

Culture Wars: Sex and Gender

Is it ok for me to look at pornography?

February 27, 2022 a.m.

HDBC

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine this week, we are once again watching in real time a real war between real nations. Real homes are being destroyed, real people are dying. No one would deny the reality of this war or the devastating consequences. We are witnessing a clash of ideas, a clash of worldviews. And though it is surely more complicated than it seems on the surface, it's pretty easy to identify the villains and the good guys. Pretty easy to decide who should win.

We are, at this time in our own human history in a culture war; a clash of ideas, a collision of worldviews. Each side has a conviction of about which way is best. These two ways, these two roads lead people in opposite directions. **At the heart** of the conflict are beliefs about **sex and gender**. There are some who want to lead us down a new road, an untested road, a road with no boundaries, no guardrails, and most tragically an unknown destination.

It requires a repudiation of all that God has declared in His Word, as well as thousands of years of human history. To walk this road one has to lay aside a belief in absolutes and assume that right and wrong are fluid concepts that can change at a moment's notice and are dependent upon only one's own personal desires. Make no mistake about it; this road **will not take us to a better place**. And those who choose to walk it are not walking toward life but away from it, not toward God but away from Him, not toward Heaven, but away from it.

In the popular Christmas movie *The Polar Express*, the engineer makes a statement that I'm sure the writers intended to be one of those cool little sayings that make people **feel all warm and fuzzing inside** and that everyone affirms. But not me. I don't affirm it. I think it's terrible advice. **Conductor: One thing about trains: It doesn't matter where they're goin'. What matters is deciding to get on.**

Really? Is that all that matters? Is that the most important thing? Just to get onboard and go along for the ride? That's what far too many are doing in this culture war over sex and gender. They don't really care where it's taking the

culture, they just want to come along for the ride. **Count me out, regardless of the cost.** I'm going to cast my lot with the God who created sex and gender. I'm going to stick with what He says. I think He knows best.

So, that's what this series is about. Key questions in the culture war related to sex and gender. Last week, *Is sex outside of marriage sinful?* The answer: YES. Today, *Is it ok for me to look at pornography?*

Short answer: No, it is not ok for any of us to look at pornography. But like last week, I want to give you more. There are dozens of serious arguments to be made about the destructive nature of pornography. I can't cover them all this morning but I think I can give you enough. Nine reasons to say NO to porn.

1. Porn leads to the sin of adultery

In the sermon on the mount Jesus calls us to a higher standard than the Old Testament law. Listen to what Jesus said . . . **Read Matthew 5:27-30**

Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation. There is some hyperbole here. **Don't come with and eye patch and missing hand. No pirates next week.** However, He is revealing two important things.

First, adultery happens in the mind, not just in the body. If you look and think on a woman to lust, you have committed adultery. Pornography facilitates that lust which is adultery. Looking at pornography results in the sin of adultery in the mind and Jesus explicitly calls that a sin.

Second, He is revealing the incredible pull that this particular sin has on the human soul. It is so enticing that some would forfeit their very souls for the momentary satisfaction that it brings. That is why Jesus goes to the extreme to point out that losing an eye or a hand is better than losing your soul. This is a dangerous temptation!

I appreciate what **Ray Ortlund** wrote, *every woman's sexuality is a sacred gift of God.* To lust after her is to violate the sacred gift that God has given to her, to be enjoyed in the context of her marriage with her husband. When we lust for another woman we are taking what is not ours. It is a violation of the sacred. **Sam Allberry** provides some clarity with these words.

Jesus is saying that her sexuality is precious and valuable, that she has a sexual integrity to her which matters and should be honored by everyone else. He is saying that this sexual integrity is so precious that it must not be violated, even in the privacy of someone else's mind. Even if she were never to find out about it, she would have been greatly wrong by being thought about lustfully.

Looking at porn **IS SIN** against God and that is enough reason to say no to it.

2. Porn stunts spiritual growth (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)

For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality ; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

God's will for your life is that you grow up spiritually. That's what *sanctification* means. Sexual immorality (*porneia*) will stunt that growth. You can't be growing spiritually as God wants you to while viewing pornography.

Not only does pornography stunt spiritual growth but it is in direct violation of the will of God. God's will is for you to be sexually pure. **We are called** to handle our own *vessels* (bodies) in honor, rather than in *lustful passion*. In other words, we are not to let our bodies, with their desires determine what we do. Under the influence and power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, we are to control our thoughts and actions. Your cravings, your hormones, your desires are not in charge. If they are, you will not be growing in Christ.

3. Porn demeans other people, particularly women

I'm aware that not all pornography involves men looking at women, but women are most prominently used on pornography. Guys, that's not just a digital image you are looking at, it is a real person. Someone's daughter. Maybe someone's sister, someone's wife. Most importantly **she is a daughter of the one true King**. She was made in the image of God and is loved by God. Because she carries the image of God, she has infinite worth.

When you look at porn you are using as an object of your selfish pleasure, one who was crafted by God in a mother's womb and one for whom Christ died. **Imagine a pedophile looking at your daughter, stalking her, glaring at her, desiring her.** That's what you are doing when you look at porn.

Our world is growing blind to what true manhood and womanhood were meant to be when God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden of Eden. Porn contributes to that blindness by completely distorting those roles and that relationship. Porn glorifies dominance and forced submission rather than companionship, protection, honor and tenderness.

4. Porn contributes to human trafficking

There is a strong and undeniable connection between the porn industry and human trafficking. The pornographers **want you to believe that the actors on screen are truly enjoying** what they are doing, that they are there because they want to be there. That is far from the truth. **Listen to the testimony of Tara.** That is her real name. She wanted to use it because she is a real person.

Read from Ortlund's book, pages 46-49.

5. Porn is an evil industry

The porn industry is an evil, multi-billion dollar industry. It makes a lot of money for a lot of people who are not interested in the value and worth of other people. **The people who are running the porn industry have sold their souls to the Devil to make money.** And in the process, they are destroying lives, marriages, families and relationships.

One male porn performer said, *Every professional in the porn-world has herpes, male and female.*

Another porn actress said, *The drugs we binged on were Ecstasy, Cocaine, Marijuana, Xanax, Valium, Vicodin and alcohol.*

Yet another porn actress said, *Guys are punching you in the face. You get ripped. Your insides can come out of you. It's never ending. You're viewed as an object, not as a human spirit.*

They are also destroying the lives of precious children, whom God loves. It is hard to imagine anything more heinous than violating the innocence of a child for the sexual gratification of a porn watcher or for the financial advancement of those who own the business.

6. Porn distorts your perspective

It changes how you look at things. It distorts your ability to know the truth. According to the Journal of Adolescent Health, prolonged exposure to pornography leads to:

An exaggerated perception of sexual activity in society.

Diminished trust between intimate couples.

The abandonment of the hope of sexual monogamy.

Belief that promiscuity is the natural state.

Belief that abstinence and sexual inactivity are unhealthy.

Belief that marriage is sexually confining.

Lack of attraction to family and child-raising.

It actually changes how the male brain works. I would recommend ***Wired for Intimacy*** by William Struthers. Briefly mention three more.

7. Porn damages marriages

Destroys intimacy and the trust that is necessary for intimacy to happen.

Creates unrealistic expectations of what sex in marriage should be.

8. Porn ensnares and enslaves

Porn is addictive. Like alcohol or drugs, it ensnares and leads the consumer to need more and more. And not only is there a craving for a greater frequency but a need for more graphic pornography. That's why looking even at what some would call softcore porn is dangerous. But there can be victory and redemption. There are ministries and resources that can help you. Don't give it or give up. Contact me and I will recommend some resources. I'll be glad to talk with you, listen you to with complete confidentiality. I will pray for you and with you and will not judge you. Remember, ***we are just a group of broken people whom God is in the process of fixing.***

9. Porn is a weapon of Satan

It is not a form of entertainment. It is a weapon of destruction.

It is not a harmless activity. It is a spiritual and psychological cancer.

It is not an innocent hobby. It is an evil, wicked sin against God.

Takeaways: Simple statements that I hope will make sense.

1. If you've done it, confess. Jesus will forgive.

2. If you're tempted to do it, protect yourself. Take steps

Device protection. Accountability group or person. Get educated.

Memorize scripture. Be an active worshipper of Jesus.

3. If you've been hurt by it, heal and forgive.

Admit your pain. Seek assistance. Take time. Choose to forgive.

4. If you think you are above temptation, beware

Jesus came to forgive sinners. Jesus came to heal the hurting and broken. Jesus came to save us from hell and to take us to Heaven. Jesus is calling. Will you answer? Will you trust Him? Will you let Him carry your sins, your burdens and your fears? Will you give Him your life and let Him forgive all your sins, and heal all your hurts?