

## Pornographic Illusions

### Film

Do you believe the husband's porn addiction played into he and his wife not having sex for over a month?

### Teaching

Pornography is a drug that seeks to numb the pain, and deafen the cries of one's brokenness.

Pornography is an illusion that tries to represent real life, real emotions, real situations, and real people; but it always falls short because it leaves out two essential parts of a person: the spirit and soul.

Pornography arouses the mind and flesh while deceiving one into believing that people, mainly women, are on earth to be used as tools, props, toys, and aids for sexual fantasy. And, while promoting this illusion, pornography slowly rewires the brain, numbs relationships, and creates intense heartache.

The research related to porn is overwhelming, and we'll look at a few highlights as it relates to faith and marriage:

- 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography.
- Pornography viewers tend to have problems with premature ejaculation and erectile dysfunction. And, due to the time in unnatural sexual experiences with paper and cyberspace, they find it difficult to have sex with a real person.
- Happily married men are 61% less likely to look at porn.
- 56% of divorce cases involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.

Pornography can be described as a three-legged stool, with each leg adding to its addictive power. Leg one is accessibility. It used to be that one had to go through the back door of a building in the sketchy part of town to access pornographic material. Fast forward to the 21st century, and pornography is readily, freely, and easily accessible on any internet-enabled device. The second leg is anonymity. While the fear of being discovered used to be a deterrent to accessing pornography or visiting adult stores or peep shows, that fear has all but disappeared given porn's private accessibility. The third leg of the stool is affordability. At one point pornography was reserved for those who could afford a video, magazine, or cable subscription. Today, pornography is freely available. In fact, global pornography revenues have steadily declined since 2007 due to the amount of free porn online.

Pornography affects everyone in our society in some way — rather directly or indirectly. While internet filters, counseling, and accountability groups are helpful, the true key to freedom from pornography's grip lies in one's spiritual strength. First Corinthians 1:2 tells us that we are made holy by means of Jesus Christ. That is Plan A in one's freedom from pornography, and supports all the other methods, which make up Plan B.

Plan B strategies include:

- Staying away from triggers, sexy advertisements, magazines and/or movies
- Avoiding late-night browsing
- Putting software controls in place to block tempting pages, and giving your spouse the password
- Getting an accountability partner of the same gender.



### **Call to Action/Homework**

If you struggle with pornography, know that you can be free, and [there's support for you](#). Moreover, if your spouse struggles with pornography, [there is support for you](#), also. The more you two team with one another to defeat this issue, the more powerful your defense will be against it.

### **Discussion**

1. How has pornography affected your marriage?
2. What is being done about it?



## Never Keeping Secrets

### Film

In being transparent with his wife, did the husband say more than he should have or not enough?

### Teaching

Listen closely, and you'll hear what thousands of termites sound like in the walls of your home. Don't hear anything, do you? Secrets in marriage are just like termites in a home. You cannot see nor hear them, but they're there busily destroying what has been built.

There is a powerful quote from the book *Clockwork Prince* that speaks well to secrets: "Lies and secrets, Tessa, they are like a cancer in the soul. They eat away what is good and leave only destruction behind." This is essential for spouses to understand. While it may be convenient, and even seem best to keep one's mate in the dark about something, the end result is typically harmful, and creates a worse situation.

The Bible speaks about secrets in Luke 8:17, "For all that is secret will eventually be brought into the open, and everything that is concealed will be brought to light and made known to all." This should serve as a warning and a relief to spouses. To those keeping secrets, it's a warning — the truth will come out eventually. To those who have questions and feel like they are being deceived, be patient — the truth will eventually be known.

Marriages will only be as strong as the truth that is told and revealed. While it's never comfortable to reveal hurtful or embarrassing truths, honesty remains the best policy.

### Call to Action/Homework

Make a commitment to being honest and forthright with your spouse. Make a commitment to having an accountability partner of the same gender who you can disclose your secrets to. While you'll certainly want to use wisdom in how and when you share things with your spouse, make it your aim to live a life where there are never any secrets, lurking like termites, waiting to destroy your marriage.

### Discussion

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, with five being the highest, how important is to you that your spouse tell you the truth?
2. On a scale of 1 to 5, with five being the highest, how important is it to you that you don't keep secrets?



## Oneness In Marriage

### **Film**

How can the wife deal with the pain and shock of her husband's porn addiction while helping him work through it?

### **Teaching**

Many are familiar with Genesis 2:24, which says a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. However, what many fail to realize about this verse is that becoming one flesh does not happen overnight. Moreover, many people do not have a real understanding of *how* a husband and wife become one. The result is confusion, and a lack of mutual support when the inevitable trials of life appear.

Oneness in marriage is a progressive experience requiring openness and acceptance.

Openness looks like the husband and wife feeling comfortable sharing the good, bad, and ugly parts of themselves and experiences. If one spouse is battling an addiction to pornography or a substance, it's not just that person's problem, rather the couple's problem. This also applies to financial situations, affairs, child-rearing, and any other situation that distresses the marriage. It's not just one spouse fighting alone — rather it's a tag-team effort. Understandably, there's fear when it comes to sharing your heart with your mate, including the fear of rejection and/or retaliation. Still, without openness, there's no chance for oneness.

The second part to oneness is acceptance. When a spouse is brave enough to share, there's a desire that he/she will be still be accepted. This, of course, is dependent upon the spouse receiving the information. It can be hard to hear shocking or sad news from your spouse, and still accept him/her. This is where the love of God is needed and tested. First Corinthians 13:7 says love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. This includes information your mate shares that causes you pain.

### **Call to Action/Homework**

Practice openness and acceptance in your marriage so you can progressively build oneness. Also, get on the same team with your mate to stand against issues that threaten your marriage.

### **Discussion**

1. What scares you about being open with your mate about things that concern you?
2. Are you willing to accept your mate - even if what he/she shares is shocking or saddens you?
3. Are there things you are currently doing that deter you from being one with your spouse?