

Protecting against Porn

Detailed Outline

Part 3 of 4

V. Practical Steps to Help Guard Ourselves and the Flock

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.” (Acts 20:28 ESV)

There is a need to take intentional and practical steps so that both the leaders and the flock are kept safe.

A. Don't Be Deceived

1. False Sense of Privacy
 - a) We live in a world where privacy is a highly valued commodity and for good reason.
 - 1) It is only in the abusive use of privacy, particularly when it hides sin, that a good thing can soon turn bad.
 - 2) The culture of "*It is my life*," clubbed with the false understanding of privacy has trapped even the intentional Christian.
 - b) We have been raised in a culture that evaluates risk based on potential of being caught. As the saying goes, "*In Jersey anything's legal as long as you don't get caught*"
2. False Rationalization
 - a) We try to excuse sin in our life and 'hide' the ones in the life of our family members on the basis of "family honor" and pride.
 - b) We must bear in mind that excusing sin for the 'greater good' – i.e. protecting a marriage, family, or even a ministry, never leads to any good. It is in fact a sinful rationalization.
 - c) As one pastor put it, "I was in a six month affair, at the same time preaching and counseling against adultery, and telling myself that God didn't care because the church was growing."
 - d) Don't be deceived. Porn lies with a straight face.

B. Don't Linger

1. Tear down the image.
 - a) Our mind is constantly creating mental pictures.
 - 1) A casual glance at picture on the magazine cover can sear itself into our minds and when we dwell on it can lead to fantasies.
 - 2) At its root, porn is about worship – self-worship.

- b) Addiction to pornography demands a disproportionate level of dwelling on and a desire for selfish satisfaction.
 - c) And anything that occupies our thoughts and motivates our actions can soon become our god.
 - d) The image becomes the god we worship.
2. Have a low tolerance to sin.
- a) Be convinced that a little is too much. Again it is the culture of compromise that we live in that allows for compatibility of sin in a Christian's life. It is in no way biblical.
 - b) We often seek "boundaries of tolerance". That is to ask questions like:
 - 1) "How much is okay?"
 - 2) "Is a casual glance an addiction?"
 - 3) "When is it really porn?"
 - c) These questions are in effect asking us to answer the question, "What proportion of sin is bad?" The answer is obvious. Asking these questions only desensitizes us to sin.

C. Make a Covenant like Job

I love the way the Book of Job begins. As soon as we are introduced to Job, his character is evidenced. What do we learn from Job?

1. Turn away from evil.
- "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job, and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil." (Job: 1:1)*
- a) Job is in effect telling us that he does not "linger."
 - b) He refuses to give anything that can lead to evil a second look.
 - c) Often it is not possible to avoid seeing, but Job reminds us that it is possible for it not to "catch our eye" and seek a second look.
 - d) The second look often sears the image in our minds for us to play at our convenience.
2. Make a covenant with your eyes.
- a) We read in chapter 31 that Job had learned there were some places he should not be looking at the first place.

"I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?" (Job 31:1)
 - b) Illustration: I know a person who committed not to look below the chin of the opposite sex when conversing with them.

D. Commit to Putting the Flesh to Death Daily

As we saw previously, desire or intention is no good on its own. It must be followed through with discipline and commitment.

We read about Paul and how he learned to discipline his body.

"Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified." (1 Cor. 9: 24-27)

E. Use Alvin Cooper's 3-Step Process to Break the Cycle

*(*Accessed: Your Brain On Porn. Luke Gilkerson. Pg 14. Covenant Eyes. Sept 2013).*

The late psychologist Alvin Cooper believed that there are three main factors that drew people into Internet porn.

The three factors according to him are: Accessibility, Affordability, and Anonymity. He dubbed this the "Triple A Engine." The good news is, like a three-legged stool, kick out one of the legs and it will fall. That is, remove one of the factors and we can break the cycle of addiction.

1. Accessibility

- a) This deals with the ease of accessing content online. The way to remove this leg of the stool is to make access difficult.
- b) Make access difficult by using reliable filters with passwords.
 - 1) Unprotected Wi-Fi allows unrestricted access especially in the secluded corners of your home.
 - 2) Have an accountability partner set this up and keep the password.
- c) Don't trust movie ratings.

PG ratings for example are often not wholesome even for adults. These movies are often filled with obscenities, violence and sex scenes that assaults the mind and soils the heart.
- d) Keep the windows of your soul closed.

Just as we board up the windows when there is a threat of a storm, we must board up our sensory organs to prevent the entry of anything less than wholesome.

2. Affordability

- a) Internet has made affordability of online porn a non-issue.
 - 1) 70% of porn available online is free and yet the Porn industry is a multi-billion industry. That must tell us something.
 - 2) The slide between 'free' porn on the Internet to paid porn is slippery. Unfortunately, many men and women are finding it out to their ruin.
- b) Ease of access has made this leg the hardest to remove.

- c) Some have found that having your spouse ready access to your credit card statements is a good way to prevent any irregular or immoral charge.

3. Anonymity

This deals with the privacy issue we covered previously. The allowance that society makes to hide and to cover what is personal.

- a) This factor however, is entirely within the control of the person.
- b) The fortunate part of this is that this leg of anonymity is the easiest to remove.
- c) Awareness, Accountability and Accessories are three ways to handle this factor.
 - 1) **Awareness:** Be aware of the presence of God.
 - (a) *To use the old Latin phrase, we must live "Coram Deo," or "before the face of God."*
 - (b) *Be aware of God's presence at all times. As the Psalmist put it:*
"The nearness of God is my good." (Ps. 73: 28)
 - 2) **Accountability:** This refers to having someone who you are accountable to. We will talk about this in detail in the next session.
 - 3) **Accessories:** Technology is a good tool in handling Internet anonymity.
You will find a list of such tools, including websites, books, videos and other tech tools as Additional Resources.