

Technology, Pornography, and Sanctification: Understanding the Big Picture

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Why this is important:

- Ministries are being ruined
- Divorce and marital distress
- Children are being impacted

Adult Internet Porn Statistics

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What we will cover today:

1. The scope of the problem (see above).
2. What is Sanctification?
3. What is Technology and does it help or hurt Sanctification?
4. Understanding Addictions as harmful Attachments.
5. Pornography Addiction.
6. Getting Help and Protecting yourself, your family and the Church.

What is sanctification and what does it look like?

God's calling on your life is to be transformed by the Word of God through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the image of Christ.

"Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ..." Eph. 4:15
"But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh...the fruit of the Spirit is: Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control" Galatians 5:

What is technology? Four Observations:

1. For this message, technology is all devices with internet connectivity. Examples: X-boxes, Wii, Blackberries, iPhones, cell phones, iPads, laptops, etc.
2. Net Technology has great creative and productive potential.
3. We live in an individualist culture that provides many options, but not wisdom.
4. Naïve or wrong use of Net Technology can BLOCK sanctification and create spiritual bondage.

Sanctification and Technology: Hindrance or Help?

- Net Technology can be used to Glorify God and Love our Neighbor, OR
- Net Technology can be used to spread lies, steal our time, rob our affections and lead to habitual sin.

What is an Addiction? You can look at addictions from many angles. One way to look at it is this:

An addiction is an Unhealthy Attachment (relationship) to something that is

- a. Positively Reinforcing.
- b. Tends to become dominating.
- c. Continues despite negative consequences.

Why are Addictions so Powerful?

1. We were created for deep attachment/bonding as God's image bearers (Genesis 1:26-27)
2. There are 3 areas of attachment we are called to find harmony and comfort: Bonding with God, with Others, and with Ourselves.
3. The rebellious Fall of humankind corrupted our hearts, leading to broken attachment with God, Self and Others, and making us vulnerable to entering into false (sinful) attachments. (Genesis 3)

Addictions as "sinful attachments" which displace God and Others

- Addictions promise us a sense of connection and acceptance (like a love relationship or bond), but actually cut us off from God, ourselves and those who love us.
- "Breaking up is hard to do" for deep attachments like addictions: Physical, Emotional and Spiritual.

The Technology of the Internet and Promotion of Addictions

- Behaviors or substances which deliver fast reinforcement are the most addictive.
- The “Triple A Engine” of internet addictions: Accessible-Affordable-Anonymous.

Pornography Addiction

Very immediate in reinforcement biologically, visual stimulation leading to self-stimulating> creating a “super-highway” in the brain over time that draws one back for more and more.

- Negative Emotions become routinely avoided by “checking out” in the behavior.
- The problem becomes not only one of moral choice, but that the brain actually is adapting.

A Range of Behaviors

Moral problems associated with Net Technology range from passive viewing with self-stimulation to interactive sexual involvement with others on the web, (chat rooms, viewing people, phone sex, sexting, etc) to the use of prostitutes, drug use or involvement in affairs.

The Shame Cycle

Someone trapped in the world of pornography often has deep shame about himself/herself as a person (feelings of worthlessness) that pre-date their addiction. In order to avoid these feelings of shame he/she starts to fantasize. After a “build-up” period, they act out. Then the feelings of worthlessness and self-reproach return again...and they start the obsessive fantasy cycle again.

I have Good News for you...

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful & just to forgive us our sins & cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 Jn 1:9

“And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— ⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰ For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:6-10

Getting Free-First Steps: Get Honest and Get Help

1. Count the Costs: What is really happening—stop kidding oneself.
 - How much time, money and energy is being lost?
 - What are the costs to my marriage or other close relationships? Has the intimacy and bond eroded?
 - What has happened to my cherished values and ideals?
 - How has my job been impacted by distraction and wasting time?
 - Where’s my relationship with God at?
 - How has my loss of time and preoccupation denied my children my full engagement?
2. Humbly confess.
3. Seek pastoral and/or Christian counselling.

Getting Free Second Steps: Repent = Deeds not Words

1. Take RIGOROUS measures to filter & make all Net Technology TRANSPARENT with accountability software.
2. Use resources like XXX.Church and Christian books on holiness and recovery for support.
3. Learn to identify negative feelings and talk about them openly rather than acting out to avoid how you feel.
4. Humbly commit to Marriage Counselling to bring healing and restoration (or seek Ind. Clg. if single)

Staying Free: Walk in Grace and Truth

- Commit to live before God and others Transparently (no secret credit, email, or web accts).
- **Identify your vulnerable places, feelings, and situations**, and plan how to reduce risks and be transparent. (E.g. when traveling, when alone with the computer at home, etc)
- **Attend a discipleship program for healing:** Living Waters, Freedom Session, Celebrate Recovery.
- Move from a shame-based identity to a Christ based one.

- Daily cherish the gifts of God in your Life (Friends, family, your mate, your children, your resources)

Common Concerns for Spouses

Habitual Pornography use often affects the self-esteem and worth of a mate. It has a similar effect as an affair: “What’s wrong with me” (self-blame) “Doesn’t he/she love me” (anger, fear) “Can I ever trust him/her?” (anxiety)

Help for Spouses

- Get informed and realize you are not alone.
- Insist on transparency in everything in the relationship. No more secrets, period.
- Do not compromise your own values and integrity: Refuse and confront.
- Seek marriage counselling, and if he/she is unwilling pursue therapy to take care of yours self.
- Make sure all internet devices in your home have filters with protected codes and accountability software where possible.

How the Church can make a difference

1. Encourage FAMILIES to be informed and proactive in healthy use of technology at home and work. Appoint a volunteer church “Net Safety Consultant” to help install software for people at home who are not computer literate.
2. Talk openly about this problem and develop support group ministries and provide deacon funds for marriage counselling.
3. Establish church policy to have accountability programs installed on all church computers.
4. Invest in Marriage Enrichment activities in the church and in helping Singles with their relationship struggles.
5. Teach parents, kids, young adults about healthy relationships and sexuality from a Biblical perspective.

Benediction

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
Ephesians 3:14-20

Additional resources in separate handouts