

Has Satan's Tricky Lie Infiltrated Your Marriage?

Almost everywhere you turn, couples are encouraged to introduce pornography to their relationship as a way to spice things up in the bedroom. Surveys will illustrate that in doing so, couples are significantly happier. What these headlines and surveys are not telling you is:

“The long term effect of watching pornography with your spouse can be devastating.”

Samuel Perry, a sociologist at the University of Oklahoma, and his colleague Cyrus Schleifer surveyed the same 2,000 American adults on three separate occasions between 2006 and 2014 regarding their relationships and their use of sexually-explicit material. According to Samuel Perry, “We found that married Americans who began pornography were roughly twice as likely to be divorced.”

Nobody thinks a spark is harmful until the flame has been fanned resulting in a fiery inferno burning out of control.

An Unexpected Disaster

In 2015, I had the opportunity to volunteer with an agency who provides disaster relief assistance. I will never forget walking into a home that was completely destroyed by floods that ripped through an area of South Carolina. The family told the story of going through the day as if everything were OK, believing the media when they said that there was no imminent threat since the river was miles away. While they were cooking a meal, the flood waters came. They had no choice but to leave—immediately.

I spent the day with this family as they realized that nothing in their home escaped the water. Everything was destroyed,

mold was growing and the home was completely wrecked. By the time evening came, we had removed everything from the home—including the floors, walls and ceilings.

The same is true for pornography. We are led to believe that all will be OK—that it will even improve the relationship, but the final outcome is certain destruction.

“And no wonder! For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14).

Many people believe the lie that viewing pornography will bring you closer together. To be quite honest, my husband and I bought into it too. Here’s what we didn’t realize until much later.

We Were Fooling Ourselves

Inviting pornography into our bedroom was a form of codependency. Both of us had been used to viewing pornography as a means to medicate the pain, emptiness and loneliness in our lives. Watching it together meant he no longer had to feel guilty for his actions, as it further endorsed the thought that I was OK with it. Feeling emotionally neglected, I believed that if I watched it with him, our relationship both inside and outside the bedroom would improve. By being willing participants, we were both sinning against God and committing spiritual suicide. Though we couldn’t see it at the time, we now recognize the lifelessness behind our eyes and in our hearts.

Eventually, like poison, it would seep out into other areas of our lives.

Early in our marriage, we worked opposite shifts so we hardly saw one another. By believing that I was okay with his pornography use, my husband continued to have a rendezvous with sin. He filled his evenings with chats and text messages to women, and even made plans to meet up with one lady. I

believed sex was love, and so when we would go periods of time without intimacy, I would begin to feel unsatisfied. Eventually, I would begin to find pleasure through porn instead of physical oneness with my husband.

Through time, I began to hate the people on the screen. They portrayed unattainable perfection.

I battled mounting pressure to measure up, but looked in the mirror in disgust, knowing I never would. After all, pornography is a huge form of false reality.

We Were at Breaking Point

This lifestyle spiraled us quickly into a battle with anger. Screaming matches would ensue. I would become physically violent to my husband and would storm out of the house, and he would punch walls. Clearly things were getting out of control, and we had to do something.

When we made the decision to kick pornography out of our bedroom, I was relieved—though the effects remained. For years, I would continue to struggle with self-esteem. We would both struggle with the images and expectations that lurked in the darkness. My husband would continue seeking out pornography on the internet to medicate the pain he felt as a result of any number of things including injury, job loss and stress. For years, I would struggle in regards to what the picture of healthy sexuality with one's spouse should look like. It held me captive and further led to me being unsatisfied and frustrated.

Once you have welcomed pornography into your mind and your life, it will continue to dominate your life—if you let it. Through Christ there is always hope to be a better version of yourself. The Conquer Series is a cinematic small group course that is helping men bring healing to their relationship. Through the use of the Conquer Series, you'll understand how your brain has been hijacked by the enemy. You will be given

proven principles and techniques that will allow you to reclaim your brain and your identity in Christ. Today is the day that you can choose lifelong change.

Getting Real

Getting real with ourselves, with each other and most importantly with God was one of the toughest journeys we have embarked on. We had to come to grips with the present struggles we were facing as a result of our bruised past. We had to learn that nothing is done in secret, for God is found in our most private moments. As a couple, we had to become putty in the hands of the Almighty.

“Investigate my life, O God, find out everything about me; Cross-examine and test me, get a clear picture of what I’m about; See for yourself whether I’ve done anything wrong, then guide me on the road to eternal life” (Ps. 139:23-24, MSG).

This is a daring prayer, so don’t pray it lightheartedly. You had better believe that when you earnestly ask God to show you what you’re doing wrong, He will.

Stepping Into What God Has for Our Relationship

My husband and I now realize that our entire relationship has been wrong. We have allowed Satan into so many areas of our lives, and we now seek to serve the Lord first and foremost. Over the past couple of years, we have really started to fall in love with one another, connect on a level we never thought possible, and we now can enjoy intimacy as the gift God intended it to be instead of a product of worldly ideas and opinions. A few months ago, we celebrated our 13th wedding anniversary, and we are considering plans to renew our vows in the near future.

I have no doubt in my mind that my story is not isolated, that there are other couples out there who are gambling with pornography and are experiencing or have experienced a

declining relationship—despite what the headlines may say. You do not have to remain a prisoner to sexual sin.

The Conquer Series Small Group study will allow you to understand the ways in which the enemy has kept a firm grip on your soul, and it will provide you the path to freedom for your tomorrow. {eo}

Find out more at .