

How Pornography Is Linked to Human Trafficking

To most people, sex trafficking is a problem that exists in distant foreign countries. You may think, “But it certainly isn’t something that would involve me, is it?”

If you view pornography, then the answer is yes. The truth is, porn and sex trafficking have strong links, even in the United States, where the sex trafficking industry is worth \$3 billion a year.

How big is the sex trafficking problem? The University of New England reports it is the third largest criminal business in the world, behind only drugs and weapons.

On April 11, 2018, the White House provided these statistics:

- Sex trafficking is a global form of modern-day slavery in which individuals are coerced to perform commercial sex acts against their will.
- Per the International Labor Organization, 4.8 million victims were in forced sexual exploitation.
- Over 99 percent of trafficked individuals trapped in forced sexual exploitation are women.
- Over 21 percent of those trafficked for sex are children.
- In fiscal year 2017, the Department of Homeland Security investigated 833 human trafficking cases. This resulted in 1,602 arrests and 578 convictions, and identified 518 victims of human trafficking.
- Since 2007, the National Human Trafficking Hotline has received reports of 22,191 sex trafficking cases in the United States.
- Of the nearly 25,000 runaway children reported to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children, one in

seven were likely victims of child sex trafficking.

So How Is Pornography Connected?

According to journalist John-Henry Westen, "As long as America's men are being trained to think that violent, disturbing pornography is sexually acceptable, an enormous clientele for sex traffickers is being created every day in homes, college dorms, and apartments across the nation."

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) defines sex trafficking as "the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act." It also includes "inducing commercial sex acts by force, fraud or coercion."

A "commercial sex act" means "any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person." Since porn performers are given money and other items of value, the definition certainly applies to the pornography industry.

But are porn performers coerced or induced by force or fraud? Aren't all the scenes done by consenting adults?

One former porn actress testified, "Women are lured in, coerced and forced to do sex acts they never agreed to do ... [and given] drugs and alcohol to help get [them] through hardcore scenes ...The porn industry is modern-day slavery."

Sex traffickers use pornography in many ways. They force their victims to watch porn to desensitize them. Even to train them in sex acts they will be forced to perform. They also video the victims and sell and distribute the pornographic films on the internet and other outlets.

'But I'm Just Watching a Few Porn Videos on My Computer'

You may think that watching a little porn alone at home

doesn't have an impact on sex trafficking.

Dr. Mahri Irvine, Adjunct Professional Lecturer at American University, said, "I really wish that people who watch porn knew more about that. Because I think they believe that they're engaging in this activity in a very passive way. And they're like, 'Oh, I'm doing it in the privacy of my own home, and this is just a video that I'm watching'. And they're not associating it with the fact that pornography is very often the filmed rape of sex trafficking victims."

Noel Bouche, executive director of pureHOPE, explained, "While pornographic content includes trafficked victims from around the world, porn consumers aren't told anything about the performers, including which ones may have been trafficked from an early age. Regular users of internet pornography are likely consuming pornography that includes adult and child victims of sex trafficking."

On Redeeming Love's blog, Katie Tomkiewicz summarized, "Various studies show that when pornographic content is viewed, the viewer's mind becomes increasingly calloused to the brutalities of the sex-trafficking industry, which include rape, coercion, sexual violence and the general idea that women are objects existing for the purpose of providing sexual pleasure."

She continued, "The psychological effects that pornography has on the mind cannot be denied; the harm done to both the viewer and the viewed cannot be denied. It is critical to address today's pornographic culture for what it is: a hub for sex-trafficking and a gateway drug for future pimps and johns."

Freedom Is Possible

Perhaps you were not aware that pornography and sex trafficking were so closely linked. You certainly thought your porn habit was a harmless pastime that didn't affect anybody.

But now you know. And it's not just sex trafficking victims that are impacted by porn viewing.

Pornography viewing affects you, your family, your friends and all areas of your life. And it also affects your relationship with God.

But there are men and women just like you who are making a stand and breaking free from their struggle with pornography.

Joshua Jorstad is one of more than 750,000 men who have started their journey to freedom through a powerful small group course called the Conquer Series.

"Because of the Conquer Series, I started my journey to be free from porn! I am officially a year and a half clean and have been loving the change. Ultimately, it was God who changed my heart, but your resources helped a bunch!"

Make a stand against sex trafficking and start your journey to freedom. {eoa}

Learn more at .