

PCA Parent Pages

Valuable information for parents intentional about raising godly and responsible children.

How Do I Talk to My Son about Pornography... And What Can We Do About It?

We no longer have the luxury of only trying to prevent our children from being exposed to pornography; we must take steps to prepare them for when they will see inappropriate images and depictions on the computer, iPad, smart phone, etc. But, thank you Lord for the wisdom we find in Proverbs chapter 5 – amazingly this chapter is perfectly suited to guide parents in a purposeful conversation with their sons about this issue!

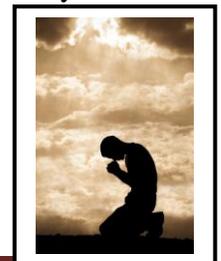
This is a **longer version** of an initial Parent Page that dealt specifically with the initial conversation with your son about the issue of pornography – **but what if that conversation isn't enough?** What happens when you find out that your son has been looking at pornography and you want to help him walk away from this trap to freedom? The initial piece is expanded here to include suggestions for parents who are looking for more than that one-time conversation.

Note to Parents: While the primary reference for this conversation is found in Scripture (Proverbs chapter 5), **various other references are not biblically-based.** There are very significant and profound scientific studies that have come out in the last year that demonstrate the connection between the “hyper-stimulation” of Internet pornography and Erectile Dysfunction in young men. These studies are not presented with a biblical worldview, but we understand that God is the one who has wired the human brain – this is not, as described by scientists, a result of the evolutionary process! God is the author of our design and because we are wired in such a manner, God gives us warnings as to what will happen when we tamper with that wiring and instructions how to literally rewire our brains back to normal. God's Word will be the foundation for this discussion, but much of what you'll be directed to as outside sources will not be presented with a biblical worldview.



Also, this conversation and material is not suited for younger audiences – this is an adult conversation that unfortunately many times has to be presented to much younger and younger audiences. Research says that boys as young as 10 years old begin to search for pornography and the average age of exposure to porn is around 12. Please be careful with this information.

Finally, our prayers are with you and your family during this difficult process. We know that God desires strong and healthy relationships and can bring healing and hope to any situation! Freedom is found on our knees at the foot of the cross!



Let's begin...

We will be examining a passage of God's Word as the foundation for this conversation. Please begin in prayer asking God to open up His Word and the Truth to you and your son regarding the issues of sex, intimacy, and pornography. Then open up your Bible to Proverbs chapter 5 and follow along with the information below. At some points you will be instructed to watch various videos online – remember that these videos are not presented from a biblical worldview, but the research and scientific information testifies to the truth of God's Word and His design!

Proverbs Chapter 5

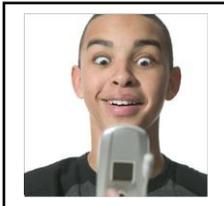
- **Verse 1-2 Pay Attention!**

- Verses 1-2 set the stage
 - Dads, this is a conversation you must have!
 - Sons, this is sound advice that is going to benefit you – it truly is in your best interest to listen and take to heart the advice of your father (and Heavenly Father)



- **Verses 3-5 Yes, she's attractive...at first...but wait!**

- Her lips drip honey and her speech is smoother than oil
 - That's Hebrew for "she's fine!" Men, we are hard-wired to find women attractive – that's exactly how God designed us – which is exactly why Satan works so hard to corrupt and destroy what God designed for good. Of course you could mention that the woman in pornography isn't real...she's "airbrushed" or altered in Photoshop – but that seems to be a meaningless concept to a man...she's either attractive or not, who cares why?!



- BUT (love that word in the Bible)...the other shoe is about to drop! Listen to how Solomon describes this:

- *But in the end she is bitter as gall sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave.*

Steps leading down to the tomb at Alto de Segoria, Colombia.

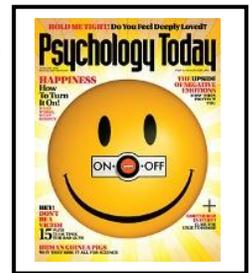


- WOW – that sure doesn't sound like a great place to go...down to death, straight to the grave...**why is looking at pornography linked to “death”?**

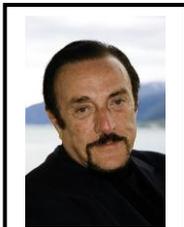


- The “death” Solomon is referring to isn't just the death that Scripture tells us is our proper wages for sin...no, I believe that Solomon understands that the “other woman” of pornography leads to the death of intimacy and trust between a man and his soul-mate. Research is now coming out that demonstrates that a long exposure to pornography actually wires the pleasure center in the brain to respond to lust, not love...to two dimensional pictures, not three dimensional beings. We are beginning to see a new consequence of pornography – men, when married, are unable to perform sexually with their wives because their brains are short-circuited from pornography.

- Study in *Psychology Today* confirms what the Book of Proverbs says!
 - A recent study in *Psychology Today* found that **men who regularly viewed Internet pornography actually lost their ability to perform in real-life sexual relationships**. Another study in Italy labeled this phenomenon as “sexual anorexia.” Here is an excerpt from that study:



Web porn simply numbs men's pleasure receptacles, desensitizing responses to the neurochemical dopamine. This is a chemical associated with reward and, in young men, researchers believe that gorging on Internet porn simply shuts down the physiological sense of reward from sex. Because the Web allows for so many different—and, if the user so chooses—ever more intense stimulations, the mind-body continuum begins to feel nothing at all.



Philip Zimbardo

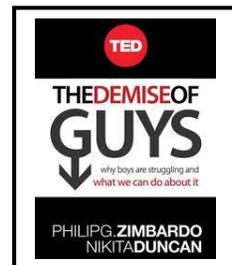
- Philip Zimbardo recently presented a TED talk titled “The Demise of Guys” (which is apparently a book as well by the same title) – in this presentation he says this about the problem he sees with young men today:

*Boys' brains are being **digitally rewired**, in a totally new way, for change, novelty, excitement, and constant arousal...that means they're totally out of sync with romantic relationships...*

- Zimbardo claims that this new “**arousal addiction**” is significantly different than other addictions, like to drugs. With a drug addiction, Zimbardo says, you crave more and more of the same drug. With the new arousal addiction, you crave something **different** each time.

- To watch this TED talk, visit the TED website:

“The Demise of Guys” by Philip Zimbardo
<http://www.ted.com/talks/zimchallenge.html>



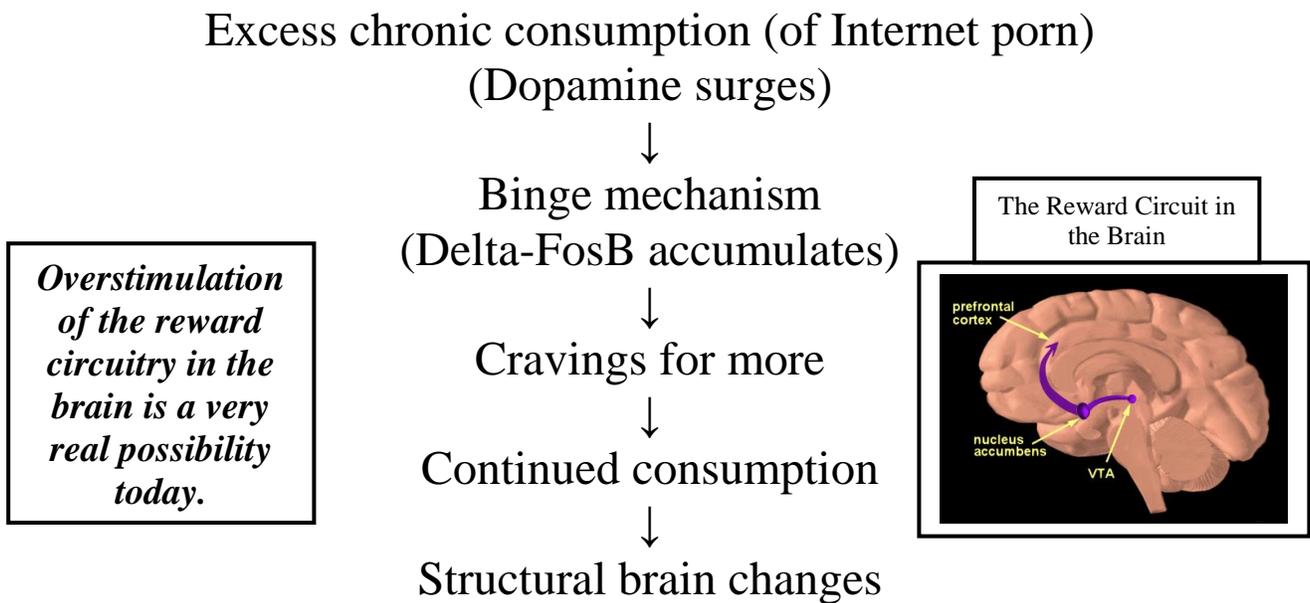


- Another TED presentation, this time by Gary Wilson titled “[The Great Porn Experiment](#),” carries Zimbardo’s concept even further examining the brain chemistry resulting in addiction. Wilson, an anatomy and physiology teacher interested in the neurochemistry of mating and bonding, is a co-author of *Cupid’s Poisoned Arrow: From Habit to Harmony in Sexual Relationships*. He also hosts a new website “Your Brain On Porn” for those seeking to understand and reverse compulsive porn use found at <http://yourbrainonporn.com>
- Wilson, while not speaking from a biblical worldview, addresses the question, “**How can porn use cause sexual performance trouble?**” From his videos and presentations, the following information has been gleaned:

ED due to porn is becoming rapidly common, especially for young men. The cause of sexual performance trouble (ED, short for Erectile Dysfunction) appears to be physiological, not psychological, given that such diverse men change only one variable (porn use), yet report a similar recovery pattern. For these men, anxiety is secondary. Recent behavioral addiction research suggests that the loss of libido and performance occur because heavy users are numbing their brain’s normal response to pleasure. Years of overriding the natural limits of libido with intense stimulation desensitize the user’s response to a neurochemical called dopamine.

Dopamine is behind motivation, “wanting” and all addictions. It drives the search for rewards. We get little spurts of it every time we bump into anything potentially rewarding, novel, surprising, or even anxiety-producing.

Many men don’t realize their brain’s sensitivity is declining toward normal sex **because Internet erotica delivers endless dopamine hits**—making erection and climax possible where normal encounters would not. When they try to have actual intercourse and cannot, they understandably panic. **The reality is that Internet porn usage, over times, physically alters the brain.** This is what it looks like in a flow chart for easier visualization:



- **Verses 7-11 YES, there is a COST associated with pornography!**

- Let's stop and consider the costs listed in these verses...

- You give your best strength to others...



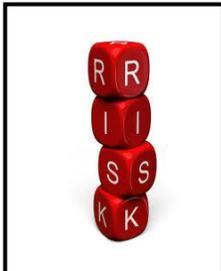
- From the studies above, the evidence is pouring in connecting Internet pornography to Erectile Dysfunction – especially in young men who have only known the “hyper-stimulation” of porn delivered via high speed Internet access! This means that when you decide to get married, your wife will get the leftovers of your sexual desires and performance! Literally, you will be unable to perform sexually with your wife – your pleasure center in your brain will be conditioned to the two dimensional world of lust and pornography!

- Lest strangers feast on your wealth...

- A porn addiction can be very, very expensive as you create an unquenchable appetite for more – and while there is so much porn for free on the Internet, as your appetite increases, so will your desire to find “different” types of sexual stimulation – you may move from Internet porn to prostitutes, etc...



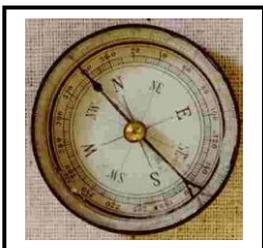
- At the end of your life you will groan...



- Today there are over 25 different sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) that you open yourself up to by engaging in promiscuous behaviors, nearly half of them are among people between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. Some of the most common STDs include HPV, chlamydia, herpes, gonorrhea, and trichomoniasis. The four STDs that are incurable are HPV, HIV, herpes, and hepatitis.

- **Verse 6 What about the woman in the pictures? Isn't she at fault as well?**

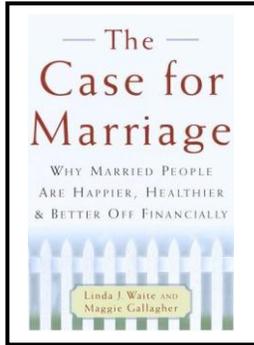
- The statement in verse 6 “she gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not” – what does that mean? How could she not know that what she is doing is wrong and degrading not only to herself, but to all women?



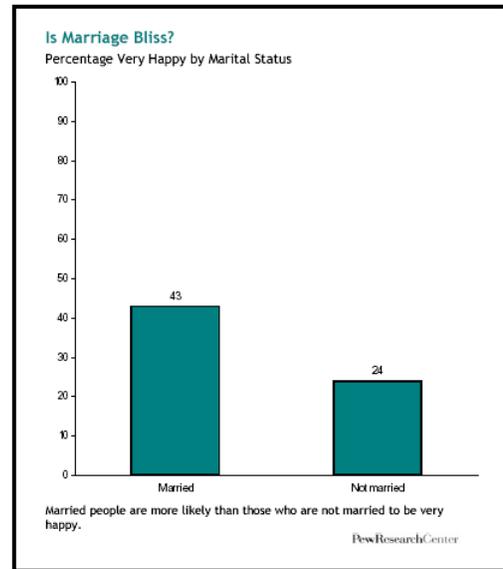
- What many people fail to realize is that many young, attractive women in the porn industry were victims of sexual abuse at a young age. Their moral compass when it relates to matters of sexuality has been severely damaged – and instead of taking advantage of these young women by continuing to ogle them, we should be protecting them and giving them the dignity they deserve whether they know it or not!

- **Verses 15-20 There is a solution to satisfy your sexual desires – MARRIAGE!**

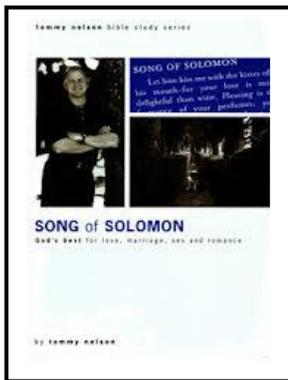
- May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.



- God has designed the institution of marriage to be a place for safe and profound intimacy, trust and sexual fulfillment. Study after study continues to demonstrate that the happiest, healthiest, wealthiest and most satisfied people sexually are those who are married! According to the Pew Research Center, those who are married are almost twice as likely to list themselves as “very happy” compared with those who are not married. A two-parent household also provides the best environment for raising healthy, well-adjusted children.



- A loving doe, a graceful deer – may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.



- If you think that Scripture is irrelevant to the issues we face today, then you haven't read much of God's Word. One of the most profound and personal books in the Bible deals with finding true intimacy and sexual fulfillment in marriage – we know it as the Song of Solomon. If you haven't gone through the Tommy Nelson study of the Song of Solomon, let me highly recommend this incredible study of God's Word! Check it out at their website: <http://www.songofsolomon.com/>

Where do you think we got passion and desire from...we got them from God. ~ Tommy Nelson, Song of Solomon series

- Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?



- Sexual dissatisfaction and frustration from a lack of true intimacy can result in adultery and the destruction of a marriage. One of the most profound movies of recent years was the 2009 movie *It's Complicated* with Alec Baldwin and Meryl Streep. Baldwin leaves his first wife for a younger model – and then realizes too late that what he really wants is to enjoy all the hard work and rewards of his original wife and children. Remember that divorce not only adversely affects you, but also your children!

- **Verses 21-23 Your secret sexual sin isn't a secret – God knows!**

- Don't be foolish – can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned (Proverbs 6:27)? Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows (Galatians 6:7).

- This verse in Galatians should not only strike fear in the heart of someone, but also bring hope...for the solution lies in the same concept...a man reaps what he sows. Consider to the verse that follows:



A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. ~ Galatians 6:7-8

- This verse appears to indicate that what you plant (sow), you will harvest (reap) – and if you plant good seed, you'll harvest good crops...or vice versa. So, if the problem is that you've been planting bad seed (pornography), then you simply need to change the seed you're planting and you'll ultimately alter your harvest from negative to positive!
- Recent studies on the adverse effects of pornography bear witness to this biblical truth. From non-biblical studies, here is the advice given to those struggling with adverse effects from Internet pornography:

Most men are astonished to learn that pornography use can be a source of sexual performance problems. Instead, many are becoming convinced that ED at twenty-something is normal. They are amazed that heavy porn use can affect them adversely, and that no one told them it could affect them. For those affected, **recovery** appears to take 6-12 weeks, and rests primarily on one factor: **avoiding the extreme stimulation of Internet erotica**. (Many also avoid masturbation for a time, either because at first they cannot masturbate without porn fantasy, or because climax triggers binging.)

The brain needs a chance to “reboot,” that is, return to normal dopamine sensitivity. This can take a couple of months. If you are suffering from youthful ED, and wish to restore your potency, be optimistic.

A few facts:

1. This is 100% fixable.
2. It will likely be one of the most difficult things you've ever done.
3. If you ever want a normal sex life again, you don't have another choice!

- Did you catch that...the brain needs a chance to “reboot” – you need to stop sowing the bad seed of pornography...and start sowing “good” seed. If you do, the altered wiring in your brain can be restored to normal!

RECAP and MOVING FORWARD

- Step one is understanding that God has given us instructions to stay away from pornography – and clearly communicated not only the cost for not listening, but also the solution how to do it. God’s Word was given to us to use – not only to know more about Him, but also to understand ourselves and this world we live in – we would be wise to heed the warnings and instructions of the One who created everything! Proverbs chapter 5 warns against the “adulterous” or “wayward” woman...the harlot or prostitute of Biblical days...which is where we get our word pornography – today these are high definition, digitally enhanced pictures of women who are not our wives...and as Gary Wilson discussed in his video series, we have access to view more women in 10 minutes of Internet viewing than our ancestors had in a lifetime!

- Step two is making sure we fully comprehend what’s at stake – we no longer live in the “Playboy” generation – Internet pornography is exponentially more potent and powerful than the dirty magazines of the past...and far more accessible at a much younger age!



- There is a video series titled [Things You Didn't Know about Porn](#) by Gary Wilson on his website that is helpful and informative on this subject – it is not presented from a biblical worldview, but the research is powerful and persuasive and worth the time to view.

- Step three is working to “reboot” the brain back to normal concepts of human sexuality. The first step in doing that is to stop sowing the bad seed of pornography...but the second step is just as important – you’ve heard the idiom that “nature abhors a vacuum” and this is true...you can’t just decide not to do something, you’ve got to decide to do something to replace that action you no longer wish to continue. I always think of Proverbs 29:18 for this principle – Where there is no vision, the people perish. The idea is that when people don’t have something to look forward to, they will perish or rot like bread left on the shelf too long. You’ve got to fill your mind with good things. A man reaps what he sows – you can’t leave the fields bare, they will continue to grow weeds! You’ve got to plant good seeds if you expect to harvest good crops! C.S. Lewis calls it “irrigating the deserts.” Pick up good books to read, start studying something that challenges and expands your mind that is interesting and worthy of your efforts, and engage your mind in meaningful and significant exercises. Think of your mind as a muscle – if you broke your left arm and continued to work out your other arm, you’d soon lack symmetry. You have to not only avoid pornography, but you must exercise your brain with positive and pure thoughts.

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things. ~ Philippians 4:8

