the CD *Release and Restore: Addressing Human Exploitation Through the Church*. This resource can be purchased from www.wmystore.com.