

Do Not Look at the Cover of 'TIME' Magazine

This is the most absurd, contradictory story I can remember: The current *TIME* magazine cover story reports on the disastrous effects of pornography on those who view it. Yet the magazine's cover image is so explicit that I warn you not to view it. The image that accompanies the story on page 40 is nearly as graphic. I would not want this magazine near anyone I know.

First, let's discuss the content of the article. Belinda Luscombe documents the growing number of young men who are convinced that "their sexual responses have been sabotaged because their brains were virtually marinated in porn when they were adolescents." So they are creating online community groups, smartphone apps and educational videos designed to help men quit porn. Luscombe observes: "For the first time, some of the most strident alarms are coming from the same demographic as its most enthusiastic customers."

Many have been worried for years about pornography's degradation of women and normalization of sexual aggression. British Prime Minister David Cameron has begun the process of requiring porn sites to verify the age of their users or face a fine. The Utah state legislature has unanimously passed a resolution treating porn as a public health crisis.

This is indeed a crisis. According to *TIME*, 46 percent of men ages 18 to 39 intentionally view pornography in any given week. Ninety percent of college-age men and one-third of women viewed porn during the previous year. Now, a growing body of scientific research indicates that watching pornography is damaging to the brain and highly addictive. The *TIME* article focuses on those who are trying to stem the tide of porn for reasons that have little to do with morality.

Our ministry has been warning about this epidemic for years. (For more, please see my *The Plague of Pornography*.) I applaud *TIME* for lending its significant influence to confronting this crisis. But I am shocked at the images they chose to accompany their story.

As I stated above, the magazine's cover image is so explicit I am warning you not to look at it. The same is true for the image that begins the actual article. Why would the *TIME* editor choose to show pornography for a story that warns against pornography? This is like offering whiskey at an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Unlike porn magazines, *TIME* is displayed at checkout stands and on magazine racks all over the country, as well as online. Any person of any age can see the images I'm warning you to avoid.

They are totally unnecessary to the story. I cannot think of a rationale that defends including them. I can only assume that whoever made this decision thought their graphic nature would sell more magazines. If so, *TIME* is using sexual images to make money, which makes its magazine pornography.

Here we find more proof that Jesus was right: Lust is so devastating that we must do whatever it takes to refuse it (Matt. 5:27-30). Starting with this week's *TIME* magazine.

So what can Christians do? In a world that is number one to pornography than ever, we can manifest the true nature of love. We can model sexuality, dating and marriage in a way that is pure, healthy and positive. We can show a skeptical culture that God invented love and sex and intends them for our good and his glory.

The antidote to pornography and the key to genuine love are the same: "To love someone means to see him as God intended him" (Fyodor Dostoevsky).