

*Question: I have a Christian friend who is getting addicted to computer pornography and cybersex.*

*What should I do, pretend it is none of my business? What would Jesus do?*

God created us as sexual beings and said, “It is very good” (Genesis 1:27-31). Within marriage, sexual relationships between men and women are sanctified and blessed by God (Genesis 2:23-25; Hebrew 13:4). But while sexual desire in itself is not sinful, we must understand that it has potential for either blessing or destroying our lives, much like fire and water. Fire and water are essential to our lives, but we must maintain a healthy respect for the devastating power of these elements. They can be extremely dangerous when misused and unrestrained. The same is true of sexual desire.

Pornography exists for the purpose of exploiting healthy sexual desire and turning it into sinful sexual lusts. Jesus warned his kingdom people that “anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matthew 5:27-28). Since the advent of the World Wide Web, pornography has exploded in our society. Those who would never enter a porn store or theater can now access it privately in their offices or homes. The addictive and destructive effects of pornography on our adult population are having a devastating affect upon marriages, family and life in general. Our national sense of sexual morality is being eroded.

The habitual viewing of sexual images on the internet often begins with mere curiosity or by innocently clicking an unsolicited email. But it has led even Christian leaders into an addiction that is extremely difficult to tame. Once this fire has been ignited, it is extremely difficult for a person to extinguish it. The sight of these sexual images is almost impossible to remove from our memories. (Read what the Bible says about the power of temptation to sin in James 1:13-15.) If we really care about our friends who are under the influence of porn, we must not remain casual or indifferent about the problem. This is not just a private matter; it is one that affects others.

I believe Jesus would tell us to confront any friend who is involved with porn. Do it privately and in the spirit of meekness and love (Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1-2). We should acknowledge our own vulnerability

as humans and offer to help without embarrassing or demeaning a person. However, we must not diminish the seriousness of this sin against God, a spouse and others who love him. This action may provide your friend the excuse he has longed for, thus helping him to confess the problem and get help. Internet pornography is claiming a high price: lost jobs, failed marriages, destroyed families, ruined reputations. Unless stopped soon, porn can desensitize and lead to more overt sexual sins. The ultimate outcome is spiritual and eternal separation from God.

Combating pornography often requires assistance from a trained and experienced counselor as well as a strong desire to overcome it on the part of the addict. In the process of repenting and seeking God's forgiveness, the person will find increasing freedom from the power of sin, relief from the burden and guilt and a hope for restoring the relationships with family and friends (James 1:12).

While addiction to pornography is a very difficult problem to overcome, many have conquered it. So maintain a spirit of forgiveness and optimism. If God could forgive King David for committing adultery with Bathsheba and having her husband killed, our friends can be forgiven and restored to spiritual health (2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51). Pray with any friend who is involved with porn, and remind him that nothing is impossible with God (Philippians 4:13). Challenge him to accept personal responsibility for the choices he makes in his own life (James 5:16).

If I can assist anyone in finding resources and counseling for dealing with pornography, please contact me. [Send questions or comments to University Church of Christ, 801 N. 12<sup>th</sup>, Murray, KY 42071 or phone 270-753-1881. This article is reproduced on the web: [www.nchrist.org](http://www.nchrist.org) ] 2012/05/04