

Pastor Claims Porn Is OK, as Long as It's 'Ethically' Sourced

More Americans are changing their views on pornography. A 2018 Gallup poll reported that 43 percent now believe that porn is 'morally acceptable'.

That's a 7 percent increase over 2017 and the highest level since Gallup began measuring moral perceptions of pornography in 2011. The liberal view of porn is also making inroads in the church.

Recently, Nadia Bolz-Weber, an Evangelical Lutheran Church pastor and founder of the House for All Saints and Sinners in Denver, told Out In Jersey about her thoughts on "ethical pornography."

She said, "Now, there are issues of justice and exploitation within the porn industry, no question, but it doesn't mean consumption of pornography should be shamed. There is ethically sourced porn. There are people who say it's sexual immorality, but if you take liberals and conservatives who show outrage and made a Venn diagram of those who consume pornography, you'd see a huge overlap."

Ethical porn is considered to be pornography that is legally made, respects the performers' rights, uses good working conditions and celebrates sexual diversity and similar characteristics.

But does ethical porn really exist, or is it just a smokescreen to justify porn?

According to Kelli Scott of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "(Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology) RMIT

research fellow Meagan Tyler is writing a book on the ethics of commercial sex and says there are questions about whether or not an industry which fundamentally trades in the sexual objectification of women can ever be ethical.”

Tyler added, “The claims about ethical porn, at this point in time, are more industry propaganda than anything else, and are—what would elsewhere be rightly recognized as—corporate whitewashing.”

Beyond the ethics of what happens in the porn industry, porn is affecting those who view it and the people around them. It ruins relationships. Fifty-six percent of divorce cases cite porn as being one of the main factors leading to the breakup.

Frustration With the Church

Bolz-Weber voiced concern that the church’s stand against porn is based on shame.

She said, “I’m not going to shame people when they already feel ashamed. People have viewed erotic imagery since we could scratch it on the inside of caves ... If we took shame out of the fact that people like to view erotic imagery, the compulsive behavior around consuming pornography would decrease.”

It is true that evangelical churches have done a lot wrong in relating to people who struggle with porn or have other sexual sins. We have failed to represent Christ to people in this area particularly. The church has been silent when it should have been discipling people.

Dr. Ted Roberts, founder of Pure Desire Ministries and host of the Conquer Series, explains that Dr. Patrick Carnes, a world-renowned expert on sexual addiction and bondage, conducted an intensive study of over a thousand sex addicts and discovered that 70 percent of them came from rigid, disengaged homes.

Dr. Roberts asked, “And what’s a great definition of a rigid, disengaged home? A fundamental evangelical home that has all kinds of rules and not relationship. That’s not saying that every evangelical home is that way, but so many of them are. They have all kinds of rules because they’re afraid kids are not going to follow the faith ...They don’t really have a real in-depth relationship with Christ emotionally in their heart.”

Guilt Versus Shame

There is, however, a difference between shame and guilt. As we deal with sin, we should experience a healthy level of guilt. If you’re a married man and you’re viewing pornography, then it’s healthy to feel guilty that you’re lusting after someone who is not your wife. Guilt is there to drive us to repentance—when we can realize where we have done wrong and earnestly come to God for forgiveness and ask Him to help us change.

Shame, on the other hand, is a feeling of worthlessness tied to your identity. Instead of “I have done something wrong,” shame is “There must be something wrong with me.” This type of shame is toxic as it doesn’t drive people to repentance but drives them deeper into their sin.

God’s Grace Knows No Bounds

Dealing with shame is certainly an issue. But the solution is not minimizing the harms of pornography and masturbation or trying to justify “ethical porn.”

We need to understand the fullness of God’s grace and forgiveness. But we also must never water down the reality of what Jesus Christ did for us on the cross when He died for all of our sins—including sexual sins.

Jesus was very clear about the subject of lust, and He did not mince words about its seriousness.

““You have heard that it was said by the ancients, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27-28).

People may try to tell you ethical porn exists, but Jesus said if you lust after a woman—whether on the street, on a porn site, in a glossy magazine or in any other format—it is sin.

Just because the evangelical church is full of broken people doesn’t make God’s Word any less true. We are all desperate for Christ. God’s Word reveals our brokenness and how much each of us needs Jesus.

Combatting shame is not about pretending that we haven’t done anything wrong, nor is it redefining sin so we feel good about our bad behavior. Dealing with shame properly is about knowing who God is in the person of Jesus. We truly deal with shame in our lives when we understand we are not the sum of our past; rather, we know who we are in Christ.

There Is Help for Your Sexual Struggle

If you are struggling with porn and sexual brokenness, there is hope and help for you. The Conquers Series is an award-winning 12-DVD resource that is helping over 750,000 men worldwide to find freedom from porn.

A 68-year-old man wrote about the Conquer Series that “So far, I see where I had been given some information as to the root of my sin, but never having been explained as to what to do now that I could see that the problem was in the mind/heart of my being ... I have been praying for a ‘renewing of my mind’ understanding that is where the root problem was hidden and the stronghold was established ... I can attest, at least for myself, that more Bible reading has not worked for me, neither has trying harder had any positive effect! I have no words of thanks great enough for the work you have done and are doing

in the name of Jesus.”

The Conquers Series can help you, too. The videos feature exciting testimonies and solid biblical teaching that guide you to a porn-free life. A personal journal and study guides help keep you focused on your recovery every day.

You can begin your victory over porn by ordering the Conquer Series today.