

Protecting against Porn

Detailed Outline

Part 1 of 4

Introduction

"Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body." (1 Cor. 6:18 ESV)

In this series, we will talk about the subject of handling Pornography and how to protect both ourselves as leaders, and the flock that God has made us to be overseers.

I. Reason for this Session

Typically questions like these may be asked, "Is it even relevant for my congregation?" "Is it appropriate to discuss in a Church or should the discussion be done in a different setting?" Let us look at three quick reasons why I believe this is appropriate:

A. God's Heart on This Matter

1. The extensive focus in the Bible against sexual sins - adultery, fornication etc. reminds us again and again that sexual purity is very important to our Lord. Nothing displays greater spite toward God than trying to destroy what He considers significant.
2. In trying to understand God's heart, we must realize that Porn is the same evil from before dressed differently. Therefore, God's command against what we might call the "21st-century porn" is the same as his command against "first century sexual immorality."

B. People Need Help

1. There are many in our churches that need help and yet have nowhere to go.
 - a) On one hand, it is unfortunate in some cases that though a Church is meant to be the hospital for the sick; people are not able to find help without being judged.
 - b) On the other hand, some have fooled themselves into thinking that this matter is personal and church has no role; especially, since it does not hurt others.
2. Porn lies by making false promises and it is important people are made aware of its lies.
 - a) We read in Romans chapter 1 that "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie" (Rom. 1:23-25).
 - b) Porn is deceptive. It makes people think it is harmless, while in fact, it is not just skin deep, but soul deep. It ravages the soul and breaks down relationships.
3. Here are some key findings on the effects of pornography by Patrick F. Fagan, Ph.D. commenting on a research conducted by Marriage and Religion Research Institute.

- a) Effect on the Family
 - 1) Pornography viewing leads to a loss of interest in good family relations.
 - 2) Pornography use is a pathway to infidelity and divorce, and is frequently a major factor in these family disasters.
- b) Effect on the Individual
 - 1) Pornography is addictive, and neuroscientists are beginning to map the biological substrate of this addiction.
 - 2) Users tend to become desensitized to the type of pornography they use, become bored with it, and then seek more perverse forms of pornography.
- c) The main defenses against pornography are close family life, a good marriage and good relations between parents and children, coupled with deliberate parental monitoring of Internet use. (<http://marri.us/pornography>, March 27, 2014)

C. Leadership Responsibility to Teach

Churches have a responsibility to warn, to teach and to equip their members against pornography, just as they do against sexual immorality (since they are not different). Let me give you three injunctions on teaching:

1. Consider the injunction of “teaching” in the very fiber of the Great Commission.
“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you...” (Matt. 28:20)
2. Consider Paul, how who compels us with his example.
“Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all, for I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God.” (Acts 20:26-27)
3. Hear Peter urging us in 1 Peter 2:11.
“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” (1 Peter 2:11)

II. What is Pornography?

Before we proceed however, it is important we get a clearer understanding of what we are dealing with.

A. General Understanding

1. Interestingly, the world finds it difficult to define porn since it lacks a point of absolute reference.
 - a) Here is a famous quote uttered by the late Justice Potter Stewart in 1964 when faced with a case involving obscenity.
“I shall not today attempt further to define [obscenity]; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly doing so. But I know it when I see it...”

- b) The judge was in effect saying that it is easy to recognize but difficult to explain or even defend legally. And the porn industry has used this ambiguity to a \$400 billion advantage.
- 2. So what is the secular definition?
"Printed or visual material containing the explicit description or display of sexual organs or activity".
 - a) The question is always asked, "What does one mean by 'explicit'?"
 - b) Here is another question, "Is the nude sculpture of David by Michelangelo, art or pornography?"
 - c) In fact, the Jury was unable to answer that question, when the lawyer defending his client indicted on pornographic charges asked them to explain.

B. Biblical Understanding

- 1. In looking at the Bible, we must recognize that the words "*porneia*" and "*porneuō*", from where we get the word "Pornography" is used in the Bible to mean illicit sexual activity or fornication. They occurs at least 35 times in the New Testament, including the text we read from, 1 Corinthians 6:18.
- 2. We can therefore define the Biblical understanding of "porn" to be:
"Anything that provides an immoral outlet to satisfy a sinful or sexual desire."
- 3. Porn in this definition covers a wide range that is because we must realize porn is a continuum.
 - a) Dr. Victor Cline says there are five stages of addiction and that sex and pornography can be a more difficult addiction to break than cocaine.
 - 1) Early exposure
 - 2) Addiction
 - 3) Escalation
 - 4) Desensitization
 - 5) Acting out sexually (http://www.focusonthefamily.com/marriage/divorce_and_infidelity/pornography_and_virtual_infidelity/stages_of_porn_addiction.aspx, September 2012)
 - b) What does this mean in our day-to-day language?
 Here is a simplistic attempt to piece together the slide from a mere 'glance' to 'addiction', 'escalation' and 'acting out sexually'.
 - 1) Let's start with glance.
 - 2) A second lingering look at someone of the opposite gender.
 - 3) Magazines on the rack we subconsciously thumb through as we wait our turn at the cash register.

- 4) Enjoying a popular movie though known for violence, foul language, and sexual content.
 - 5) A 'one-click stand' with online provocative banner ads, especially available on social media.
 - 6) Intentionally watching a pay-per-view movie in a hotel room while travelling alone.
 - 7) Frequent fantasizing over images in print, or online sites.
 - 8) Acting out private sexual acts over digital or print images and/or visiting a prostitute.
- c) Individual experiences may vary but the broad road to destruction is the same.
 - d) More importantly, since porn is a continuum, many may unknowingly be porn victims and they need help desperately.

III. What is the Leader's Role?

The role of every Bible teacher is to direct the attention of every person to Jesus Christ. He is the perfect answer and the total solution against pornography. He shows us how to handle this tricky subject.

A. We read about the woman of Samaria in the gospel according to John 4.

1. The incident of the woman of Samaria is story of grace.
2. She has been looking for meaning, satisfaction, and identity in sexual intimacy.
3. Jesus could have demanded that she stop her behavior before he would talk to her. Knowing that she is trapped, he offers her Living Water that would quench her thirst.
4. Instead of leaving her guilty, he leads her to fuller satisfaction in himself.

B. Our role is to lead people to this Living Water.

1. Only Jesus can quench that inner thirst.
2. Lead them lovingly, gently and without judging for only he can truly judge but more importantly only He can fully satisfy.