

The Plague of Pornography

Introduction:

- I. Illustration: The fear that a pandemic causes
 - A. In October of 1347, a plague known as the Black Death was introduced into Europe and, in the next five years, it would kill more than 20 million people in Europe, almost one-third of the continent's population. In the 14th century, an estimated 75 million people died from this plague. It took less than a week to kill. (history.com)
 1. It would be hard to imagine the hysteria caused by a 50% death count in some areas of Europe.
 2. Sociologists assert that the disease radically changed the course of human history.
 - B. 2014: An Ebola outbreak in western Africa; lots of controversy about Americans who had been infected returning to the US or traveling on public transport.
- II. There is a pandemic raging in our country and around the world – the plague of pornography!
 - A. The plague of pornography is not marked by carts laden with dead corpses as was the bubonic plague, but it is destroying the lives of countless individuals.
 - B. The effects of using pornography are not invisible: marriages and families are destroyed; jobs are lost; rape, adultery and incest are encouraged; people live under the constant shame of their use of pornography.
 - C. “Internet pornography will create an epidemic of obsession, compulsion and addiction that will sweep across America like a tidal wave, destroying marriages, families and individual lives with a devastation never before witnessed in the history of this great nation!” Kastleman, (Kindle Locations 62-64).
 - D. Frankly, the fight against pornography is everyone's battle.
 1. Although differences exist in the way that men and women are stimulated sexually, pornography is not just a “man's problem.”
 2. Children are often the victims. In fact, those who market pornography often specifically target young people.
 3. “Porn doesn't have a demographic – it goes across all demographics.” – Paul Fishbein, founder of Adult Video News. (Hardin, 25)
- III. Your presence here this evening is appreciated.
 - A. Some of you are here because you know someone else who is perhaps fighting and losing the battle against pornography.
 - B. Some of you are here because you are seeking help to avoid becoming a victim of the pornography plague.
 - C. Some of you are perhaps here because you are struggling with pornography and you want to be free.
 - D. Whatever your motivation, thank you for coming and may God bless us as we work together against this evil.

IV. Some housekeeping matters:

- A. The presentation will be in two sessions, separated by a brief break.
 - 1. In the first session, we will describe in some detail the nature of the “plague” with which we are dealing.
 - 2. In the second session, we will describe some strategies for dealing with the temptation of pornography.
 - 3. If time permits, I would like to have a brief question-and-answer session at the conclusion of the second session.
- B. Survey of the bibliography – available to those who request the materials.
- C. Water is available and restrooms are located...

V. Course of Study:

- A. Pornography defined/described
- B. Emphasize the reality of the danger of pornography (to be accomplished in several ways)
 - 1. Statistics regarding the use of pornography
 - 2. The consequences of pornography use
- C. Describe some coping strategies

Body:

I. **Pornography: Defined**

- A. Some definitions include:
 - 1. Its etymology: from *porne* (harlot) and *graphein* (to write).
 - a. “The writing of harlots”
 - b. “A description of prostitutes and their trade”
 - 2. From the dictionaries...
 - a. “Writings, pictures, etc. intended to arouse sexual desire” (Webster)
 - b. “The depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing) intended to cause sexual excitement” (Merriam Webster online)
 - c. “Material (as books or photograph) that depicts erotic behavior and is intended to cause sexual excitement” (Merriam Webster online)
 - 3. Soft-core vs. hardcore distinction:
 - a. Soft-core usually refers to nude erotic photography, simulated sex acts or videos that do not show the details of actual sex acts.
 - b. Hardcore openly portrays sexually aroused people engaging in real sex acts and includes explicit detail.
- A. While the word “pornography” is not found in the Bible, it is certainly described.
 - 1. “Uncleanness” / “impurity” (*akatharsia*; ἀκαθαρσία)
 - a. Definition:

- 1) “fig. a state of moral corruption, *immorality, vileness*, esp. of sexual sins” (BDAG)
 - 2) “the state of moral impurity, especially in relationship to sexual sin – impurity, immorality, filthiness” (Louw-Nida)
- b. Passages where used:
- 1) Romans 1:24; 6:19
 - 2) Galatians 5:19
 - 3) Ephesians 4:19; 5:3 (impurity – ESV)
 - 4) Colossians 3:5
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 12:21 (impurity – ESV)
 - 6) 1 Thessalonians 2:3; 4:7 (read verses 1-7 to let context help to define the word)
2. “Sensuality” (“licentiousness” – NKJV; “lasciviousness” - KJV) (*aselgeia; ἀσέλγεια*)
- a. “behavior completely lacking in moral restraint, usually with the implication of sexual licentiousness” (Louw-Nida)
 - b. “sensuality, debauchery, licentiousness, lewdness, i.e., be unrestrained in moral attitudes and behaviors” (Swanson, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages*)
 - c. Licentious (adj.)
 - 1) “lacking moral restraint, especially in sexual conduct” (thefreedictionary.com)
 - 2) “sexually unrestrained; lascivious; libertine; lewd” (dictionary.com)
 - d. Lascivious – “tending to produce lewd emotions” (Webster)
 - e. Lewd - “lustful, unchaste” (Webster)
 - f. Passages where used:
 - 1) Mark 7:22
 - 2) Romans 13:13
 - 3) 1 Peter 4:3
 - 4) 2 Peter 2:2
3. There seems to be no doubt that pornography is included in these words and thus sinful, a work of the flesh.

B. Changing views regarding pornography

1. In a 1964 obscenity case, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Stewart Potter said of hardcore pornography, “I know it when I see it.”
2. Would we?
 - a. The pornography of a generation ago is today’s television advertising for everything from clothing to food to cars.
 - b. We have become desensitized to soft-core pornography.

- 1) “*Nobody considers Playboy (magazine) pornographic any more.*” Don MacPherson, president of First Choice, national pay TV channel in Canada, as quoted in MACLEANS, Jan. 31, 1983.
 - 2) With the explicit nature of today’s television, theater and Internet, it takes more and more to shock people.
 - 3) A sliding scale: The sense of what is harmful or sinful keeps changing, moving toward more and more explicit materials.
- c. 29% of born again adults in the U.S. feel it is morally acceptable to view movies with explicit sexual behavior (The Barna Group).
3. Illustration: the “rich” man is always the one who has more than I have!
 4. The entertainment and advertising industries have gotten us to accept soft-core pornography by degrees. How long will it be before sadomasochistic sexual practices and bestiality are the only “pornography” that people won’t watch?? Hello? As a culture, we are already there!
- C. Pornography is certainly not a new thing. Pornographic pictures and/or writing have been around for a long time.
1. Illustration: The Italian city of Pompeii was buried in volcanic ash from Mount Vesuvius in 79 C.E. Those who have excavated the city of Pompeii have found rather risqué murals on walls.
 2. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)** ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
- D. We live in unique circumstances because of digital communications.
1. Although the temptation to view pornography is not new, it has been intensified by digital communications.
 - a. The Internet is a relatively new thing; just a generation or two ago, “pornography” meant dirty pictures in men’s magazines or adult book stores in the seedy part of town.
 - b. VCR’s and later DVD players have brought a whole new dimension to pornography.
 2. The Internet is relatively new for the average consumer. Its advent has caused the exponential proliferation of pornography and facilitated accessibility for the average person.
 - a. The “Triple-A Engine” (coined by deceased psychologist Alvin Cooper) – Accessible, Affordable and Anonymous (*Cybersex: The Dark Side of the Force*; cited in *Coming Clean @covenanteyes.com*). Kastleman adds a fourth “A” – Aggressive!
 - b. VCR tapes, DVDs and Internet porn have taken static pictures and made them more realistic, drawing in the spectator.

II. Pornography: Statistics

- A. We all know that pornography is commonly available, but just how big is this monster?

- B. We will look at some statistics regarding pornography use, but we need also to remember some things about “statistics” in general.
1. Statistics can be misleading creatures! They are often influenced by those who gather the information, the size and character of the sample and the interpretation of results.
 2. Statistics are sometimes extrapolated in ways that distort their significance.
 3. Statistics can also become outdated.
 4. We will treat the following statistics as anecdotal rather than definitive, serving to suggest the “big picture” regarding the use of pornography.
- C. ***How prevalent is pornography use?*** (most of the following statistics are from the *2015 Pornography Statistics* by CovenantEyes)
1. According to a survey conducted by the Barna Group (U.S.) in 2014:
 - a. The following percentages of men say they view pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year-olds, 79%; 31-49-year-olds, 67%; 50-68-year-olds, 49%
 - b. The following percentages of men say they view pornography at least several times a week: 18-30-year-olds, 63%; 31-49-year-olds, 38%; 50-68-year-olds, 25%
 - c. The following percentages of women say they view pornography at least once a month: 18-30-year-olds, 76%; 31-49-year-olds, 16%; 50-68-year-olds, 4%
 - d. The following percentages of women say they view pornography at least several times a week: 18-30-year-olds, 21%; 31-49-year-olds, 5%; 50-68-year-olds, 0%
 - e. 55% of married men say they watch porn at least once a month, compared to 70% of not married men.
 - f. 25% of married women say they watch porn at least once a month, compared to 16% of not married women.
 - g. 63% of adult men have looked at pornography at least one time while at work in the past 3 months; 38% have done so more than once.
 - h. 36% of adult women have looked at pornography at least one time while at work in the past 3 months; 13% have done so more than once.
 2. In 2008, more than 560 college student responded to an online survey:
 - a. 93% of boys and 62% of girls were exposed to pornography before 18.
 - b. 14% of boys and 9% of girls were exposed to pornography before 13.

Chiara Sabina, Janis Wolak, and David Finkelhor, “The nature and dynamics of Internet pornography exposure for youth,” *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 11 (2008): 691-693.
 3. After an analysis of 400 million web searches from July 2009 to July 2010, researchers concluded that 13% of all searches were for erotic content. (Ogi Ogasa and Sai Gaddam, *A Billion Wicked Thoughts: What the Internet Tell Us About Sexual Relationships*. (New York: Plume, 2011)
 4. After an analysis of more than one million hits to Google’s mobile search sites in 2006, adult queries were demonstrated to be the most popular query category, with more than 1 in 5 searches being for pornography. (Maryam Kamvar and Shumeet Baluja, “A large scale study of wireless search behavior: Google mobile search.” CHI

06: Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems [2006]: 701-709.

http://www.kevinli.net/courses/mobilehci_w2012/papers/googlemobilesearch.pdf (accessed Dec. 27, 2012).

5. In 2008, an estimated 3 million Americans purchased pornography online, paying an average of \$60 per month. (Kirk Doran, "Industry size, measurement, and social costs," Presentation at Princeton University, Dec. 11-13 2008. http://www.socialcostsofpornography.com/Doran_Industry_Size_Measurement_Social_Costs.pdf [accessed Dec. 27, 2012])
6. About 80-90% of Internet porn users only access free material, whether it be samples of pay material, illegally copied versions of pay material, or amateur material. (Ibid)
7. According to Juniper Research, by 2017, a quarter of a billion people are expected to be accessing mobile adult content from their phones or tablets, an increase of more than 30% from 2013. Mobile adult videochat alone will have a compound annual growth rate of 25%. (Juniper Research, "250 Million to Access Adult Content on their Mobile or Tablet by 2017, Juniper Report Finds." Sept. 2013. <http://www.juniperresearch.com/viewpressrelease.php?id=628&pr=401> [accessed Dec. 29, 2014])
8. One out of every six women struggles with an addiction to pornography, (typically initiated through Internet chat rooms) equaling 17 percent of the population. (*Today's Christian Woman*, September/October 2003) -- Kastleman, (Kindle Locations 73-87)
 - a. More than 80% of women who suffer with this addiction take it offline. Women, far more than men, are likely to act out their behaviors in real life, such as having multiple partners, engaging in casual sex, or entering into affairs. (*Today's Christian Woman*, September/October 2003).

D. *How much pornography is on the Internet?*

1. There are over 4.2 million known separate and distinct porn websites on the Internet, with 2,500 brand new sites coming online every week. (www.max.com and www.afafilter.com/vitalfacts.asp)
2. "65% of [all Internet] data transferred through [our] data center is porn. Other web-hosting companies vary from lowest at 40% to highest at 80%." (From an engineer at Exodus, a web-hosting company; www.justinlong.org/reality-check/20010604.htm)
3. "In 2002, there were 100,000 adult websites based in the United States, and nearly 400,000 for-profit adult sites worldwide. In September 2003, the N2H2 database contained 260 million adult webpages – a near 20-fold increase since 1998. In December 2003, the Florida Family Association provided an exhaustive report to the United States Department of Justice. Their special software program, *PornCrawler*, identified 297 million porn links (separate pornographic images) on the Internet. In 2004, there were 420 million webpages of pornography from nearly 1.6 million websites, 17 times greater than the amount registered in 2000." (Hardin, 24-25)

E. *How profitable is the Internet porn industry?*

1. In 2006, the sex-related entertainment business' estimated revenues were just under \$13 billion in the U.S., according to Paul Fishbein, president of the Adult Video News Media Network. These estimates included video sales and rentals, Internet sales, cable, pay-per-view, phone sex, exotic dance clubs, magazines, and novelty stores.

2. In 2007, global porn revenues were estimated at \$20 billion, with \$10 billion in the U.S. The Free Speech Coalition estimated both global and U.S. porn revenues have been reduced by 50% between 2007 and 2011, due to the amount of free pornography available online. (Paul M. Barrett, "The new republic of porn," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, June 21, 2012. <http://www.businessweek.com/printer/articles/58466-the-new-republic-of-porn> [accessed Dec. 27, 2012])

F. *Are young people watching?*

1. According to a 2007 study among 813 students from six U.S. schools:
 - a. 66.5% of young men and 48.7% of young women said viewing pornographic materials is an acceptable way to express one's sexuality.
 - b. 21.3% of young men said they view pornographic material *every day or almost every day*.
 - c. An additional 27.1% of young men said they view pornographic material 1 or 2 days a week.
 - d. An additional 21% of young men said they view pornographic material 2 or 3 days a month.
 - e. An additional 16.8% of young men said they view pornographic material once a month or less.
 - f. Only 13.9% of young men said they never view pornography.
 - g. 31% of young women said they view pornographic material.

Jason S. Carroll, Laura M. Padilla-Walker, Larry J. Nelson, Chad D. Olson, Carolyn McNamara Barry, and Stephanie D. Madsen, "Generation XXX: Pornography acceptance and use among emerging adults." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 23 (2008): 6-30.

G. *What about people of faith? Are they watching?*

1. According to a survey conducted by the Barna Group in the U.S. in 2014:
 - a. 64% of self-identified Christian men and 15% of self-identified Christian women view pornography at least once a month (compared to 65% of non-Christian men and 30% of non-Christian women).
 - b. 37% of Christian men and 7% of Christian women view pornography at least several times a week (compared to 42% of non-Christian men and 11% of non-Christian women).
2. 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography. 60% of the women who answered the survey admitted to having significant struggles with lust; 40% admitted to being involved in sexual sin in the past year; and 20% of the church-going female participants struggle with looking at pornography on an ongoing basis (Market Wire. August 7, 2006. ChristiaNet.com. December 7, 2006 http://www.marketwire.com/mw/r...e_html_b1?release_id=151336).
3. 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue to their congregation (Christians and Sex Leadership Journal Survey, March 2005).

H. The producers of porn use crafty strategies to pull in viewers.

1. Mirror sites – “giving a name to a porn site that is nearly identical to the name of a legitimate site.” (Kastleman). Some website names are simply the common misspelling of harmless, non-pornographic sites.
2. Mouse-trapping – attempts to close a pornographic site open other pornographic sites.
3. Porn links to websites in emails sent under the name of a known contact
4. “It’s the conflicting messages in pornography that causes the brain and other parts of the body to release the highest quantity and variety of neuro-chemicals. This is why pornographers mix nudity and sex with aggression, submission, violence, incest, molestation, rape, etc. (One form of pornography that has become increasingly popular for its ability to produce an extreme brain reaction is child pornography.) The viewer feels arousal and fear, lust and shock, excitement and shame, a confusing blend of sensations all thrown together into an emotional-chemical cocktail.” --Kastleman, (Kindle Locations 263-267)
5. Like drug dealers who give free samples to future addicts, pornographers offer teaser photos and low-cost monthly subscriptions. They understand the principles of **desensitization** and **habituation**, both of which encourage an ever-increasing use of pornography.

III. Consequences of Using Pornography

A. The use of pornography can become addictive.

1. “Addiction to internet pornography is a very real phenomenon with a very real impact on well-being. It is a phenomenon which has grown exponentially in the last decade, even though it has remained largely invisible and undetected by society. Tragically, its risks continue to be ignored or actively denied by all but a few enlightened medical professionals. It is a phenomenon that is not just here to stay, but also likely to increase. It is almost certainly the cause of the widespread sexual dysfunction found in recent studies of late adolescence. It is a problem that is most likely impacting you, or your loved ones, without you even being aware of it.” -- Dr. Anthony Jack, cited by Wilson, *Your Brain on Porn: Internet Pornography and the Emerging Science of Addiction* (Kindle Locations 72-78).
2. How can a person become addicted to pornography?
 - a. During sexual arousal, the human brain produces several powerful chemicals, including dopamine, norepinephrine, testosterone, oxytocin and serotonin. The effects of these chemicals are described by Kastleman (Kindle locations 591 ff):
 - 1) Dopamine – “Elevated levels of dopamine in the brain produce extremely focused attention, as well as unwavering motivation and goal-directed behaviors. This causes the viewer to focus intensely on the pornographic images at the exclusion of everything else around him. He sees only attractive bodies, only the perceived positives, while shutting out all other truth and reality.”
 - 2) Norepinephrine – “This chemical induces feelings of exhilaration and increased energy by giving the body a shot of natural adrenaline. The porn viewer gets a ‘rush’ not unlike that felt while participating in a competitive sporting event or during a thrilling amusement park ride. Norepinephrine also

increases memory capacity. Whatever stimulus is being experienced in the presence of this chemical is ‘seared’ into the brain. A tidal wave of this chemical is released at climax. This explains why porn addicts can recall the images seen with vivid clarity, even years later. This also means that an addict doesn’t have to be at the computer screen to ‘see’ pornography. Norepinephrine guarantees that he is equipped with his own, private mobile porn library, a catalogue of images he can access at any time for self-medication. Unfortunately, when one is trying to overcome a porn addiction, the same vivid images often ‘pop’ into the mind at the most inappropriate and frustrating times.”

- 3) Testosterone – “This powerful hormone dramatically increases sexual desire and arousal. Testosterone levels increase dramatically during porn viewing, eliciting a self-sustaining, building cycle. Pornography triggers the release of testosterone, which, in turn, increases the desire for more pornography, triggering once more the release of even more testosterone, and so on.”
- 4) Oxytocin – “At sexual climax, oxytocin levels spike in an immense neurochemical rush that forges a powerful bond between husband and wife, producing a feeling of oneness, closeness and attachment. This ‘bonding-high’ is so wonderful that oxytocin has been referred to as the ‘joyful brain chemical’ . . . In addition, oxytocin acts as a natural tranquilizer, lowering blood pressure and blunting sensitivity to pain and stress. Thus, individuals also seek the oxytocin rush to cope with the stress and pressures of life. But once the ‘high’ is over, the realities of life return.” (Kindle Locations 512-514, 622-624).
- 5) Serotonin – “This natural chemical is released after climax, evoking a deep feeling of calmness, satisfaction, and release from stress. Just as those who are depressed may take Prozac to increase their serotonin levels, individuals turn to porn to self-medicate and escape the stress and pressures of life.”

- b. “However, our behavioural choices in turn affect our neurochemical balance in these same brain structures. This is how chronic overconsumption can have unexpected effects. It can make us hyper-aroused by our favourite enticements, such that immediate wants weigh heavier than they should relative to longer term desires. It can also sour our enjoyment of – and responsiveness to – everyday pleasures. It can drive us to seek more extreme stimulation. Or cause withdrawal symptoms so severe that they send even the most strong-minded of us bolting for relief. It can also alter our mood, perception and priorities – all without our conscious awareness.” -- Wilson, (Kindle Locations 185-189)

B. The exposure of young people to pornography has profound effects on their sexual attitudes and behaviors.

1. According to multiple sources, the largest consumers of Internet pornography are young men between the ages of 12 and 17.
2. In 2011 a study published in *The Journal of Sex Research* showed results from interviews with 782 U.S. college students:
 - a. 58% of men said they viewed pornography once a week or more.
 - b. On average, first exposure to pornography among men was 12 years old.

- c. For men and women, the frequency of viewing pornography was correlated with more casual sexual relationships.

Elizabeth M. Morgan, "Association between young adults' use of sexually explicit materials and their sexual preferences, behaviors, and satisfaction," *Journal of Sex Research* 48 (2011): 520-530.

3. Pornography encourages the objectification of people (women...and men!).
 4. Pornography divorces sexual relations from love, tenderness and fidelity and reduces them to physical acts with no emotional attachment.
 - a. Pornography thus cheapens sexual relations and leads to superficiality.
 - b. Note that the Bible speaks euphemistically of sexual relations, i.e., a husband "knows" his wife (e.g., Genesis 4:1, 17; Matthew 1:25).
 5. Pornography also preaches that women enjoy being sexually abused.
- C. The use of pornography is becoming linked by scientific studies to various kinds of sexual dysfunctions, especially in young men. Additional information on this subject can be found in Wilson's book, *Your Brain on Porn: Internet Pornography and the Emerging Science of Addiction*. However, caution should be exercised inasmuch as the book uses explicit language.

IV. **Biblical Principles and Coping Strategies**

- A. Illustration: There is a type of email advertising that has been duplicated by a number of different marketers. The constituent parts of the ad are as follows:
 1. There is some terrible danger (unidentified, of course) that will cause harm to you and your family...unless you watch the linked presentation.
 2. The presentation may not be available for long, because "they" (the government; Big Pharma, or some other unidentified group) will force the advertiser to "take it down."
 3. The advertiser presents his credentials – "I warned about this, and that, and something else...and I was right" (in other words, "you should trust me").
 4. The danger identified
 5. The products or services offered by others to deal with the problem are tragically flawed; the government (or some other distrusted entity, company or group of companies) is upset at this "simple" or "inexpensive" solution being offered in the presentation.
 6. You must order now; supplies are limited.
- B. I am making no such claims regarding the strategies that I will describe in this section of the presentation. I am not "marketing" anything.
 1. It is not my goal to suggest that "I am the only one who has the answer to the problem of pornography."
 2. Of the strategies that I will mention, some will work better for some people than other people.
- C. In this presentation, we will only be able to "touch the hem of the garment" with regard to strategies for dealing with pornography.

1. The temptation to view pornography is often strong because of the strength of the sexual desire that is natural to our bodies.
 2. God provides an outlet for sexual desires: marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-5).
 - a. A satisfying sexual relationship with a spouse is a strong defense against pornography.
 - b. It is recognized, however, that marriage is not an option for many who struggle with pornography.
 3. We all face temptations of various kinds. The way(s) that we overcome other temptations will assist us in dealing with pornography.
- D. I am a firm believer that the Bible reveals the principles that will enable any of us to avoid or overcome the temptation of pornography.
1. **1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)** ¹³ No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.
 2. We must understand how those principles can be applied in practical ways.
- E. In his book *Finally Free*, Heath Lambert argues that the attack against pornography should focus on three areas: **desire, time and access**.
1. “You will need to employ radical measures in at least three areas. You look at porn when you have the desire to see it, when you have the time to look at it, and when it is available to you. Nobody looks at pornography without all three of these elements coming together. In your fight to be free from pornography, you must learn to take radical steps to eliminate each one.” (Kindle Locations 658-661)
 2. The strategies we will discuss focus on these three areas.

F. **Desire**

1. The fight against pornography begins in the mind (the biblical “heart”) because that’s where sin begins.
 - a. **Mark 7:20–23 (ESV)** ²⁰ And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”
 - b. **Matthew 5:27–28 (ESV)** 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.
 - c. **Proverbs 4:23 (ESV)** ²³ Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.
 - d. “Imagine you have a garden with a flower that has ugly blossoms. You don’t want to see the ugly bloom anymore. Every time the flower buds, you pluck it off. Predictably, the blossom keeps coming back. It will continue to do so until you remove the plant at the root. The same principle applies to the pornographic lust that is choking out good spiritual fruit in the garden of your heart. If you only attack the outward behavior, the problem will keep returning. You must uproot

pornographic lust in your thinking, dealing with what Jesus unveils as the lustful intentions of your heart (Matthew 5:28).” -- Lambert, (Kindle Locations 669-673)

- e. **Job 31:1 (ESV)** ¹ “I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?”
 - f. **Romans 12:2 (ESV)** ² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.
 - g. How do we “renew our minds”?
2. In the fight against pornography, we must be absolutely convinced of at least three things:
- a. The danger of pornography and its consequences
 - b. The possibility of defeating sexual temptation
 - c. The value and availability of eternal life
3. Illustration: John Piper / adequate motivation
- Addiction is a relative term. I would stake my life on the assumption that no one in this room is absolutely addicted to pornography or any sexual sin. What I mean is this: If the stakes are high enough and sure enough, you will have all the self-control you need to resist any sexual temptation.
- For example, if tonight you are feeling totally in the sway of sexual desire — more blazing, more powerful than you have ever felt it in your life — and you believe that you cannot resist the temptation to look at some nudity online, and suddenly a black-hooded ISIS member drags your best friend or your spouse into the room with a knife at his or her throat, and says, “If you look at that website, I will slit their throat,” you will have the self-control you thought you didn’t have. You won’t click.
- Or if a man walks into the room and says, “If you do not look at that nudity, I will give you one million dollars cash, tax-free, tonight,” you will suddenly have the self-control you thought you did not have. (“You Can Say No to Porn,” desiringgod.org; posted 2/11/15)
4. We CAN control our thoughts!
- a. “It was more than a mental game for me. When an urge would hit me, I would shut off my computer and walk away. I would scrub the kitchen floor, wash the dishes, or see how fast I could do 50 jumping jacks. I was doing anything and everything except looking at porn. As I was distracting myself, I prayed to God to take away the urges and feelings I was having and to replace them with pure and holy thoughts. I often read the Psalms. I focused on how amazing our God is. I focused on rebuilding a healthy view of sex in marriage. I confessed my sins to God and cried for his grace once again in my life. God never fails us; He saved me from my secret addiction.”
- An excerpt from “My Addiction To Pornography – It’s Not Just a Man’s Issue” by Jennifer Smith (unveiledwives.com; posted 4/29/14)
- b. We need a battle plan for when temptation presents itself.

G. Access

1. **Matthew 5:27–30 (ESV)** 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. (note the connection between vv. 27-28 and vv. 29-30 - asd)
2. **Romans 13:14 (ESV)** ¹⁴ But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.
3. Where/how do people access pornography? Three main ways include:
 - a. Buy it at some physical location.
 - b. View/subscribe to pornographic websites
 - c. Access through a friend
4. “Many people struggle with pornography because it is so easy for them to get it. The simple truth is that if you keep pornography easily available, you will look at it sooner or later. If you want to experience true and lasting change, you can pray, beg, cry, and wail, but at the end of the day you will also need to be very practical. You will need to make porn less accessible.” -- Lambert (Kindle Locations 623-626).
5. Eliminating access to pornography may involve some radical measures because of the ubiquitous nature of pornography in our culture.
 - a. Remove all vestiges of pornography from your home, workplace, etc.
 - b. Moving a computer to a more central (public) location in your home
 - c. Password access to the Internet on computers, phones, tablets, etc.
6. Filtering software/hardware
 - a. Example: The CovenantEyes organization offers programs for filtering Internet sites and monitoring Internet use. There is cost involved, but it is nominal.
 - 1) The filtering software blocks objectionable sites.
 - 2) The monitoring software records Internet activity and sends the log to someone (i.e., an accountability partner) designated by the user.
 - b. The settings for filtering and/or monitoring should be controlled by someone other than the user; it is too easy to “cover your tracks” by changing settings to enable or conceal pornography use.
7. Accountability partners
 - a. **2 Timothy 2:22 (ESV)** ²² So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.
 - b. **Galatians 6:1–2 (ESV)** ¹ Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ² Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

- c. **James 5:16 (ESV)** ¹⁶ Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.
- d. **Ecclesiastes 4:12 (ESV)** ¹² And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.
- e. Of course, God sees all that we do!
- f. Note these observations about accountability: (Lambert)
 - 1) Effective accountability doesn't rely exclusively on accountability.
 - 2) Effective accountability is involved early rather than late.
 - 3) Effective accountability involves someone with maturity.
 - 4) Effective accountability involves someone with authority.
 - 5) Effective accountability should avoid explicit details.
 - 6) Effective accountability places the responsibility for confession on the person with the problem.
 - 7) Effective accountability must actually hold people accountable.

H. Time

1. Typically, those who view pornography do so *alone*.
2. "In addition to a transformation in your thinking, the second area in which you must take extreme measures is your use of time. A person who desires pornography can only view it when it's available and when they have time alone to view it. Imagine you have a desire to see pornography and are in a room surrounded by porn. If one of your pastors or an accountability partner happens to be in the room with you, you would probably be able to resist looking— despite your desire and the availability of the porn. Now, take those people away and you're instantly tempted again. Why? Because now you're alone. This means you must limit the time you spend alone— especially in the early phases of the struggle against pornography. Be honest with your accountability partner about the typical times when you are alone and find yourself tempted. Make plans to spend those times with others. You can study together, take a walk, play sports, read the Bible and pray, or watch a movie. You can even have an accountability partner scheduled to call you during those times (with the requirement that you must pick up the phone) to check in on you. If you're married, you may need to commit to going to bed at the same time as your spouse, even if you don't feel tired. Cut back as much as possible on the times when you are alone and tempted to indulge in pornography." -- Lambert, (Kindle Locations 694-703).

Conclusion:

- I. For those already involved in pornography, repentance is the divinely prescribed course of action.
 - A. Freedom from the addiction of pornography will not happen overnight, but our minds CAN be renewed.
 - B. The decision to stop viewing pornography must, however, be accompanied by a practical plan for carrying out that decision. Hopefully, this presentation has generated some ideas about how that can be accomplished.

- II. “We are in the midst of a terrible epidemic, one that is claiming the spiritual and emotional lives of millions. In growing numbers, this epidemic is even extinguishing life itself in the form of sexually transmitted diseases, suicide and even murder. It is destroying marriages and devastating families. It is the great thief of human potential, creativity and worthy achievement. It prevents and poisons healthy, fulfilling relationships. It cheapens and distorts sacred sexual intimacy. It is a direct and potent assault on the rights and safety of women and children, increasing rates of rape, incest and other sexual abuses. It is eroding the dignity, integrity and nobility of men. It isolates people, cutting them off from society and blunting the contributions they could make and the joy they could feel. It darkens the light and the spirit within, separating individuals from their Creator. It represents the antithesis of everything that brings true peace and happiness. Every civilization that has allowed this epidemic to spread unchecked has collapsed into ruin.” -- Kastleman, (Kindle Locations 169-176).

Bibliography

- Brandenburg, Brian. *Power Over Pornography: The Proven Solution for Overcoming Pornography Addiction*. (Kindle Edition)
- Collins, George N. *Breaking the Cycle: Free Yourself from Sex Addiction, Porn Obsession, and Shame*. (Kindle Edition).
- Hardin, Jason. (2010). *Hard Core*. DeWard Publishing Company (dewardpublishing.com).
- Kastleman, Mark B. *Drug of the New Millennium: Pornography 500mg*. (Kindle Edition)
- Lambert, Heath. *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace*. (Kindle Edition).
- Welch, Edward. *Addictions: A Banquet in the Grave*. (Kindle Edition)
- Wilson, Gary. *Your Brain on Porn: Internet Pornography and the Emerging Science of Addiction*. (Kindle Edition)

I found the books by Hardin, Kastleman and Lambert to be particularly helpful to me. Kastleman's book includes many statistics on pornography, but they are dated. His information on the addictive nature of pornography was what first stimulated my interest in that aspect. Hardin's book contains statistics that are more current. Lambert's book is very well written with many practical suggestions – highly recommended. I include Wilson's book with two provisos: he cites personal experiences of those who struggle with sexual dysfunctions due to pornography use and their language is quite explicit; and Wilson would argue that limited use of pornography might not be harmful. In the words of another writer, there is “no such thing as free porn.”

Additional works on sexual temptation:

- Arterburn, Stephen & Fred Stoeker. (2002). *Every Young Man's Battle*. Colorado Springs, CO: WaterBrook Press.
- Dennis, Jay & Marilyn Jeffcoat. (2002). *Taming Your Private Thoughts*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Ghent, Rick & James K. Childerston. (1994). *Purity & Passion*. Chicago: Moody Press.
- Mylander, Charles. (1986). *Running the Red Lights*. Ventura, CA: Regal Books.
- Schaumburg, Harry W. (1997). *False Intimacy*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress.

Helpful websites:

www.covenanteyes.com (highly recommended; additional resources are listed in “The Porn Circuit” available for free on the website)

www.safefamilies.org

Inclusion in these lists is not intended to be a recommendation of everything to be found in these works.