

“What’s Wrong with Pornography?” Developing Arguments to Flee from its Addictive Bondage¹

Summarized and adapted by Rev. Dr Tim Yates

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 6:18: “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.”

^{ESV} Matthew 5:27 "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.

1. **DESTROYS TRUE SEXUAL INTIMACY:** Pornography promotes sexual lust and sexual fantasy that is emotionally disconnected from real relationships. Some soft-core porn like *Playboy* generates semi-plausible neighbor scenarios in their articles and images to make it seem like you really “know” the girl and have a false sense of intimacy with her. Some phone sex operators pretend to have an intimate relationship with the same caller over time, but of course the facts are that intimacy is just faked for the love of money paid through credit card charges. But this kind of false intimacy presents an imaginary, accepting and willing sex partner, masking the real personality of the sex-idol behind the media (be it photographs, audio, video or interactive computer sex games). A married man’s sex with his wife is an effort to act out his self-adoring, self-pleasing sex fantasies rather than give and sacrifice for her needs in a relationship of true intimacy. ‘But when compared with married women in faithful relationships, women who are sexually active outside of marriage have less sexual satisfaction. Women who feel secure, loved and trust that their husbands are faithful and committed will enjoy sex more than women who think their partner is likely to leave them. While soft-core pornography presents women who always look sexually eager, the facts show that natural sexual desire is maintained and increases in secure marriages.’ (78) Of course love of money will persuade women to look sexually eager for the camera, but desires that form within unforced social relationships can only be maintained when there is sacrificial love evident.
2. **DESTROYS HEALTHY MALE SEXUAL IDENTITY:** Pornography used by men leads to fantasies about one’s own sexual skill and sexual desirability. In sexual fantasies portrayed by porn a man imagines that anything he wants to do to satisfy his own sexual perversions will delight one or more women sexually. He imagines that sex with multiple partners makes him more of a “man”. Every picture of every type of perverted sexual act imaginable is shown as wildly satisfying to the woman. But “prostitutes are paid to fake it.” (79, 95) If these false intimacy fantasies are acted out in real life with virtually unknown, multiple sex partners (as in using prostitutes, or one-night internet hook-ups), this is often evidence of deep personal selfishness, poor sexual skill, low sexual desirability and inability to form lasting relationships. (95) Further, a man masturbating is actually distorting his own sex role by imagining his hand is a woman’s hand stimulating him as he directs. (111) While imagining his own dominance, a man is actually dominated and enslaved by the woman. True manliness is displaying self-control, but porn addictions reduce a man to a wimp. Healthy women will be attracted to men who are sexually faithful and display self-control. ^{ESV} Proverbs 25:28 “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.” While supposing that his life is productive, the man addicted to masturbation wastes more and more time on building and acting out the fantasies. (111) However in real married sexual love, the man must learn what his wife likes and seek to satisfy those desires, rather than fantasizing about how he can satisfy a woman by simply doing what he desires. The masturbating husband easily ignores his wife’s legitimate desires, and the wife loses interest in sex altogether, feeling used or degraded. In this unsatisfying cycle the man becomes even more attracted to other fantasy women whom he imagines think he is sexually skillful and desirable.
3. **ENCOURAGES SELF-CENTERED SEX:** Pornography develops patterns of self-centered sexual orgasm through masturbation rather than experiencing sex as a way of giving to one’s spouse and studying her sexual preferences. Pornography focuses exclusively on two or three erogenous physical body parts to the exclusion of the emotional caring that arouses a woman. A man trained by porn will think a woman will be aroused by immediate attention to those physical areas, when in fact her sexual pleasure begins with the emotional caring, intimacy and evidence of sacrifice. When a male practices patterns of rapid sexual climax and orgasm through masturbation (a few seconds to a minute or so) with fantasy women, he has learned a pattern that will generally not satisfy a real woman sexually, who often needs 5 to 10 minutes of sexual intercourse to reach climax, after a period of emotional closeness and encouraging words that have been demonstrated throughout the day or the

¹ Principles about pornography addiction adapted from *An Affair of the Mind*, Laurie Hall, (Tyndale 1996) (*mostly written for men struggling with porn addictions, but also for a wife who has this kind of husband*). I have basically read over chapters 9-13 in her book and re-organized the ideas and added a few of my own thoughts and expansions on the ideas. A number of the same ideas are repeated in different ways throughout these chapters, so I tried to assemble the ideas thematically into paragraphs and noted relevant page numbers in parentheses. I have tried to be faithful in using quotation marks where I actually quoted the author. The concluding section on “Finding the Real Pleasures of Marital Sex” are ideas drawn from Scripture, reading and my own marriage of over 20 years.

- past few days. If a woman knows her husband values and cherishes her in all ways (not just sexually) and he sacrifices for her pleasures, then she is more prepared for enjoying sexual pleasures. (80-81)
4. **PERVERTS HEALTHY SEX:** Pornography stimulates interest in perverted sexual practices. Oral and anal sex become part of the whole culture of imaginary arousal and pleasure. Anal penetration of the woman by a man uses parts of the body never intended to work together, and negative consequences are serious: anal fissures, and infection of the vagina from a penis first inserted in the woman's anus. Further since the practices are not sexually stimulating for the woman, it violates the intended mutual pleasure of sexual intercourse, abusing her instead. However pornography routinely displays women as enjoying these experiences. Husbands who are aroused by this type of porn will often force these practices on their wives. (81, 84)
 5. **ENCOURAGES VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:** Pornography increases the acceptance of coercion in sexual relationships, according to the U.S. Surgeon General's report. Pornography frequently displays people tied up or forced to submit to certain kinds of sexual abuse, yet at the same time presents both the one forcing and the one who submits as enjoying the experience. Love and caring in marital sex are directly opposite to these kinds of perversions. In real life, sexual pleasure occurs when a relationship of trust and security are first established. Yet in the highest stages of sexual climax, one must be free to move in ways that excite the favorite spots. Bondage porn that prohibits movement of one partner is clearly selling a lie in mutual sexual pleasure. (82-83). Porn also encourages rape, even so-called non-violent soft porn. Since women are viewed as hyper-sexual playthings in porn, men lose respect for women and trivialize rape with the imaginary reason that women like all kinds of sex. Some studies have shown that states with a highest subscription rates to porn also have the highest rape statistics (Alaska & Nevada). Further other studies indicate that husbands who use porn are more likely to rape their wives. (83-85)
 6. **DECREASES SEXUAL PLEASURE:** As a result, porn actually decreases sexual satisfaction on a number of levels rather than enhancing it: unrealistic male fantasies about a women's beauty and sexual eagerness compared to real life sexual experience, male sexual arousal is keyed to visual stimulus only, the man reaches self-centered orgasm based on his imagination rather waiting for the actual orgasm of his wife (*orgasm together would actually be more pleasurable*), promoting coercive and perverse practices toward women that decrease her satisfaction and thus distance the couple in their real sex life. Porn is also filled with lies about female sexual nature and what produces female sexual responsiveness. Women who have lived the *Playboy* lifestyle have been seriously abused and degraded, with examples of women who have STD's (sexually transmitted diseases), have taken drugs or have tried to commit suicide because of the emptiness and worthlessness they feel. (85-86, 94) Men (married or single) who try to live the playboy lifestyle are likely to get STD's, destroy marriages and abuse women. (see 95)
 7. **COMES WITH MUCH LYING:** Porn addicts have generally practiced constant lying about everything, even if telling the truth would save time and money. It opens up a person's life and family to spiritual control of demonic powers (John 8:44; Eph 6:12).
 8. **TWISTS IMAGINATION:** Some people feel that looking at porn is harmless, or is a creative, non-abusive outlet for sexual energy (better than rape, some say). Others feel that in order to deal with a porn addiction, a man (or woman) only needs to stop looking at it. But these approaches fail to see that the major damage is to the imagination, like bad weeds in a pasture field. These imaginary sexual fantasies generated by porn (or by sexual fantasy with real people) are associated with huge emotional and physiological pleasure sensations in masturbation, and become very addictive. When imagination loses touch with reality, fed constantly by the self-centered sense of being worshiped that porn fuels, the porn addict will manipulate real people to try to get them to imitate the fantasies. Further, when the realities of life, work, health problems, conflicts and real relationships create stress, the one addicted to sexual fantasy will quickly "zone-out" and seek the imaginary world to comfort him/herself. Married men who sexually "zone out" want to be left alone and seldom engage in family conversations. As sex fantasies become more deeply entrenched over constant rehearsal from years of porn exposure, men lose their ability to stay focused on any part of family life or work or to solve ordinary problems, since all their imagination is used for sex fantasy. Like a drug addict, all they concern themselves with is their next "sex-fix". (87-92, 98-99, 103)
 9. **CONDEMNS & ISOLATES WIVES:** Married men who let porn take over their imaginations will soon begin to apply those fantasies to their wives with disastrous effects. With his heightened porn fantasies are compared with the wife, he will both manipulate her to try to convince her to behave like his porn idol (by buying gifts or doing favors, then seeking sexual payback). He will condemn and accuse her for failures to measure up, both in physical features and in imitating the sexually perverted, ever-sexually-willing, non-judgmental attitude of his fantasy idol. A wife living under this kind of scrutiny, coupled with the husband's emotional "zone-out" associated with his sex fantasy, makes a woman feel terribly insecure, lonely and self-condemning. The porn-masturbation cycle deprives the wife of her authority over her husband's body and her entitlement to his sexuality on emotional and physical levels. His sexual drive is already spent on images and fantasy, rather than

invested in real intimacy: ^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 7:4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. *Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.* ⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (96-97, 107, 109)

10. **REVEALS GOD'S WRATH IN CREATURE WORSHIP:** Porn is very much the worship of the creature rather than the Creator, having the worship of naked human images before the worship of the true God (Rom 1:23-6; Exod 20:3-6; Jer 3:8; 13:27; Hos 4:12; 9:1; Ezek 16:28-42; Rev 17:1-16; 19:2). ^{ESV} Proverbs 6:26 for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread, but a married woman hunts down a precious life. These women of the porn industry (and the many men who perpetuate it and buy it) reveal the wrath of God, in the sense that rather than being seen as objects of sexual desire and lust, they ought to be people we pity and whom we see as headed for eternal destruction. ^{ESV} Matthew 5:27 "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.

Finding the Real Pleasure & Blessing of Marital Sex: Sacrificial Giving to Please the Spouse

^{ESV} Acts 20:35 In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, *'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*"

1. Finding pleasure in the pleasure of your spouse. Joy in the intimacy cultivated by serving each other.
2. Patiently studying what bring pleasure to your spouse and learning to satisfy those pleasures.
3. While it is commonly thought that men are aroused by visual elements in his wife's beauty (and while porn perpetuates this as the man's most satisfying element, it's basically overrated), the pleasure of the husband should be transformed by delighting in what delights his wife. Further, much of the time sex happens in very low light or darkness, so that visual arousal is not generally going to be the main source of pleasure.
4. A wife is sexually receptive all day long, in the sense that her receptivity to the attentiveness, listening, intimacy and pro-active caring that is normally expressed in sex by her husband, needs to be felt all day long in numerous other ways. Foreplay, in its broadest sense (not necessarily sexual touching), is all day long.
5. While popular culture and movies portray passionate sex as short-term lust affairs, the real passion is found in the bedroom of married couples who patiently navigate through years of fidelity and studying all the needs of his/her spouse on all levels (not just sexual technique), who show diligent efforts to meets those needs. Sex reaches great passions when each is willing to genuinely repent and show efforts to change when faults or sins interfere with meeting those needs. Couples who show humility and an ability to learn from the criticisms of the spouse, coupled with an ability to ask for and give forgiveness for offensive words, motives or actions will have passionate sex that reaches the highest levels of human satisfaction possible.
6. Especially for men here, make your spouse the **only** definition of physical beauty that attracts and excites you sexually (Prov 5:18-19). Regardless of how your wife's body changes with age, sickness, disease or injury, you must train your eyes and mind to sexually desire her body alone. Love is much more than physical attraction and sex is most wonderful with the wife you are committed to serving, feeding and caring for (Eph 5:29).
7. See the glory of God (all his character/attributes) revealed through your spouse. Use him/her to praise, love and worship God for his greatness, sovereignty and power. Put your spouse "on the mirror" and tip the angle of the mirror up towards God. Refuse to look straight at things on the mirror and assume that these things exist to give you pleasure apart from drawing you nearer to God (Rom 1:20-26). Things in the world only bring true joy and pleasure when seen as coming *from God*, existing *through God* and returning *to God* (Rom 11:36).
8. Maintain a healthy curiosity about your spouse. You do not know everything about your spouse or about his/her reactions. You are not omniscient! Only God can search the heart and know it completely (Jer 17:10; Ps 139:1-7; 1 Cor 2:11). Every day is a new experience of life, with new opportunities for communication and romance that will be different from anything you have experienced before. Every day is a new opportunity to know your spouse better and more intimately.
9. Marital sex should be for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31). Enjoy *doxological* sex with your spouse—that is, *the act of sexual intercourse should assist you in knowing, loving and delighting in God himself*. Put your sex life on the same mirror and praise God for revealing his covenant love and delight in you through your spouse's sexual faithfulness to you and delight in you. Do this even during the act of sexual intercourse.
10. Marital sex is a shadow of the pleasure-realities to come in relationship to God in heaven and thus is seen as temporary and muted compared to pleasures made for those who share in the glories of God in heaven (Heb 8:5; 10:1; Isa 62:5). While this probably does not mean that we have a sexual relationship with God in heaven, whatever we do have will exceed the intimacy pleasures of human marital sex.