

3 Ways Porn Steals From Your Marriage

John is a normal guy. He's a Christian, a businessman and a good father who happens to struggle with a pornography addiction.

Introduced to pornography at the young age of 11, he just seems to always struggle with the pull of it. Growing up, getting through school, marrying and having two kids helped life to seem normal but always right there under the surface is this pull of the forbidden that he always seems to lose.

John has great intentions and every time he fails, he tells himself, "This is the last time." John doesn't share his struggle with his wife because it will probably upset her, and it just affects him anyways, right?

Christine is John's wife and constantly struggles with her self-image. She never feels quite settled or secure in her marriage. Although John is a good provider and always comes home, there are times when he just seems to check out.

Although he is nice to her most of the time, sometimes he just seems to pick her apart. It is those times that Christine thinks about most days and wonders if she's good enough for John and if he is eventually going to find someone else if she doesn't measure up a little better as a wife.

So Christine struggles, she tries to work out, she tries different makeup, different hairstyles, better outfits, and although the *new* works for a little while, it eventually settles back in to those same old uncomfortable interactions that leaves her feeling less than.

This isn't a how-to article on eliminating porn from your life. In marriage mentoring and counseling, I have seen

countless men addicted to pornography. The ones who have successfully been delivered from that addiction all had several things in common. They recognized what their addiction was doing to their relationship with God, they recognized what their sin was doing to their relationship with their wife and they recognized the very real capability of sexual sin passing down through the generations to their children.

They then after reviewing all the evidence, made a firm decision that they wanted pure relationships more than secret sin. They confessed to God *and* their wife, and were genuinely changed through grace and forgiveness and the power of Jesus Christ to be overcomers, more than conquerors, exceedingly and abundantly free from their past.

Here are three ways porn steals from your marriage:

1. Porn steals honest and open communication from your marriage. You can never get to a level five-communication status with your wife if you are always hiding something from her. Every time the conversation goes a little too deep and you find yourself a little too open, you have to reign it back in to keep from revealing something about your hidden life.

This leaves your wife feeling abandoned and disconnected from you which, in turn, causes her to usually withdraw as well. If there is always something between you and God, is your relationship in good standing? If there is always something between you and your wife, is your relationship in good standing? A foundation for a healthy, affair proof, divorce proof marriage is honest and open communication about everyday life. The more you know about each other's struggles, the more you can pray for and support each other.

2. Porn steals a genuine unconditional love from your marriage. Once you dive in to the world of porn, it's like a slippery slope. What started at the surface soon becomes mundane and you have to go further to try to maintain an

excitement

Now what happens next is beyond your control. If you're immersed in pornography you will begin to view people as sexual objects only. Those that are "good" for sex and those who are "bad" for sex, those you are attracted to and those you aren't attracted to will be the only two categories you view people in. You no longer will think with concern for someone's well-being but only if they look hot or not. This will bleed over in to your relationship with your wife.

Does she look hot enough, does she act like the girls on the video, and does she perform as well as those girls perform? If not, you begin to become bitter towards her for not meeting your new expectations. You deserve more, you need more, and this isn't cutting it.

You become condescending and mean trying to get her to respond with more enthusiasm, more passion, but it only drives her away, because her number one need from you is security and she doesn't have it anymore. Unconditional love and security brings a whole new level of intimacy in a relationship. If your wife knows you love her unconditionally, she will more than likely be much more available to you physically (barring any other situations not mentioned).

3. Porn steals the utter relief of holiness from your marriage. Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote that a marriage is a Holy Office to hold. One to be cherished and respected and treated with dignity, ordained and sanctioned by God Himself.

Pornography addiction within a marriage is not honoring to the office and not honoring to God and completely dishonoring to your wife. There's a certain stress that lies under the surface when dealing with unconfessed sin. "But I confessed it to God, Steve!"

It is still a sin against your wife that requires confession. Carrying around a potential threat to your family

all by yourself is dangerous and deadly to your family spiritually. There are two ways this secret will eventually come to the light, by your confession or by revelation. Revelation to those around you will be much more embarrassing. There is an utter relief when holiness returns and there's nothing between you and God and nothing between you and your wife.

If your wife isn't a safe place for you to confess, (some women aren't) try a Pastor or a counselor first. Then ask him for help in revealing it to your wife. You may need counseling to stabilize your marriage. You may need a program like Pure Life Ministry to hold you accountable to finding your deliverance. Whatever the cost, it's less than what porn costs your marriage and family.

Praying for your release from this bondage and for you to feel the utter relief of freedom.

Galatians 5:1 "For freedom Christ freed us. Stand fast therefore and do not be entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (MEV).

Even if porn isn't your struggle, what else do you recognize that you are allowing to steal from your marriage? Share on social media or in the comments below.

Stephen Miller is a Family Life Pastor at Crystal River Church of God, an ordained minister in the Church of God, the Men's Ministry leader of Warriors with a Covenant and a Married Life Small group marriage ministry leader. Steve and his wife Jessica present regularly for the Marriage Restored Conference. You can read more of his work at Marriage Encounter and read his book "Fight for Her! A Marriage in Crisis and God's Intervention."