

OVERCOMING Addiction to Pornography

by Don S. Otis

Men bound by pornography often feel trapped. But there is a way out.

The Internet has made it possible for Christian men to access hard-core pornography in the privacy of their homes. Men who might never consider stepping inside a strip club or visiting a triple-X theater can, with the click of a mouse, enter a world of sensual stimulation that is every bit as addictive as drugs or alcohol.

It is just as destructive too. Pornography creates unrealistic expectations within men that cannot legitimately be fulfilled—even within the context of marriage.

Many Christian men still equate sex with love. Yet sexual sin is rarely about not having enough sex.

Rather, it is about distorting sex. Even some ministers erroneously believe healing sexual relationships can be accomplished by encouraging wives to purchase sexy lingerie.

The truth is, Christian women are not to blame when their husbands choose to view pornography. They are victims of a culture that says fidelity is boring and that there are no consequences.

Christian women whose husbands are addicted to pornography wrestle with fear that they are not good enough and live in pain caused by their husband's mental adultery. Their lives are constantly filled with embarrassment, rejection, betrayal and grief.

When men, women or children look at pornography, they are locking images in the brain that don't go away. Cable television and the Internet make it simple for men or children to pollute their minds, giving Satan a stronghold that can unravel marriages or distort relationships later in life.

Today, more than 50 percent of all teens have visited Web sites containing pornography. Many young people use computers at public libraries or a friend's home, or they simply log on when their parents aren't around.

At the root of an addiction to pornography is a relational dysfunction. The long-term consequence of filling our minds with pornographic images is unfaithfulness.

According to Jim Cordell, a private counselor and lay minister with Life Center Foursquare Church in Spokane, Washington, many men create relationships in their own minds that no human can fulfill. He says he is counseling more Christian men than ever before about such expectations.

"These men often fear rejection and want risk-free relationships," Cordell says. Increasingly, men are willing to take their addiction to pornography to the next level—a physical affair.

A typical addict is someone who was exposed to pornographic images in childhood through a parent, extended family member

or friend. Most are men in their 30s and 40s who have been unable to hide their addiction. The healing process for those caught in the destructive grip of pornography includes four key elements:

1. Community intervention, preferably in small groups for discussion and accountability
2. Healthy relationships with individuals who will provide added mentoring and accountability
3. Counseling to deal with the bad seeds Satan has planted
4. Removal of temptations to avoid falling into pornography's trap again.

"If a person understands the relational roots of pornography," Cordell says, "it is easier to resolve the hurts and allow God to provide healing."

Resources for Finding Freedom

There are dozens of resources and organizations available to help men and women break free from pornography's grip. Here are a few:

National Coalition for the Protection of Children Families
800 Compton Road, Suite 9224
Cincinnati, OH 45231
(513) 521-6227
ncpcf@

Victim Helpline: (800) 583-2964

Harvest USA
PO Box 11469
Philadelphia, PA 19111
(215) 342-7114 Phone
info@

Harvest USA exists to bring the clarity of God's Word and the power of Jesus Christ to bear on the issues of homosexuality, pornography and other sexual addictions. They do this by: (1) equipping men and women who want to be free; (2) providing spiritual support to families and friends affected by these issues; and (3) educating church leadership and laity relating to these critical issues in our day.

Other resources:

* An Affair of the Mind by Laurie Hall (Focus on the Family)

* Door of Hope by Jan Frank (Thomas Nelson)