

## Pornography May 23, 2010

### 1. **How is pornography generally defined?**

The world would seek a definition of pornography that avoids any moral judgment:

“Writings, pictures, etc. intended primarily to arouse sexual desire.”

In this amoral view, pornography is considered simply an adult form of entertainment, a way of spicing up one’s life, or increasing the interest level in certain adult social functions such as bachelor parties.

For example, Shepherd Smith of the Fox News Channel expressed this casual view of the pornography seen in some TV programs as simply “cool nudity.”

### 2. **How would Scripture define pornography.**

Though the word “pornography” is derived from an ancient Greek word meaning “the writing of harlots,” it doesn’t occur in the Bible.

However, the related Gk word *porneia* (translated either “fornication” or “immorality”) occurs quite frequently in the NT.

To do justice to this topic biblically, the additional idea of “lust” must also be taken into account—the passionate desire for something God has forbidden.

### 3. **What are the underlying spiritual and moral issues involved?**

From the Christian viewpoint, pornography is not amoral but involves significant spiritual issues.

#### Pornography is idol worship

Pornography draws people into passionate false worship of a false god—the human body.

This god promises its worshipers pleasure, but that pleasure is always less than promised, and it is so short-lived that Heb 11:25 calls it “*the passing pleasures of sin.*”

They are soon replaced with painful feelings of guilt, frustration, and self-condemnation.

Pornography, like every other form of idolatry, is based on Satanic deception.

Rom 1:25 says of all sinners (including pornographers), “*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.*”

Several years ago a cheese company aired a TV ad in which 2 teenage boys are seen at the beach secretly gawking in the distance at a young female sunbather eating a piece of cheese.

Her exaggerated movements were made to look sensual by filming them in slow motion.

Background music gave the impression that her love for the cheese was so passionate, eating it was something akin to a religious experience.

Periodically, the camera would switch to the boys staring at her immodest bathing suit, a forest fire of hormones obviously raging within them.

To them, she is a goddess.

Coincidentally, the camera crew from a local TV station happened to be in the area as the commercial was being filmed, and interviewed the young woman afterward.

She said she was planning to go home and drink a lot of water, “because you know what too much cheese does to a person....”

She wasn’t a goddess after all. Just a normal young lady with constipation problems!

This, like all pornography, was based on a lie, but it sold a lot of cheese.

Pornography itself is a Satanic deception that is never what it appears to be.

True and lasting pleasure is found only in worship of, and communion with, God.

The pleasures of pornography are counterfeit pleasures which Satan offers to our fleshly nature as a substitute for the true pleasure of sensing God's loving presence.

Psa 16:11 (David)—*“Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.”*

Looking for pleasure in a creature rather than the Creator is a sin for which God rebuked Israel.

Jer 2:13—*“My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, The fountain of living waters, To hew for themselves cisterns, Broken cisterns, That can hold no water.”*

Satan uses the “broken cistern” of pornography to control people by deceiving them into forsaking the living water of God that alone can satisfy their souls.

In the case of believers, he uses it to alienate them from God, weaken them spiritually, and cause them to question God's love for them.

### Pornography is slavery

The world likes to call it a sexual addiction, but in reality it's a form of slavery.

II Pet 2:19 refers to people controlled by their fleshly desires as *“slaves of corruption.”*

Rom 6:16—*“Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?”*

On January 24, 1989, Ted Bundy was executed as a serial murderer who had killed 28 women.

The night before his execution, he was interviewed by James Dobson, and he told him that the path to his becoming a serial killer began with his looking at pornographic magazines he found in a dump near his home.

Over time, his craving for pornography involved increasingly violent images, which he eventually chose to act out himself.

Bundy's own words: “I knew it was wrong to think about it, and certainly, to do it was wrong.

I was on the edge, and the last vestiges of restraint were being tested constantly, and assailed through the kind of fantasy life that was fueled, largely, by pornography....

I've lived in prison for a long time now, and I've met a lot of men who were motivated to commit violence. Without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography - deeply consumed by the addiction. The F.B.I.'s own study on serial homicide shows that the most common interest among serial killers is pornographers. It's true.”

Bundy's words even testify of demonic involvement through pornography:

“It was like coming out of some horrible trance or dream. I can only liken it to (and I don't want to overdramatize it) being possessed by something so awful and alien, and the next morning waking up and remembering what happened and realizing that in the eyes of the law, and certainly in the eyes of God, you're responsible. To wake up in the morning and realize what I had done with a clear mind, with all my essential moral and ethical feelings intact, absolutely horrified me.”

### Pornography is degradation

It is degrading of the human body in general, perverting it from God's original purpose in creating it—to glorify Himself.

This is especially grievous in Christians because, as 1 Cor 6:20 says, *“You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.”*

It degrades the person whose body is being lusted after, reducing it to a mere object to accommodate someone else's lust.

Because God created man in 2 parts, as *“body and spirit”* (I Cor 7:34), the body is just as much a part of man’s true being as his spirit.

It’s not just an outer shell in which the “real inner man” resides.

When one person degrades another person’s body, he degrades the whole person. It degrades the idol worshiper, who worships the creature rather than its Creator.

In addition, as pornography leads to other sins of the flesh, I Cor 6:18 points out that, *“Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.”*

### Pornography is spiritual war

Pornography ignites a spiritual war within a believer which he will always lose, and which can only lead to an inner conflict involving feelings of guilt, defeat, and self-disgust.

That’s what Paul was talking about in Rom 7:14-15—*“We know that the Law is spiritual; but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. / For that which I am doing, I do not understand; for I am not practicing what I would like to do, but I am doing the very thing I hate.”*

Having weakened himself spiritually by succumbing to the flesh through pornography, a believer is then more likely to fall victim to future temptations.

Gal 6:8—*“For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption.”*

Believers in this predicament often hope that their own self-disgust will motivate them to avoid the same temptation next time.

But having sown to their flesh, they’re actually more likely than ever to reap corruption from the flesh again.

Pornography takes the mind off the things of the Spirit and sets it on sensual things of the flesh.

In Rom 8:6-7, Paul says the mind set on the flesh is death, *“because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.”*

At the very moment a believer needs all the strength he can muster to overcome his slavery to his passions, he finds himself alienated and estranged from God, the only possible Source of such strength.

He needs the power that comes from being filled with the Spirit, but he and the Spirit aren’t on speaking terms at that moment.

We must never underestimate Satan’s insidious and demonic schemes against our souls.

### Pornography involves secrecy

Involvement in pornography is inherently secretive, because it is so shameful.

Jesus said (Mt 5:28), *“Everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already **in his heart.**”*

Involvement with pornography takes place first and foremost in the secrecy of the heart.

It is 2 teenage boys at the beach secretly watching a sunbather eating cheese, David’s secretly watching Bathsheba bathe herself, or a middle aged man sneaking around as he rummages through the adult section of a video store.

The home has become an important outlet for internet pornography, as a pornographer enters the private, secret world of his computer monitor.

This makes pornography a sin to which Christians can be especially susceptible, because it’s so easy to hide, even from those who think they know us best.

Christians caught up in pornography can go to church, sing, pray and praise God, and no one knows sees through their hypocrisy—except them, God, and the devil.

#### 4. Where does pornography come from?

From the depravity of the human heart.

Mk 7:21—“*For from within, out of the **heart** of men, proceed the evil thoughts, **fornications** [porneia], thefts, murders, adulteries.*”

From the fleshly nature with which even Christians still struggle after they are regenerated.

Gal 5:19—“*Now the deeds of the **flesh** are evident, which are: immorality, **impurity** [porneia], sensuality....*”

From the world’s whole system of corrupt values.

1 Jn 2:15-16—“*Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. / For all that is in the **world**, the **lust of the flesh** and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is **from the world.***”

From the wrath of God, turning people loose to worship the idols for which their hearts crave.

Rom 1:28—“*And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, **God gave them over** to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper, / being filled with all unrighteousness, **wickedness** [porneia]....*”

#### 5. What can a Christian do to overcome the temptations of pornography?

1<sup>st</sup>, one must see it for what it is.

It’s not merely an adult form of entertainment, or writings and pictures to arouse sexual desires. It is a very serious spiritual problem involving idolatry, slavery, degradation, spiritual warfare, and secret sins.

It is such a serious problem that it can never be dealt with through half measures.

2<sup>nd</sup>, one must make up his mind, once and for all, to overcome it.

Virtually every Christian who struggles with this issue would like to be rid of it, but not every Christian has reached a point at which he’s ready to pay the cost to deal with it seriously. Jesus said (Mt 18:9)—“*If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out.*”

I.e., deal with sin seriously, realizing the seriousness of its eternal implications.

This means giving up the option of even occasionally dabbling in pornography, to “*flee immorality*” (I Cor 6:18) as Joseph fled from Potiphar’s wife, leaving his coat.

Col 3:5 says—“*Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to **immorality** [porneia].*”

A Christian must completely eliminate all pornography from his life, becoming dead to it.

Jms 1:14-15—“*Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own **lust**. / Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to **sin.***”

Christians aren’t to allow even momentary openings for lustful thoughts in their minds.

Heb 13:4 says—“***Fornicators** [ pornos ] and adulterers God will judge.*”

That’s a very good reason for making up one’s mind to overcome this temptation.

3<sup>rd</sup>, walk by the Spirit

Gal 5:16-17—“***Walk by the Spirit**, and you will not carry out the **desire of the flesh**. / For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.*”

This means continually yielding our hearts and lives to the Spirit’s control, which means continually obeying the commands of Scripture, thus reorienting our minds.

In order to do that, a Christian must meditate on Scripture, hiding it away in his heart.

Psa 119:9-10—“*How can a young man keep his way **pure**? By keeping it according to **Thy word**. / With all my heart I have **sought Thee.***”