

CFC Equip: Human Sexuality

February 9, 2020 – Pornography and Its Consequences

I. Introduction: The Prevalence of Pornography

- American Heritage Dictionary: Sexually explicit pictures, writing, or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal.
- Catechism of the Catholic Church: “Pornography consists in removing real or simulated sexual acts from the intimacy of the partners, in order to display them deliberately to third parties.”
- Erik Raymond: “Lust is any craving to experience the intimate pleasures reserved for marriage but apart from this sacred institution.”
- John Freeman: “Lust is that heart-hunger in me that denies and disavows those made in the image of God, whether it’s another man or another woman, and reduces them to what I can get out of them to feed (and fill) my hungry heart right now. This means that by nature, lusts twist, devour, consume, and use others for our own benefit.”
- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 – [3] *For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality (πορνεία); [4] that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, [5] not in the passion of lust (επιθυμία) like the Gentiles who do not know God; [6] that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. [7] For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. [8] Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.*

II. The Problem with Pornography

1. Pornography mocks the gift and Giver of sex.
2. Pornography seeks pleasure without intimacy.
3. The problem of masturbation.
 - Tim Challies (*Sexual Detox*) “A close examination of the Bible’s teaching on sexuality uncovers no reason to believe that God ever intended sex to be a private pursuit. Indeed, the heart and soul of sexuality is the giving and receiving of sexual pleasure between two people: one husband and one wife. Sex is intended to be a means of mutual fulfillment, an expression of love in which a husband thinks foremost of his wife, and the wife thinks foremost of her husband.... This mutual giving and

receiving, the heart of God’s purpose for sexuality, is exactly what masturbation does not and cannot provide. Masturbation strips sexuality of its divine purpose of mutual fulfillment. Where legitimate sexual expression is meant to produce unity, masturbation produces isolation and division.... Masturbation (again, even in the hypothetical absence of pornographic imagery) deeply undermines a man’s [or woman’s] ability to deny and resist his most self-centered, sinful, isolationist tendencies. Masturbation simply cannot fulfill God’s design for sexuality, and thus has no place in the life of one who calls himself a Christian.”

4. Pornography re-wires your brain.
 - William Struthers (*Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*): “As men fall deeper into the mental habit of fixating on these images, the exposure to them creates neural pathways. Like a path is created in the woods with each successive hiker, so do the neural paths set the course for the next time an erotic image is viewed. Over time these neural paths become wider as they are repeatedly traveled with each exposure to pornography. *They become the automatic pathway through which interactions with women are routed.* The neural circuitry anchors this process solidly in the brain. With each lingering stare, pornography deepens a Grand Canyon-like gorge in the brain through which images of women are destined to flow. This extends to women that they have not seen naked or engaging in sexual acts as well. All women become potential porn stars in the eyes of these men. They have unknowingly created a neurological circuit that imprisons their ability to see women rightly as created in God’s image.”
 - **1 Timothy 5:1-2** – [1] *Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, [2] older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*
5. Pornography wrecks the self-image of fellow image-bearers.
6. Pornography is progressive in nature.
 - Tim Challies: “A man’s first glimpse of porn may be fleeting—intriguing but short-lived. A naked body is all the eye needs, and a single glimpse provides plenty of fuel for a while. But before long the heart craves more.... Certain things that interested you at the beginning, that got you going, now seem pretty bland. And things that were once gross are already beginning to intrigue you. This is the way sin is. This is the way sin always is. It will always demand more of you.”
7. Pornography is costly.
 - **Matthew 5:8** – [8] *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.*

- **Hebrews 12:14** – [14] *Strive...for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

III. God's Solution to Fight Pornography

1. Better Beauty

- Tim Keller: "What the heart most wants the mind finds reasonable, the emotions find valuable, and the will finds doable. What makes people into what they are is the order of their loves — what they love most, more, less, and least. That is more fundamental to who you are than even the beliefs to which you mentally subscribe. Your loves show what you actually believe in, not what you say you do. Change happens not just by giving the mind new arguments but also by feeding the imagination new beauties."
- Some texts to help feed your heart the better beauty of the gospel:
 - Zechariah 3:1-5**
 - Micah 7:8-9**
 - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

2. Vigilant Strategy

- Put Off
 - Matthew 5:27-30** (see also Matthew 18:7-9; Mark 9:43-48) – [27] *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' [28] But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. [29] If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. [30] And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*
 - Colossians 3:5-6** –[5] *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. [6] On account of these the wrath of God is coming.*
 - If you were going to take this seriously, what has to die in your life?
 - What supply lines do you have to cut off?
 - What "freedoms" do you have to give up to get out of your bondage?

■ Put On

- Colossians 3:1-4** – [1] *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. [2] Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. [3] For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [4] When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
- Romans 13:14** – [14] *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*
- Proverbs 5:18-23** – [18] *Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, [19] a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love. [20] Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress? [21] For a man's ways are before the eyes of the LORD, and he ponders all his paths. [22] The iniquities of the wicked ensnare him, and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. [23] He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.*
 - Tim Challies: "Every time you look at pornography, every time you give in to lust, you are diminishing your ability to be focused on one woman, intoxicated in her love and finding your joy and satisfaction in her alone."

3. Honest Community

- Tell your spouse (where applicable).
- Tell a trusted member of your Growth Group.
- Tell an elder at this church.
- Confess your sins quickly.