

The Power of Porn

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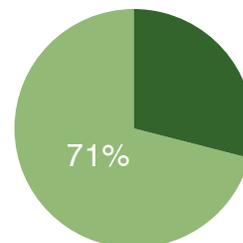
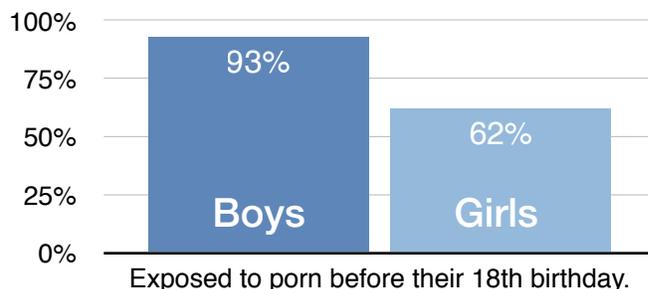
Sadly, this is something we hear more and more each year from parents. Unfortunately, parents often only realize the reality of the situation after the fact.

Many adults are suppressing this possibility with the naïve statement: “Not my kids.” I’ve (Jonathan) heard it hundreds of times from moms and dads at my parent workshops across the country. “Our kids aren’t even thinking about this stuff yet,” they claim.

Well, those of us who spend a lot of time with teenagers (churched and unchurched), know the majority of young people today are well versed in porn vocabulary and have seen far more than Mom and Dad ever dreamed.¹

To promote understanding of the porn pandemic, Covenant Eyes, an online enterprise that seeks to help those held hostage by addictions to pornography, compiled statistics on porn that were made available in 2013, exposing 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to porn.²

Turning the focus exclusively on teenagers, we find a reality that is just as saturated with porn as adults’, if not more so. For example:



Feel the need to hide their online activity from parents.



“Porn doesn't have a demographic—it goes across all demographics.”

That prevalence of porn in the lives of all people led Paul Fishbein, founder of Adult View News, to say, “Porn doesn't have a demographic—it goes across all demographics.”

It's not uncommon to find onscreen sex anymore. Popular shows like Game of Thrones have created a gateway to porn. We live in a country where much of our top entertainment choices are on pay channels like HBO, Showtime and Starz, all which provide explicit sex and nudity as a main course of their entertainment diet.³

Many young people are imitating this kind of on-screen behavior.⁴ Young boys are asking young girls if they want to do a threesome. After all, almost every good onscreen sexual experience includes a threesome.⁵

Most of those findings have been well-documented over the years, but porn's negative impact seems to be growing in new and different directions as of late. Take, for instance, “revenge porn.” Revenge porn happens when Regular Joes and Janes take naked pictures/videos of themselves to send to their significant other, only to have them surface later, after the couple has broken up with one another. Revenge porn has become so prolific that advocate websites (like this one⁶) now exist to help those who have been hurt by the betrayal of a former significant other.

As porn continues to surface in the public sector, we can expect even more broken lives to be found in its wake. Could that be why the men's magazine GQ gave its readers “10 Reasons Why You Should Quit Watching Porn”?⁷

Parents have their hands full when it comes to stopping the negative influences of a porn-saturated nation. Fortunately for those who care, there are several tools that can aid in the fight.

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Here are a few practical ways parents (and youth leaders) can help the teenagers they love actually stop watching porn.

1. Get educated about porn, its prevalence, and its power.

Ironically, the Internet that provides so much of the devastating porn for free is also filled with thousands of resources to help you better understand how porn works and why it's so addictive, like this free e-book from Covenant Eyes.⁸ I (Jonathan) write about it frequently and have linked helpful studies like this one.⁹ Pastor Mark Driscoll has even released a fairly hard-hitting document called Porn Again Christian that specifically targets Christians who are trapped in the fiery ring of porn.¹⁰ There are so many resources available that one of them is bound to fit the need you're facing. The more you know about the problem, the better chance you have of solving it.

2. Introduce accountability.

Young people lack accountability in almost every aspect of their lives, but when it comes to the arena of sexual purity, the consequences for flying solo can be devastating. Get your teenagers a set of "digital eyes." There are plenty of groups that offer focused resources to help a young person maintain their purity while surfing the web; the edgy XXXChurch.com is just one of them. Their X3Watch program is a great place to start (though it's not the only one that ministry-minded folks offer).¹¹ Accountability software is a great way to start the accountability process, but it's far from the best. The best kind of accountability comes in human form, so....

3. Engage teens on a frequent basis about pornography and lust.

Talk with your teenagers over meals, in the car, and while doing chores together. Ask tons of questions instead of offering lectures, though. Let them know that you care about their sexual future, that you understand how difficult it is to stay pure in our culture, and that you are willing to sacrifice on their behalf. Those kinds of talks will make a big difference. But don't just limit your conversations to "porn." Remember, pornography is just one face of the overall lust problem many teens have. Give them tools to help them deal with lust so that it doesn't lead to pornography.

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Porn is a powerful enemy that seeks to destroy anyone it can get in its clutches. Young people and teenagers are particularly vulnerable to this monster. If your teenagers are among the unfortunate users of pornography, prepare yourself to be willing to make some big changes in your family's life for the sake of your kids. Get professional help and enlist anyone in your faith community who's willing to pray for you. Porn is big, but it's only going to get bigger. Get all the help you can so that when you face this problem, you and your teenagers are able to overcome it.

1. <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2432591/Porn-pernicious-threat-facing-children-today-By-ex-lads-mag-editor-MARTIN-DAUBNEY.html>
2. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>
3. <http://www.thesource4ym.com/youthculturewindow/article.aspx?ID=254>
4. <http://www.today.com/health/boys-also-harmed-teen-hookup-culture-experts-say-6C10919522>
5. <http://www.jonathanmckeewrites.com/archive/2013/04/03/great-powerful-franco.aspx>
6. http://www.endrevengeporn.org/?page_id=22
7. <http://www.gq.com/blogs/the-feed/2013/11/10-reasons-why-you-should-quit-watching-porn.html>
8. http://www.covenanteyes.com/science-of-porn-addiction-ebook/?utm_campaign=porn-circuit&utm_content=bottom_blog_post&utm_medium=web&utm_source=blog_post
9. <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2013/10/10846/>
10. http://theresurgence.com/books/porn_again_christian
11. <http://x3watch.com/>

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