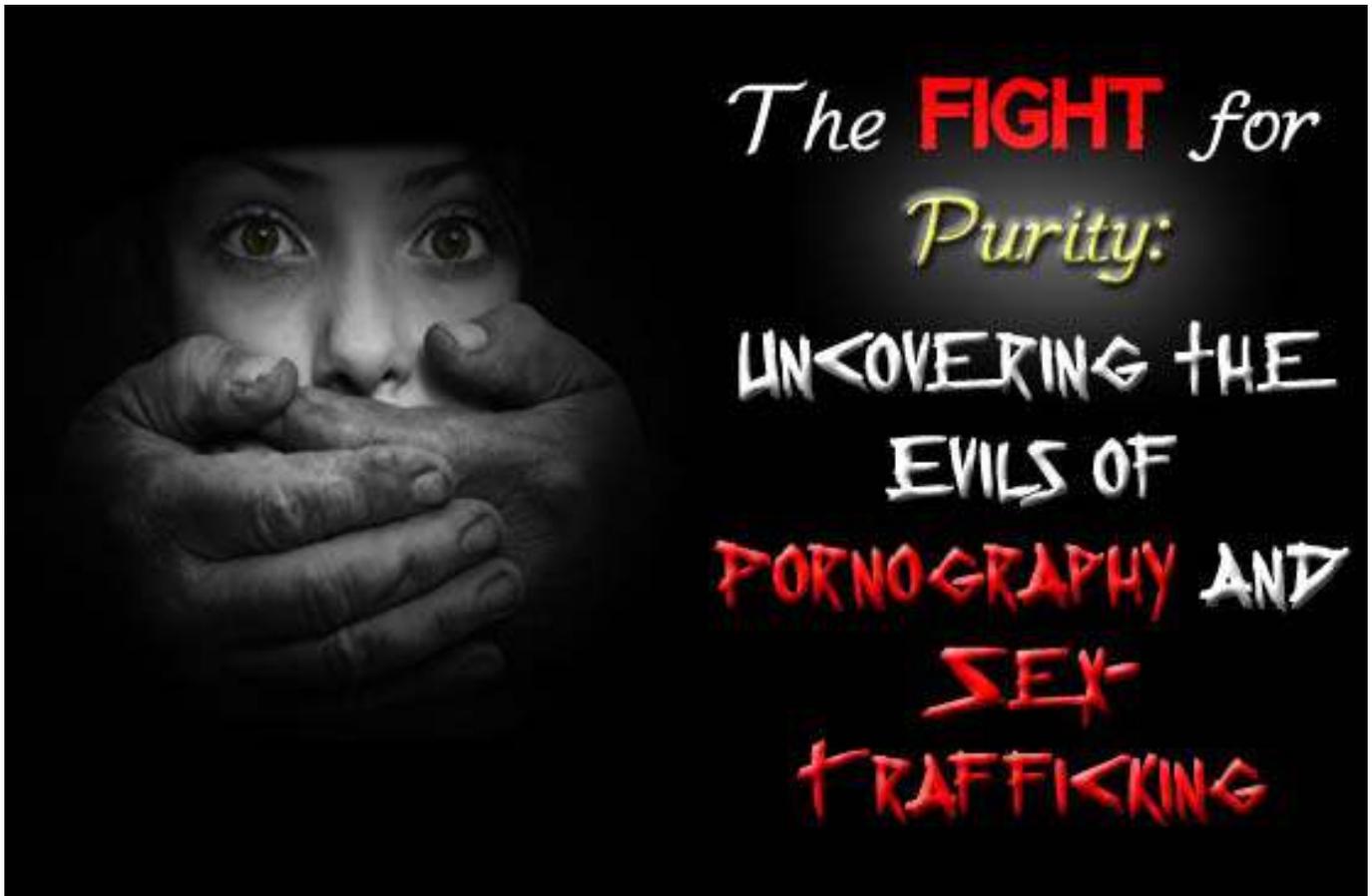


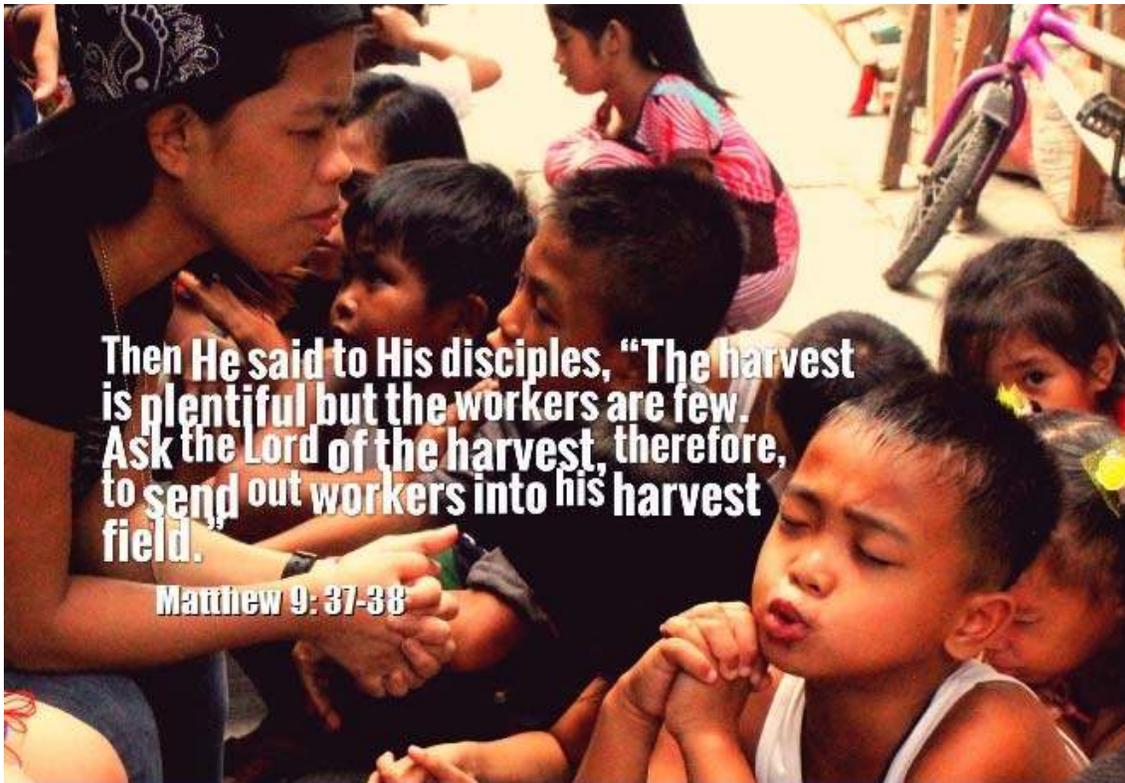
Theology for Life

Volume 3 | Issue 2 | Summer 2016



Inside this Issue...

- *Three Ways Jesus Makes Sex Education Easy for Parents*
- ***The Lord Calleth: Giving Hope for a New Day of Freedom** — An Interview with Luke and Susan Carter*
- ***Finally Free** — A Book Review*



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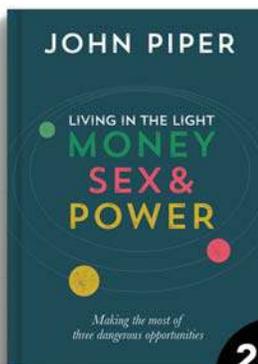
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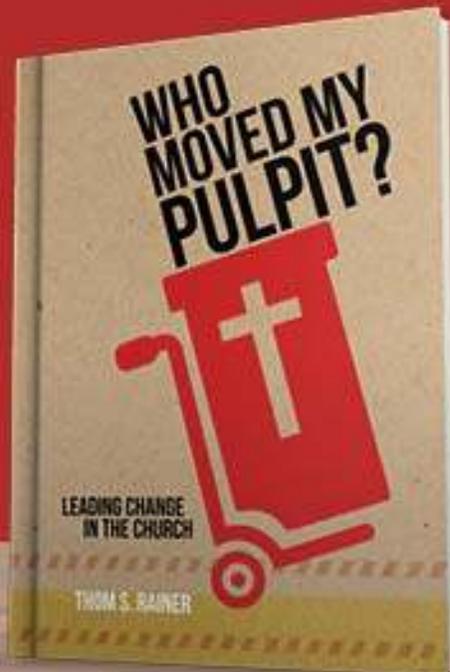
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Men, and now women also, are struggling in silence with pornography. All over our world, children and adults are being kidnapped (or otherwise entrapped) and sold into the world of sex trafficking. With every click, men and women perpetuate the pornography and sex industry. These clicks ultimately represent *real people* who appear on pornographic videos and images. These people are in bondage—many of them, if not in outright slavery, are often forced on a variety of drugs to perform the acts you see in videos. Meanwhile, other people become addicted to viewing these images and videos. Others become dependent financially on the addiction of others. Around and around this vicious cycle goes—enslaving people, perpetuating kidnapping, murder, theft—all while stealing people's hopes, dreams, and lives.

Within this Issue of *Theology for Life Magazine* on pornography, purity, and sex-trafficking it is our aim to speak to these issues. The issue of pornography and purity are often well-covered. What is not so well-covered, however, is the sex-trafficking industry—the unfortunate underbelly of pornography. The sex-trafficking industry exists in the shadows, where people would rather live in darkness than be exposed. With this Issue, we are aiming to drag that industry out into the light while pointing to the hope of the Gospel.

Many men and women are struggling with an addiction to pornography. These people struggle, not only outside the Church, but also inside the Church. One of the purposes of this Issue is to help men and women fulfill their God-given role and function within God's design. One of our objectives is to help people understand that God has a specific

plan and purpose for their lives: to reflect His design within the specific gender He has given.

The struggle with pornography is one I know well. Over the course of sitting in a church in the Seattle, Washington area in 2005, the Lord convicted me deeply of the selfishness of my addiction to pornography. As you read the articles in this Issue, it is my sincere prayer that the Lord would convict you of your own sin if you struggle in this area, and that you would begin your journey to freedom.

Secondly, my prayer as you read this Issue is that you'll gain insight and understanding through the writers of the articles in this Issue about how serious the problem of sexual sin is, in particular, and specifically how dark the sex-trafficking industry truly is.

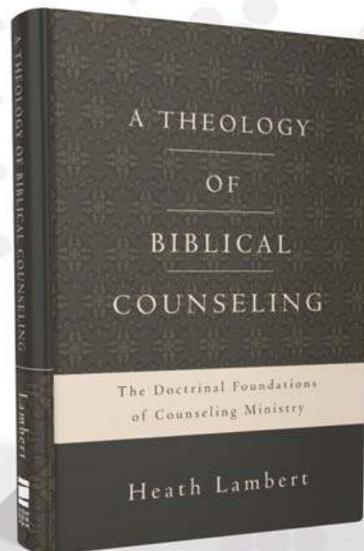
Lastly, as you read this magazine, I'm praying for those of you who minister to people who are struggling with an addiction to pornography. I'm praying that the articles in this issue will help equip you to serve the Lord in whatever capacity He has you.

Whether you struggle with this issue, you are actively involved in it in some way, or you are ministering within these areas, I'm praying that the Lord will convict, challenge, and equip you to serve Him as you read the articles, book reviews, and interviews in this issue.

**In Christ Alone,
Dave Jenkins
Executive Editor, *Theology for Life Magazine***

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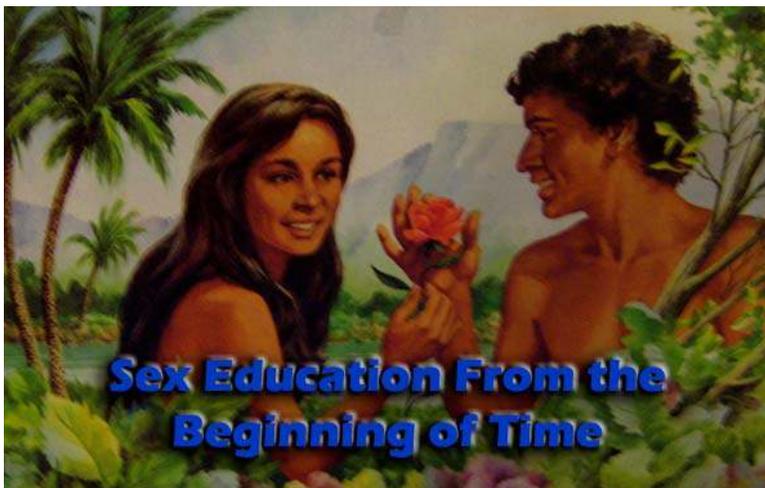
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Three Ways Jesus Makes Sex Education Easy for Parents

By Luke Gilkerson



It's amazing how sheepish parents can get about the subject of sex—especially around their children. At a recent conference, I spoke to a packed crowd of parents who wanted to learn about how to give their kids a godly sex education. After an hour session, a woman came up to me during the break and told me she had worked for fifteen years as an educator in the public

schools, teaching children of all ages about human sexuality. For all intents and purposes, she should consider herself an expert in this subject. She knew how to talk about the biology of sexuality. She knew how to communicate these ideas to children, meeting them at their intellectual and emotional levels—probably better than most people can. But when it came to talking to her *own* kids, she was tongue tied. She could not get the words “penis” or “vagina” to come out of her mouth around her own children, let alone teach them how those parts go together.

1. Jesus Has Given Parents an Important Commission

Jesus said the greatest law given by Moses is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and might (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-38). On the heels of this law is a command to adults to teach the next generation diligently about what God has commanded (Deut. 6:6-9)—and this includes God’s commands about sexuality. After His resurrection, Jesus told his followers their commission was to make disciples of all nations, teaching these new disciples to observe all He has commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). This most certainly includes making disciples of our own children, including teaching them Christ’s words about sex.

Speaking through the Apostle Paul, Jesus told fathers to bring up children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4). This includes all the Lord has revealed about how to steward our sexuality. Regardless of our fears, uncertainties, or questions, Christian parents have been called by Christ to thoroughly instruct their children about sexuality.

2. Jesus Has Given Us the Perfect Ice-Breaker

Parents face a fear in our modern age. The number one concern I hear from Christian parents is hoping they don't say "too much too soon." **However, this often means parents end up saying too little too late.** Parents wait for their children to be "ready" to have conversations about sexuality, but when I press for what "ready" actually means, I receive mostly blank stares. This is because "ready" for many parents is more of a subjective feeling than it is a definable benchmark of maturity visible in their child. Of course we want to teach our kids about sex before the world fills in the intellectual void. Of course we want to have far more than just "one big sex talk" and call it good. Of course we want to communicate to our children in ways they can understand. Assuming all of this, it is not the children who are not "ready" for lessons about human sexuality. It is the *parents* who don't feel emotionally ready to broach the subject. **God has given parents the perfect tool to break the ice: the Bible.** Do you do regular devotions with your children in some fashion? This is your launching pad to talking about sex.

"There is no safer place for children to learn about sex than sitting next to a loving parent with a Bible in their lap."

One of the best ways to introduce your child to basic sexual concepts is to simply not censor the Bible.

The Word of God is filled with all the building blocks you need to construct your child's theology of sex. From God's creation of male and female (Gen. 1:24-27) to His command to be fruitful and multiply (1:28-31), from the wonderful descriptions of God weaving us together in the womb (Ps.

139:13-18) to the description of husband and wife as one flesh (Gen. 2:18-25), from commands about sexual sin (Exodus 20:14) to stories of sexual abuse (2 Sam. 13:6-14), the Bible is full of ice-breakers to broach important and foundational sexual subjects with your kids. There is no safer place for children to learn about sex than sitting next to a loving parent with a Bible in their lap.

3. Jesus Has Given Our Bodies Eternal Dignity

At the heart of the Gospel is the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 10:9). The resurrection not only proclaims that Jesus is the Son of God and the Lord of the world (Romans 1:1-4). It also proclaims that new creation has begun, that the Kingdom of God has come, and it is only a matter of time before death is destroyed forever (1 Cor. 15:20-28).

Why does this matter for sex education? It matters because God has shown us, through the resurrection of Christ, that our bodies have eternal dignity. Someday, God will raise the dead and our bodies will be redeemed (Rom. 8:23); our bodies will be imperishable, glorious, powerful, and perfectly suited for a new spiritual world (1 Cor. 15:42-44). Physical reality is not temporary. Our bodies are not temporary. All of us—soul and body—was bought with a price, which is why we are called to glorify God in our bodies, fleeing from sexual immorality (1 Cor. 6:18-20).

The resurrection of Christ is one of the greatest and most precious diamonds of Scriptural truth. Hold it up to the light, and with each turn, it reflects and refracts the light in new and dazzling ways. It has profound implications for all of life in this age, including how we understand our own bodies and our sexuality. When children grow up knowing their bodies have eternal dignity, then they don't see their bodies or the bodies of others as mere "flesh suits." They don't fall prey so easily to theological dualism—thinking the "spiritual" is more important than the "material." I'm reminded of what the Oxford scholar C.S. Lewis said in a famous sermon:

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilization—these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors.

"There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal."

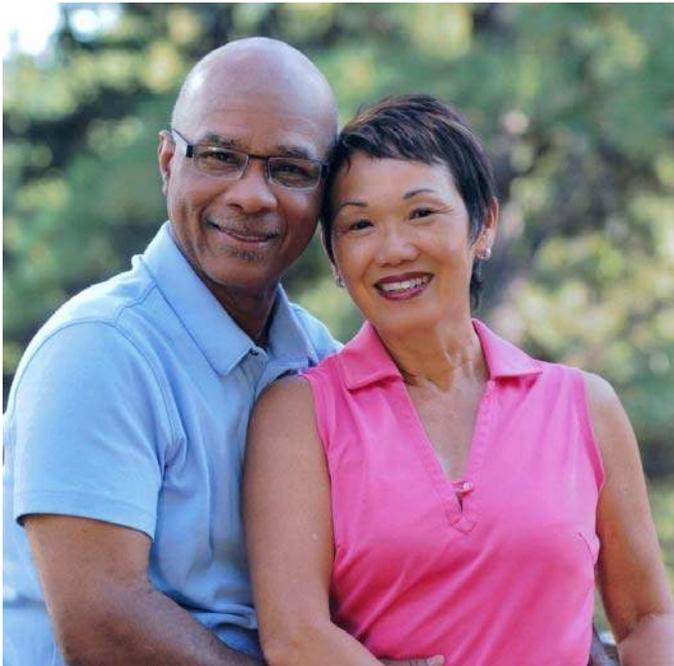
Having the Talk: Biblical Sex Ed Training for Parents

If you need a little help using the Bible as a springboard to giving your kids godly sex education, I encourage you to enroll in my e-Course: [Having the Talk: Biblical Sex Ed Training for Parents](#). In this course, my wife and I walk parents through several key passages of Scripture, giving them ways to communicate to young children the basics of human sexuality.

The Lord Calleth: Giving Hope for a New Day of Freedom

An Interview with Luke and Susan Carter

By Dave Jenkins



Luke and Susan Carter worship at Ustick Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho. In 2013, when both were re-tired and in their mid-60s, they answered the call to volunteer with a Christian non-government organization (NGO) in Southeast Asia. For 18 months they served in Cambodia, Thailand, and Myanmar, fighting against sex

trafficking of underage girls. Now at home, they find joy in volunteering as mentors and befriending refugees resettling in their community.

T4L: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *The-*

ology for Life Magazine, Luke and Susan. Can you please tell us a bit about yourselves, including your call to enter the mission field in the fight against sex trafficking?

Luke Carter: I was raised in a Christian home in the Midwest. At the age of 17, I joined the US Marine Corps and served six years, including two 13-month tours of duty in Vietnam during that conflict. In 1979, I began my career with the Internal Revenue Service, retiring in 2004 as Senior Manager of Compliance. After this retirement, in 2005 I joined Goodwill Industries of Greater Grand Rapids and worked for two years as senior manager overseeing the Homeless Veterans Program. In 2007, I met my wife, Susan, and we married in 2008. Shortly thereafter, I was hired by the Idaho Attorney General's office as an investigator for Medicaid Fraud in the Criminal Division. In 2012, I retired once again—this time from the State of Idaho. Then, in 2012, the Lord calleth!!!

Susan Carter: Well, considering that we are a couple fast-approaching the age of 69, I too will give a quick and brief summary of my life! I am a third-generation American of Japanese descent, born in Idaho and reared on a self-sustaining working farm. I married, completed an advanced degree in English Literature, and, with my (late) husband, raised two children—yes, in Idaho. I gave my life to Christ at the age of 37, was baptized in a river, and lived the normal American life thereafter. The Lord took my husband of 33 years to Heaven in 2001.

I think I had a deep, unspoken desire for foreign missions for many years, but was never able to ignite that spark, as my husband and I were on track to raise our family in the usual American way, heading towards a lifetime career and a retirement package at the end. So, it wasn't until later in life—and my marriage to Luke—that the missions spark was ignited and the flame fed—hot enough to burn in both our hearts. As Luke says, in 2012 the Lord calleth!

T4L: Interesting! So, tell us about the missionary work you did in Southeast Asia for the Lord!

Luke and Susan Carter: In 2013 we were led to join the fight against sex

trafficking of underage girls in Cambodia through a Christian non-government organization (NGO) whose mission and purpose is to rescue under-age girls from sexual exploitation and trafficking in Third-World countries. The work was undercover, and our weapons were...the full armor of God. Rescue is the first step; the second is shelter and care in a safe-house staffed with counselors, teachers, social workers, and vocational trainers. The girls typically stay in the program for two years, then are reintegrated back into society with a marketable skill and, in some cases, a small-business start-up that will support their family.

“Most trafficked girls, by the time they arrived in our care, had been betrayed by a host of people whom, in an ideal world, children should be able to trust.”

The heart of rescue lies in restoring a trafficked girl’s life to one of wholeness; the centerpiece of restoration is sharing the love of Christ. Most trafficked girls, by the time they arrived in our care, had been betrayed by a host of people whom, in an ideal world, children should be able to trust. Furthermore, their exposure to any semblance of religion is marked by syncretism, an amalgam of paganism, including witchcraft and sorcery, sometimes with a few Christian symbols thrown in. *Trust* and *Hope* are meaningless words; *unconditional love* an incomprehensible concept. For girls rescued from sex trafficking, 2 Corinthians 5:17 is their anchor verse: *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

T4L: How heartbreaking! So, how is the Lord rescuing children in Southeast Asia from sex trafficking?

Luke Carter: The Lord used me to build a rescue team in Cambodia made up of six young Christian nationals who had a heart for the work. These young men cared deeply about the plight of their “sisters” and wanted to see them rescued from such darkness. Together, we would go into the darkness of the night to seek out the most vulnerable, build trusting relationships with them, and offer them a new way of life. Our hope and prayer was always that every girl who was rescued and eventually reintegrated would return to her family and village knowing Jesus

Christ as her very personal Savior, and that she would never be forced to return to the same circumstances in which we had found her.

T4L: That's wonderful news! What are some of the Christian organizations doing good Gospel work in Cambodia and Thailand in sex trafficking?

Luke and Susan Carter: In Cambodia and Thailand there are dozens—no, hundreds—of NGOs, both Christian and secular, doing work to help populations of people in these countries where their own governments are not positioned to help them. In our time spent in Cambodia and Thailand, two organizations stand out, as their leaders/founders are freedom fighters in every sense of the word: fierce in love and bold to proclaim the gospel of the one Redeemer who can truly set the enslaved free. These are Agape International, based in Cambodia, and Compass 31, based in Thailand.

T4L: Excellent! Well, we know that sex-trafficking is a growing issue, but just how serious is the problem?

Luke and Susan Carter: Worldwide, sex trafficking has become just one iteration of human trafficking, a billion-dollar-per-year global scourge which now numbers nearly 30 million people. The International Labor Organization estimates that there are 4.5 million people trapped in forced sexual exploitation globally. In short, the demand is great and the supply is unlimited. While the majority of people who are sexually enslaved are women and girls, men and boys are often invisible victims whose plight is not always publicized.

T4L: So, how can the Church get involved and speak to the issue of sex-trafficking?

Luke and Susan Carter: Seek out credible organizations in this field of work. Study the statistics around this terrible activity, put ourselves in the shoes of the parents who are so poor they have to send their young daughters out to find work to help feed the family. Think about these little girls and think about our own daughters

and granddaughters. Pray for this work, give to this work, and volunteer to do this work.

T4L: And what kinds of support do kids and adults who've experienced trafficking need?

Luke and Susan Carter: **Advocate.** Educate yourself, then speak out for the cause of innocence destroyed. Become a voice for those whose cries have been silenced. **Volunteer.** Charitable organizations are able to continue fighting because of volunteers: teachers (languages, 3 R's, social skills, Christian living), social workers, counselors and business leaders are needed. Don't let age hold you back, regardless of which end of the spectrum you may be on! If you love God and love people, you can be an instrument in His hands! **Support.** Give to those organizations and missionaries who are involved in the fight against human sex trafficking. Money is needed to cover many needs including basic living, educational materials, and evangelistic materials.

T4L: Wonderful suggestions on that. Alright, last question, do you believe there is a connection between sex-trafficking and pornography?

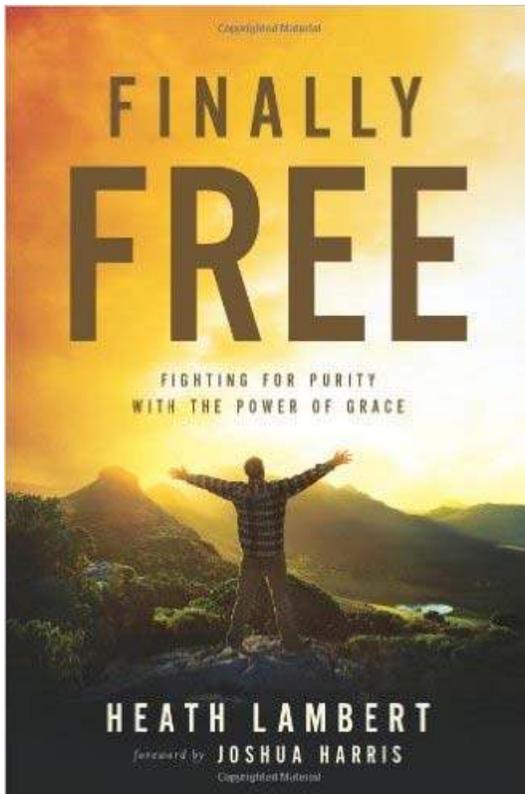
Luke and Susan Carter: There could be a connection. For sure it breeds demand for these kids. We've seen it with our own eyes: men from around the world parading down dark streets with two and three little girls in tow. It's a disgusting picture of sin at its darkest. I imagine some of these men are or were married, and may have children—even grandchildren—of their own. Pornography's ubiquitous existence in the dark reaches of the Internet makes sexual exploitation of children easy and keeps the perpetrators anonymous. Internet porn feeds insatiable appetites—an unending diet of desire that plays out on the streets of Third-World countries like Cambodia and Thailand...and First-World countries like the United States!

T4L: An unfortunate truth in this world we live in...Well, thank you so much for taking the time to let us interview you, Mr. and Mrs. Carter. Your work is greatly appreciated!

A Book Review:

Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace

By Joey Tomlinson



Heath Lambert’s book, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace*, is an issue-specific book for men and women who struggle with sexual sin, specifically in the area of pornography. In the introduction of the book Lambert puts forth his thesis: “This book is about the amazing power of Jesus Christ” (12). This thesis sets Lambert’s book apart from most books on pornography. It’s unique because it’s about God’s powerful Gospel and how he loves to distribute it to those who desire to change.

Many books assume the Gospel. This may be because they believe that only Christians would want to fight against sexual sin and temptation. This may or may not be true, but Lambert avoids the assumption. This is a critically important strategy. Christians are prone to forget the Gospel. Fighting sin apart from the Gospel is futile and temporal. It is a counterfeit repentance that leads to frustration, overwhelming guilt and eventually burn out. Lambert refocuses the conversation and centers it around God, rather than on porn and sexual sin. This strategy prevents repentance from becoming an idol that’s worshipped. If repentance is the highest aim, it becomes nothing more than a cheap sinful replacement. In what follows, I will highlight several key subjects I personally appreciated in Lambert’s book on fighting sexual sin.

Godly Sorrow vs. Worldly Sorrow

Lambert has an entire chapter dedicated to repentance. I believe this is the strongest portion of his book and it can be applied to sins other than pornography. His foundational text in this chapter is 2nd Corinthians 7:8-11. Its summary is that godly sorrow leads to repentance as op-

posed to worldly sorrow which leads only to death. From this passage, Lambert is able to put out several applications that characterize a person who has godly sorrow and I will mention two of them to give you an example.

One of the first principles he draws from the passage is that godly sorrow is earnest. Lambert states, “Godly sorrow gets busy and fervently seeks to fight against sin in a battle that lasts and lasts” (36). This type of repentance manifests itself in limiting access to porn, pursuing accountability in an effort to honor the Lord and clear one’s self of self.

Another characteristic Lambert draws out in godly repentance is that it produces hatred: “Godly sorrow hates the sin itself... feels the horror of disobediences and weeps over the reality of a heart that chose transgression over faithfulness” (38). This chapter is really a great tool to use as a counselor to help a counselee evaluate his repentance. Not only that, but before we counsel, we should apply 2nd Corinthians 7 to our own lives. Lambert writes bluntly on repentance in this chapter. This is strategic. It allows the reader to understand clearly so that he may repent quickly. Although Lambert writes bluntly, this chapter is cloaked in grace, love and humility.

“We are saved by God’s grace alone, displayed in the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, and applied by the Holy Spirit.”

Accountability Groups

Another excellent section in Lambert’s book covers the topic of biblical accountability. I call it biblical accountability, because much of the accountability that takes place inside the local church is not biblical. Lambert states, “In a lot of groups there is a lot of reporting but no real accountability” (55). Lambert believes that biblical accountability involves men that are not struggling with porn and sexual sin coming along side of men who are struggling with it. He believes that real accountability takes place when one brother calls another brother in the heat of temptation rather than calling after succumbing to that temptation. Men in accountability groups should provoke one another to savor Christ and to strategically and vehemently flee sin. Lambert also pleads with his readers that accountability groups should also avoid explicit details in confession.

I deeply appreciate Lambert’s pastoral wisdom on this. Far too often men are led into further temptation through accountability conversations because of how explicit the details are. Even the books on fighting against pornography and sexual sin used in accountability groups can often be explicit and sometimes do more harm than good. Lambert recognizes this and speaks to it directly.

This caused me to think of the way I counsel. I often counsel men struggling with sexual temptation and sin. Lambert gave me much to think about in the way I speak to these men. He also gave me much to think about regarding the gospel-centered literature I put in these men’s hands. Not all Christian literature is Christian.

Fighting Sexual Sin

Lambert's chapter on using radical measures to fight pornography is helpful as well. Lambert states, "You look at porn when you have the desire to see it, when you have the time to look at it, and when it is available to you." (62-3). There is tremendous wisdom in that statement. He goes on to use Matthew 5:27-30 to urge and plead with readers to be extreme and serious in their fight to overcome sexual temptation and sin.

This is a common theme in most books on pornography, but Lambert ensures that the reader understands that this radical measure is cloaked and motivated by a changed heart captivated by the gospel: "... Jesus and the good news of the gospel is the only sure hope for those who want to be free from porn" (72). God, through Christ by His Holy Spirit, enables believers to take extreme measures in their fight against sin and to successfully overcome their temptations.

Not Just Sexual Sin

Another unique thing about this book comes as a warning from Lambert. He urges the reader to remember he has other sins to overcome. He states, "When the only sin a man sees in his life is his pornography, something fascinatingly sinister happens as he begins to gain victory over that sin: he believes his sin has gone away" (115). This is a critical reminder to me that when counseling a man dealing with sexual sin, I must not fail in helping him, by God's grace, to see and overcome other sins in his life. Sexual sin is just one of many sins that our Lord died for. Sexual sin is just one of many sins that can be overcome by God's grace.

Gratitude Instead of Immorality

One of the final distinguishing marks I thought necessary to bring out in Lambert's book is found in his chapter on gratitude. He states, "... in place of immorality there should be something else, and that something else is thankfulness" (124). He goes as far as to call it a "key strategy" (124). What do we have to be thankful for? Lambert once again, reminds the reader of who God is for Christians in Jesus Christ. In my counseling sessions, I must remind my counselees that God did not look down at sinners with cold indifference and give us what we deserve. Rather, he set his affections on us before the foundation of the world that we might be holy and blameless in Christ, Jesus (Ephesians 1). God chose to save men enslaved in sexual sin. That is a humbling statement. If God, through Christ saves adulterers, how much more can he help people overcome the sin by the power of the Holy Spirit? Considering the Gospel produces thankfulness that leads to gladness that leads to longevity in repentance of sin and trust in Christ.

Concluding Thoughts

This book is in the top three books that I have read on overcoming sexual sin and temptation. It is cloaked in both the indicatives of gospel (what God has done for us) and

its imperatives (what God commands us to do). It is a model of how we should approach repentance in our own lives and how we should counsel each individual that walks through our doors seeking to be set free from this enslaving sin.

So many Christians are living depressed lives because they feel utterly defeated by sexual sin. Others make an idol out of their repentance and experience a downward spiral when their idol comes crashing to the ground. As repenting believers, we must be quick to repent and grow in our hatred for sin and our love for our Savior. As pastors and counselors we must plead with our counselees to do the same.

“Lambert’s book is an excellent guide and template to work counselees through.”

Lambert’s book is an excellent guide and template to work counselees through. I personally will be making it a part of my homework for men that I counsel with on a weekly basis. As a Christian, I must see my sin through the power of the gospel which is able to rescue me from even the darkest, most heinous sin. I am reminded that God emptied all of his wrath out on His Son for Christians on the cross. Christ died, was buried and by the power of the Holy Spirit, rose again certifying his claim, “It is finished” (John 19:30). It is because of this, sinners who were once enslaved to sexual sin can boldly proclaim as Paul did in Romans 8:1, “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Lambert reminds us that we are “Finally Free” only because of the person and work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Four Ways to Minister to People with Sexual Addictions

By Dave Jenkins



Over the past few years, I've been in a fortunate position to be able to minister to many men locally and across the United States who struggle with an addiction to pornography. Pornography is a huge issue inside and outside the church. Based on the things I've learned in ministry, here are four keys to helping men who struggle with pornography.

Build a Relationship

Chances are, only those who know you will open up to you about their

porn addiction. As the Lord has expanded my ministry and speaking on this topic, He's opened doors to minister to people I don't know. It takes longer for me to help people I don't have a prior relationship with than people I know locally. I have had to be more intentional to learn their histories and why they struggle. Asking about their hobbies, their likes and dislikes, and even what makes them tick sets you up for a more effective ministry relationship. Engage in polite conversation and build a friendship with the person you're trying to help.

Speak the Truth in Love

Once you've gotten to know the person by learning about their personal history and struggle, you can speak the truth to them in love (Eph. 4:15). This can take many different forms, but it always means being faithful to Jesus by preaching the Word of God. Let's use Joe as an example. Joe struggles with a chronic addiction to pornography. His marriage is in shambles. In this situation, I want to help Joe understand that the root of his pornography addiction is idolatry. Jesus took his place and died for his sin of idolatry. Through Christ, Joe can be free and put his sin to death.

"We step into godly maturity when we know the right answers and apply those answers to our lives."

Joe needs to understand his porn addiction is hurting his wife. When he views porn, he told me he takes off his ring. I asked him, "Do you love your wife and seek to honor your vows?" He wants to honor his vows, but often feels so overwhelmed for looking at things he knows he shouldn't. Sometimes, he's just so tired of the struggle that he gives up and stops fighting.

In the midst of Joe's struggle, Jesus, the sympathetic High Priest who lived a perfect life, died in his place and rose again. Joe needs to learn he is not alone when he struggles. Jesus is there with him even when he's looking at porn. He can turn to Jesus and trust that He will see him safely out of his struggle.

When ministering to people with sexual addictions, I've often dealt with Christians who know *some* of the answers. However, knowing the right answers isn't the goal of theology. Yes, it's a first step, but not the ultimate step. We step into godly maturity when we know the right answers and apply those answers to our lives (James 1:22).

In Joe's story, he needs to know his sin affects his relationship with his wife. He also needs to understand the nature of God. Jesus sees his struggle and knows his heart. An omniscient, omnipresent God serves as his sympathetic, sinless High Priest and advocates for him before the Father (Heb. 4:14-16). Sadly, Joe doesn't see this yet, which is why we're going to move to the next step—confronting Joe in love.

Confront in Love

I met with Joe again to talk about his struggle. Today, we discuss real biblical knowledge. Joe nods his head to acknowledge what I'm saying. Real biblical knowledge isn't just in the head, it moves from our heads to our hearts and results in life change (James 1:22; 2:14-26). In other words, believing sound doctrine leads to right living (1 Tim. 4:16).

Joe is slowly starting to realize that he has been, as James says, a *hearer* of the word only and not a doer (James 1:22). As we talk more, he shares his sorrow for how his addiction has affected his relationship with God and his wife. Sorrow for sin is a good start, but feeling sorry isn't enough—he needs to turn from his sin to Jesus. True repentance is sorrow for sin *and* turning from our sin to Jesus.

As our time ends, I encourage Joe with the real progress he's made. We'll continue to meet, but he also needs to share about his struggle honestly with God and other men around him. I encourage him to get [Covenant Eyes Internet Accountability and Filtering](#) to block his access to sites that will cause him to stumble.

I once again emphasize to him that he doesn't struggle with temptation alone that Jesus is there and will always provide a way out when he experiences temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). I also tell him when he feels tempted to walk away from the computer. Joe and I plan another session to meet and talk and continue on meeting until he no longer struggles with an addiction to pornography.

There are various stages to confronting in love. First, we always speak the truth in love by remaining faithful to the truth of Scripture (Eph. 4:15). Second, we need to understand what the person is saying about their struggle. If we assume what the person we're speaking to means and then speak before we gain understanding, our advice will likely be, at best, shallow and, at worst, wrong.

Asking lots of questions is important. We should also ask clarifying ques-

The Secret Sin in the Mind of a Woman

By Sarah Jenkins



It had been an exhausting day. I can't even describe to you how much I would just love to close out the rest of the world and drop into the fantasy world of the novel resting on my night stand. Its pages beckon temptingly. I breathe deeply, knowing that if I give into this temptation that I may not surface for hours. But that isn't the worst part. Despite the innocuous looking cover of this book, I know that if it had been a DVD there would be a Rated R label on the back side. Of course there isn't such a thing on the cover of this book to give it away. No one in my family would ever suspect just how bad it was...and I was grateful. I didn't want them to see the sick sin creeping into my life.

In 6th grade I read my first "romance" novel. I'm sure a lot of people reading this article think that I didn't understand most of the book, but let me assure you, I did. True, I'd never personally experienced any of those things (and as a 12 year old, you'd hope that to be the case, certainly), but nevertheless, I did understand

the meaning behind each seductive description. This is where it began. My friends all thought I was crazy for reading something so (as Mom called it) “smutty”. They didn’t understand the sickening draw that this type of fiction held for me. Once I began reading it, however, I was hooked.

It wasn’t long before I began devouring these books like they were candy. I’d stay up until the wee hours of the morning reading.

I allowed my other passions in life to begin falling by the wayside in order to spend more time reading. Eventually, my mother started doing “night checks” to make sure I was asleep so that I couldn’t just stay awake and read all night. And while this was a deterrent, it certainly didn’t prevent me from continuing in my addiction.

I continued in this addiction until half-way through high school. I’d recently become a Christian, and found that the Holy Spirit was trying to root this sin from my life. I went from reading X-Rated books to PG-Rated books—“historical romance” by secular authors, to “Christian romance”. I’ll admit, it was quite an adjustment, but because I wanted to please God, I did it willingly. I promised God that I would never pick up another dirty romance novel again, and I was determined to hold onto that promise.

I’d put such things behind me once I gave my life to Christ, convinced I’d never ever go back to that. Those books were mind -porn. Straight up sexual trash. I knew it, and I knew that God was not pleased that I’d read them. I wanted to keep my mind pure. And I had...until a few years later when I slipped up.

“I knew that my behavior was wrong, and that the secret sin I was holding in my heart was killing my walk with God.”

One day I found myself reading an explicit book on my phone’s Kindle app. And like a drug-addict returning to his/her favorite narcotic, I found myself falling off the “band-wagon” in a heartbeat. At first it was just little things, like more kissing and other such scenes. Then I stopped looking in the “Christian” genre altogether. I wanted—craved—the other things. I wanted to read the more sexually-explicit scenes. The more I read them, the more I wanted to read them. I tried a few times to remind myself of my promise to God years ago. I tried to revert back to the non-sexual books because I knew in my heart that what I was doing to my own mind was wrong. I knew it would hurt more than just my brain, but time and time again I found myself drawn back to these books. And because I’d almost completely stopped praying and reading my Bible, I was nearly powerless to the heavy pull.

I confided in my Bible-study partner that I was struggling with this mind-porn addition, and she agreed to pray for me. I knew that my behavior was wrong, and that the secret sin I was holding in my heart was killing my walk with God. It made me sad. It made me want to change, but the sin that already gripped my heart wasn’t ready to let go...not yet. I began trying to read the rating labels on my Kindle books before buying them. My thought process was that if I was aware of what I was getting myself into, I would be less likely to step into temptation. And I was right...at least part of the time. I prayed sometimes, asking God for strength to do the right thing. But I held onto my sin tightly, trying to rationalize my reading addiction as a “stress relief”. It was. That

part was true. But it was never a healthy one.

I had times when I returned to the band-wagon, and times when the sin snuck back in. The harder I tried to resist on my own, the harder resistance became. One day, however, I got hit in the face with a wake-up call. My husband announced that the next edition of *Theology for Life Magazine* would be on purity. As the magazine's copy editor and design coordinator, this announcement felt like a sucker-punch to the gut. And he followed up this announcement with a request for me. He wanted to know if I would like to write an article on purity from a woman's prospective. *Ouch*. How could I write such an article, knowing how much I struggled with this secret sin? What kind of hypocrite would that make me? That thought made me sick. I'd never in my life felt like such a charlatan. I didn't give him an answer right away. I needed time to figure out if it was even possible.

“But instead of turning to Him, I'd allowed my sin in...again.”

Eventually I told him that I would write this article. I knew I had to. It wasn't so much of a choice as it was a compulsion. Conviction in my spirit had begun to eat away at me. I didn't want to ask God for help, but eventually, however, I began to crack. It was little things at first—prayers for comfort, prayers for strength. Jesus answered each one. One day at a time, the shell around my heart began to crack and chip. Something was wearing me down. In my subconscious, I knew *who* it was.

One day at a time I began to pray for more. Peace. Hope. Joy.

God answered, but slowly. As you probably already know, God works in His own time. Nothing is done in a rush, unless He desires it that way. Bit by bit, He began helping me with my sin, my addiction. But let me tell you, when you finally “wake up”, it's an ugly picture you'll find yourself painted into. This is where I found myself. A world of darkness and shadow. A world of pain, wrapped in a false glamor of contentment. My sin had allowed me to fantasize about people and places that my reality couldn't touch. The fact that I pictured the sexual acts in my mind gave me a false sense of secret security. Obviously, people couldn't see the sick thoughts running through my mind, but God knew. I was worse than the average porn-addict. I thought about these stories all the time. Why? Because I never stopped reading these things—they were constantly at my fingertips.

How could I have let myself become so wrapped up in this secret sin again? How had I allowed such a foothold for sin to grip my life? **Satan knew my weaknesses. Denial. Pride. Idolatry.** And when he exploited them in the face of my pain and loss, I was as good as gone. He led me to an “old friend”—the escape of fantasy. The comfort of “love” wrapped in sexual encounters. He gave me an out when it was the one thing I longed for desperately. And I fell for it. Fell hard. Our old sins are never far behind us. Our secret evil desires are never far out of reach. Once we allow our mind to be twisted by our fleshly desires, it's only a matter of time before we allow righteousness to fall to the wayside.

When I was a teenager, I'd allowed myself to first become wrapped up in things outside of God, to the point that they became who I was, my existence. And when this carefully constructed environment was taken away from me (with the death of my father and my aunt), I found a gaping hole in my life. This gaping hole was a vortex of darkness—one that I tried to fill with books. In recent years, similar things had crept into my life, becoming a greater source of joy and contentment in my life over God, but my spirit knew that this would never appease the vacuum. As a Christian, I knew in the core of my being that only God could truly fill this great void. Only He could make me whole. But, instead of turning to Him, I'd allowed sin in...again.

So, how did I get out of this pit I'd dug for myself? Well, I didn't do it by myself. In fact, very little of what I did helped. It was Jesus that pulled me out. He alone knew how. He alone could. It may sound cliché, but the one verse that I clung to as I let God draw me back to Himself was Psalm 23:

***The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.
He leads me beside still waters.
He restores my soul.
He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.
Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they
comfort me.
You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you
anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.***

I turned my heart and life back to Him. It hasn't been easy. I still struggle with this fight. Sometimes I slip up and other times I am victorious. In those times of victory, however, I know that it's *His* strength, *His* victory, and not my own that got me through. As you can probably understand, this fight is not something I can win. He alone has the ability to break the chains holding my mind captive. He alone has the ability to give me the strength to turn away from the evil desires still lodging in my heart. Without Him, I am nothing. Without His strength, I can do nothing. It is His will (with the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in my life and my continual repentance) that allows me to walk away from temptation. It is *not my own strength, not my own will*.

Maybe you can understand my struggle. Maybe you can even sympathize with me in this. Maybe you've been here. Maybe your circumstances are worse than mine. Maybe your pain is worse. Maybe your struggle is still on-going. If that is the case,

“Romans 8 says that Jesus pleads for us on our behalf, with groanings in the Spirit that we cannot understand.”

friend, I encourage you to reach out to Jesus. I wish I could be the one to help you through this, but as you can clearly see, I am just as bad as everyone else. My struggle continues to hound me every single day, but God is providing help. The Holy Spirit sends me comfort when I ask, and even in the times when I don't, but need it regardless.

Romans 8 says that Jesus pleads for us on our behalf, with groanings in the Spirit that we cannot understand. He is our intercessor. He is our High Priest before God the Father. And when we are in desperate need of help, He intercedes on our behalf. You see, even when we don't even know what to say, how to pray, or what to ask for, Jesus knows—and He does it on our behalf. We will never know the full extent of the way He pleads on our behalf. We will never fully understand the depth of His love for us. Even when we were yet sinners, Christ died for us—the just for the unjust. Who can fathom love that great? Who can understand or comprehend the magnitude of grace and mercy poured out on us? He has lavished us in His love. So much so that nothing can separate us from it.

In Romans 8:38-39, it says: “For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Friend, this is the love that God has given *us*. When one considers the sheer magnitude of this love, one can only stand in awe. Surely we are not worthy of such a gift. But Jesus paid the price for us and gave it to us anyway. Knowing that nothing you can do, whether a sin of the mind or body, can separate you from God's love, will allow you to open yourself up to the healing of your spirit and mind that He is offering to you. Only through this work of the Holy Spirit in your life will you be able to be free of your sin. Only through repentance will you become pure again. Only through the work of the Holy Spirit will you have the ability to live a righteous life. Jesus has justified you. He gave you His blood as payment for the sins you've committed (past, present, and future). He's covered over them and has given you a new identity in Him.

It may be a long road to purity for you, but God will give you the strength and support you need to move past this struggle. Eventually, you can be free. One day, Lord willing, you will be completely past this stronghold of sin. Friend, I am going to pray for you. Whoever you are, reading this article, know that you have someone in your corner, praying for you. And I hope that you'll pray for me too. We cannot do this on our own. God gives us brothers and sisters in the Faith so that we'll have support in the real world. You may not feel comfortable confessing your sin to others, but rest assured, even an “unspoken prayer request” can still be answered. God knows what that prayer request was for, even if the people at Bible Study or church don't.

I encourage you to get back to reading the Bible again and praying on a regular basis, if you've stopped. It won't be easy. These are spiritual disciplines that are very difficult to conform to when one is struggling with sin—especially sin of the mind. It's hard to force your mind to think on the things of God when you are allowing your thoughts to be turned elsewhere. The Bible says to

take every thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:5). You can do it. Do you know how I know this? Well, it's because I know that God will give you the ability if you but ask Him for it. So ask. Our Father wants to give His children good gifts. He wants us to ask Him for them, however. So ask, don't be shy. He loves you so much more than you could ever know! Don't be afraid to ask Him for help. Allow Him to wrap His loving arms around you. Allow Him to give you peace and comfort. Allow your mind to be transformed by the renewing of your spirit.

Maybe one day, I'll be reading your testimony. Maybe one day you'll be able to share the story of how God brought victory over sin into your life. I hope that if I don't get a chance to hear or read about it here on Earth, that I'll get a chance to hear about it in Heaven. Precious One, you are loved. I can't wait to see the work of God's grace and mercy in your life—whoever you are. When the stress of life threatens to pull you under, just remember Jesus has victory over every sin. Take a moment to remember that He is near and His arms are open wide.

No matter what is going on in your life—whether pain and suffering, or simply over-taxation and stress—Jesus is there. One day, we'll all have glorified bodies. Our sanctification will be complete. We will live without sin. We will be in the presence of Jesus every second, and the trials of this life will be past. But until then, Beloved, remember to (as Paul said) run the good race of endurance. In every trial, God is with you. He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Your secret sin cannot stand up to the overwhelming, victorious love of God.

Confronting the Evils of Sex-Trafficking

By Vicki Tiede

As the author of *When Your Husband is Addicted to Pornography: Healing Your Wounded Heart*,

and as one whose first husband was ensnared by the evil web of pornography, I became heartbreakingly aware that porn fuels the demand for sex-trafficking. The continued demand by men to buy women is fed by

internet pornography. With that knowledge, I felt compelled to get involved with Tiny Hands International, an organization who intercepts girls who are about to be trafficked from Nepal into the sex-trade in India.



Because sex-trafficking is a relatively “hidden” crime, accurate data is hard to come by. Nonetheless, we know that this is a serious problem in the United States, but an even greater problem worldwide. The [Trafficking in Persons Report, July 2015](#), gives the most current statistics. This report explains that Tier 1 countries fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act’s minimum standards (United States) vs. a Tier 2 country that doesn’t comply with the TVPA’s minimum standards (Nepal) or a Tier 3 country that doesn’t meet minimum standards and isn’t making significant efforts to do so. There are certainly differences between the evils of sex-trafficking in the United States as opposed to how it’s played out in third-world, undeveloped countries, but there are also countless similarities. Evil is evil.

One Sunday in 2014, shortly before I left for Nepal, my pas-

tor asked, "What if everyone in our church was just like you?" My heart heard it this way, "What if everyone cared as much or as little as you care about the poor, the vulnerable, and the exploited?"

If I'm honest, some days our world (with me as its representative) would look

"The sex-traffickers have their people at the bus station waiting to receive these girls. "Do you need a job? A place to stay? Great, come with us." And they give them these basic provisions, which they desperately need."

GRRREEAAT and other days—well—not so great. There's just something about *faces* that impresses us with the value of a human being. But when we don't see those faces, we don't feel the urgency. *We know* that someone is just as valuable whether they are in the same room with us, or across the hall, or three doors down, or across the world.

Ten years ago it was possible to be ignorant about exploitation because you didn't have any reliable information about it, but now with globalization and the internet and with air travel ... you can choose to ignore it, but people *are* aware of it – we have to intentionally blind ourselves in order to avoid the pain of having to do something that will come if we open our eyes to see the suffering that's going on, albeit on the other side of the world, but for people who are just as precious as our own children.

Sex-trafficking is, in my opinion, the Greatest Injustice of Our Time. Young women and children are harvested from villages and streets of Nepal and taken across the Nepal/India borders for the purpose of sexual slavery. In the village, there are no opportunities. Going overseas may be the only opportunity for them to make a living. Thousands of girls come to Kathmandu, Nepal, every year looking for work and they can't find work. You need money, business knowledge, a skill, a personal contact, a place to stay ... there is no one helping them with that except the sex-industry. The sex-traffickers have their people at the bus station waiting to receive these girls. "Do you need a job? A place to stay? Great, come with us." And they give them these basic provisions, which they desperately need.

Girls get ensnared into the sex-industry in this way. There is no other industry that's really an option for them. If they want to be a tailor, two years of training and apprenticeship is required with no pay. They have to figure out how to eat and live and they make no money to send to their family, which was the whole reason for coming to the big city. Their family needs money *NOW*. They have to support their family and pay for tuition and uniforms for their little brother/sister, so they seemingly have no choices.

Often, traffickers go right into the villages and offer these girls jobs, education, and marriage. These girls leave behind everything

they have known and set out with the hopeful expectation of a better life. They are innocent, and so trusting. A girl will travel with her benefactor, sometimes by bus, sometimes by train, stopping at hotels along the way to eat, and trying to keep out of sight. They cross the border on foot, and she does not ask why they must be so secretive. She naively swallows easily whatever explanation her benefactor happens to give.

That’s when she learns she’s been sold and her job is to have sex with old men. This is debt bondage. It works like this ... I kidnapped you, I sold you, now if you want to be free, you have to pay me back. It’s NUTS—in our eyes; we think, this is a *huge injustice*, but this is how a fatalistic culture works. Fatalism is the belief that all events are predetermined and therefore inevitable. So, she cannot leave, because she now owes the brothel owner a great deal of money, which he or she paid to the trafficker.

“She will break. She won’t be free to refuse customers. She won’t leave the brothel without an escort.”

When the girl refuses to have sex with men in order to pay back the brothel owner, she is subject to the most horrible forms of tortures. Typically, trafficked girls are beaten and gang-raped in order to be initiated into their new life. They are sometimes locked in a dark room, unable to see the light of the sun for days—until they will consent. They are beaten with pipes and cords, burned with cigarettes, and have chili powder rubbed in their genitals. They are told that if they refuse, their mothers and sisters will be trafficked in their place. Day after day, if she continues to refuse, the tortures will grow worse. The other girls will tell her what is inevitable: she cannot hold out, she has no choice in the matter—she must accept her fate.

She will break. She won’t be free to refuse customers. She won’t leave the brothel without an escort. She won’t contact her family or loved ones in any way—let alone send money for her siblings’ education. She will be a prisoner—kept in a cage or a locked windowless room. Eventually, she will get HIV and in time she’ll be too sick to work and she’ll be forced to leave the brothel and go back to Nepal. She won’t be welcomed back like the prodigal son/daughter we read about in God’s Word. No, now she’s unclean, and her family and friends will reject her. Her only option will be to wander into a nearby village and find a young, desperate girl who’s run out of options and she’ll offer her a job...

This is the reality for 30,000 young girls in Nepal and Bangladesh *annually*. Let that number sink in for a minute. Thirty thousand children and young women sacrificed for the “pleasure” of men who are willing to pay a price for them.

One of the most beautiful things I got to see in Nepal was Tiny Hands’ intervention strategy. You see, Border Monitoring and safe houses are their primary strategy and greatest investment to protect innocent girls from the experience that awaits them in a brothel. They have 21 border monitoring stations along the border of Nepal and India.

Local pastors oversee sub-committees, and their parishioners help monitor the borders, watching for red flags that a girl is being taken across the border for illicit purposes. When they recognize such signs, they intercept the girl and her trafficker before she can be taken across the border and placed in the hands of a brothel owner. In April, Tiny Hands surpassed their 10,000th interception!

After Nepal, I found myself *still* asking myself this question on repeat: "What if everyone cared as much or as little as you care about the poor, the vulnerable, and the exploited?"

I believe God chose to ruin my comfortable life by that trip to Nepal. It didn't have to be a trip to Nepal — He could have used any number of evidences of our broken world that happen within a 10-mile radius of our home. But He intercepted my heart in Nepal. You see, just like Tiny Hands intercepts young girls and children who are headed in one direction until Tiny Hands obstructs their path and prevents them from continuing toward a horrific destination —in the same way, Jesus intercepted my life. First, when I accepted Him as my Savior, and second, when He called me to walk shoulder to shoulder with Tiny Hands.

So, I ask you ...

What if everyone cared as much or as little as you care about the poor, the vulnerable, and the exploited? I believe the evils of sex-trafficking must be confronted on two fronts; first on that of internet pornography, and second, as we partner with ministries who are successfully combating sex-trafficking in the United States and around the world. Your involvement can make the difference between life and death—every second matters.

From Pew Sitter to Abolitionist: Sex-Trafficking and the Church

By Gale Clark



Pornography and sex-trafficking have gained a foothold of normalcy in the United States.

Don't believe it? Advertisements for sex with minors are now posted on several mainstream online ad companies. The activity is indeed illegal. But the right to *advertise* it, according to a majority of state and now federal courts, is not. Few news agencies reported these recent rulings. Last year Amnesty International called for the decriminalization of prostitution. Did the Church join the conversation? Did they even know about it?

Then consider this excerpt from the book, *The Pimp Game, An Instructional Guide* by Mickey Royal, currently for sale on Amazon:

"You'll start to dress her, think for her, own her. If you and your victim are sexually active, slow it down. After sex, take her shopping for one item. Hair and/or nails is fine. She'll develop a feeling of accomplishment... After you have broken her spirit, she has no sense of self value. Now pimp, put a price tag on the item you have manufactured."

Many other books on how to become a pimp are also for sale at paperback prices. Like a cancer growing inside a patient too afraid to go to the doctor, sex-trafficking flourishes with little intervention. Google the phrase "it happens here-sex trafficking," and thousands of stories pop up, each with a different city named. Voters interviewed in polls rarely mention sex-trafficking as a concern nor do any of the presidential candidates. It's only on a few people's radar.

Yet sex-trafficking has begun to capture the angst of many believers who struggle to know what to do with their outrage. How can we make a decisive impact against such profound evil? I'd like to share the stories of two teens who became ensnared in sex-trafficking. Along the way I want to challenge some myths held by many and offer practical ways the Church can help.

In a New York Times op-ed piece, Nicholas Kristof told the [story](#) of a 15

-year-old girl, “Natalie” who was part of an “everyday, average family.” Natalie ran track and played soccer and the violin. Her mother, Nacole, told Kristof, “I dropped her off at school in the morning. I was expecting to pick her up after track practice in the afternoon. Then I didn’t see her for 108 days.”

Natalie ran off to a bus station where a pimp found her. Within days, he placed an ad for Natalie on Backpage, which runs more than a million sex ads a day worldwide. As a result, Natalie was placed on a virtual public auction block and sold for sex repeatedly.

Some runaways, like Natalie, make an impulsive decision with tragic consequences. “Fifteen-year-olds don’t make the best choices,” her mother said. What parent of a teenager would argue? Teens *are not* little adults. While they may be well acquainted with “right and wrong,” the frontal cortex of their brains aren’t fully formed. Hence the tendency for impulsive decisions. While Natalie chose to run away from home, she hadn’t planned on meeting a pimp. She wasn’t volunteering to engage in sex work when she went to the bus station. In fact, she had no idea the man she met was a pimp until it was too late.

“Like Natalie, many survivors **are not** troubled teens with a long criminal history.”

Like Natalie, many survivors are not troubled teens with a long criminal history. Many believers are shocked to learn they may have encountered a sex-trafficking survivor without realizing it. She could be in your child’s classroom or one of her friends in the youth group. You might even have encountered a sex-trafficking survivor at work.

Dr. Jeffery Barrows has dedicated most of his career to helping hospitals spot sex-trafficking victims who come to their emergency rooms and clinics. He is an Obstetrician/Gynecologist on staff with the Christian Medical & Dental Association. In 2008, he founded Gracehaven, a rehabilitative home in Central Ohio for adolescent girls who have been survivors of child sex-trafficking. He serves as Director of U.S. Education at Hope for Justice, an organization dedicated to eradicating human trafficking worldwide.

Dr. Barrows tells a story of Jill who was trafficked by her pimp from age 14. She had run away from home to escape physical and sexual abuse. Many people are under the false impression that some teens make a conscious decision to become a prostitute. A comment left following one of my online articles asked about a 17-year-olds who “choose to leave home and engage in sex work, often lying about their age.” The comment also stated these teens “should bear some moral and perhaps legal responsibility.”

But there was nothing voluntary about Jill’s life or choices. She ran away to escape the severe abuse she endured at home. She’s not alone. According to the [Office of Administration Children and Families](#), a child enters foster care every two minutes in the United States. Many of those kids, like Jill, have endure severe abuse. Sadly, many foster kids suffer further trauma in foster homes. Could that change if

the Church stepped up? Thousands of children in every state in the US are waiting for foster families. To get involved in foster care and adoption can prevent a child from ever becoming a victim of sex-trafficking. Many Christian adoption agencies train volunteers to foster a child. One way to fight sex-trafficking is to fight domestic child abuse through foster parenting and mentoring young moms and dads in church.

Let's return to Jill's story. Homeless, Jill was approached by a man named Bruce who promised to provide work. Out on the street, a pimp disguised as a caring older man is no match for a 14 year-old who has little alternative. Jill agreed to go to Bruce's "office," which turned out to be the cellar of his home. She was hung from the ceiling with leather straps, beaten and tortured until she agreed to work as a prostitute. Still think she had a choice?

Unlike Jill, many trafficked individuals seem physically free to leave, but they aren't *psychologically* free. The manipulative cycle of false love and abuse creates a trauma bond between a victim and her pimp. Trauma re-wires the brain and requires specialized care before long term healing can occur.

This can be a hard aspect for many to understand, but it should not be for believers. God's Word tells us when we were dead in our trespasses and sins, Christ made us alive in Him. Though we may very much appear physically alive, apart from Christ we are spiritually dead. And not unlike a sex-trafficking survivor, apart from Christ we may appear to be free, yet

"The ER in Los Angeles was no different. Bruce had a cover story that hid his true identity and Jill's dire circumstances."

we are slaves. Ever tried to kick an addiction apart from the power of Christ? Both Natalie and Jill were easily located by a pimp. Perpetrators can spot vulnerability whenever it comes into view. Pimps frequent bus stops, train stations, school yards. With empty bellies and no shelter, runaway teens have few options. What if caring believers started a ministry at bus stops looking to assist the same vulnerable teenagers pimps seek? What if Jill had encountered a Christian on the lookout to help a runaway? Unfortunately, no one was there to engage her but Bruce.

During the next three years, Jill suffered horrible torture and repeated rapes by Bruce's clients. She was hung by her neck resulting in a permanent scar and damage to her vocal cords. She could barely speak. When she became pregnant, Bruce became her abortionist. After enduring Bruce's botched abortion, Jill began to hemorrhage. So Bruce took Jill to an ER in Los Angeles.

Those in the medical profession, working at a clinic or hospital, may have encountered a sex-trafficking victim like Jill. A 2014 [study](#) reported that 87 percent of 107 trafficking survivors interviewed had contact with a healthcare provider while they were trafficked, including 63 percent who went to a hospital or emergency room. More than half of those interviewed interacted regularly with some type of clinical facility such as urgent care, women's health clinic, or Planned Parenthood. The report noted at least two prior studies demonstrated that healthcare providers are "woefully unpre-

pared to identify trafficking victims.”

The ER in Los Angeles was no different. Bruce had a cover story that hid his true identity and Jill’s dire circumstances. He told ER personnel he was Jill’s older brother, and they had lost their parents in a car accident two years before. As a result of the sudden loss of her parents, Jill suffered from Schizophrenia and often hallucinated about very strange things—like being held captive and suffering torture. She needed to be tied down so she didn’t run away. So said Bruce.

Medical personnel accepted his story without hesitation. They couldn’t see who was right in front of them *because they weren’t looking for her*. What if just one of the medical personnel treating Jill had been trained to see the red flags Jill displayed or at least had a healthier curiosity? Did they confirm the story of her parent’s death? If she was a schizophrenic, why was she not on appropriate medication? And how did Jill end up pregnant when she was being watched over so closely by a caring older brother?

Jill remained in the hospital three more days and was returned to her captor. This scenario is played out repeatedly in ERs across the country. She was finally freed after 3 years of captivity by police on a *drug* raid to Bruce’s home. They found Jill bound and gagged in a closet.

Jill and Natalie’s very different stories remind us that the circumstances of a sex-trafficked victims can vary enormously. With each victim’s story being unique, how does the Church begin to offer hope?

1. Learn as much as you can on the subject of human trafficking. Locate qualified speakers to train your entire church as to what a traffic victim looks like and what to do if they think they have encounter someone like Jill or Natalie. Are you a nurse or physician in a local hospital or clinic? Contact the Christian Medical and Dental Association and ask for a speaker who can train your staff. Are you a teacher at a school? There are several organizations (Shared Hope Intl., Street Grace to name two) offering training for teachers and students.

Youth Pastors, are you educating parents and teens about human trafficking? Many pimps approach middle school girls under the guise of being an admiring boyfriend. They target “good little church going children” and use their budding conscience against them. Would the twelve-year-old teens in your congregation see that coming and know how to respond?

“Awareness” does more than provide information. It equips concerned Christians to take action. It prevents young girls from becoming victims. A 12-year-old girl who attended a training session I led at church came up to me afterward, describing her best friend’s new boyfriend. She was concerned. Turns out she had reason to be. But what if she hadn’t attended the training session? Would she have been able to recognize what was happening to her friend? Would she or her parents know how to help?

Shared Hope International is an excellent resource for information about sex-trafficking with well researched studies and information on state legislation. They also can locate competent local speakers in almost any part of the country. They provide

online training for those interested in spreading awareness in their spheres of influence.

2. Find out who in your community is already at work helping survivors.

Like so many other social justice causes, sex-trafficking is loaded with its share of hubris. With a battle this large, we can't afford to not play well with others and reinvent the wheel. Don't be afraid to cross denominational lines. Don't be afraid to follow, instead of lead, if another demonstrates competence and wisdom in this area.

Tracy McElhaney heard about an iCare in Augusta, Georgia through her church and attended a conference. She listened to the testimonies of a lawyer, therapist, police officer, and stay-at-home mom who found places to serve locally and nationally.

“Ask how your church may assist them as they recover victims who need a legion of services.”

“Not a prostitute, not a victim, but a recovering survivor that deserves another chance,” therapist Bonnie Martin said.

“I walked in as an everyday person, a volunteer at a local church . . . Now that I have a greater understanding of the sex-trafficking survivor I advocate for nearly every day,” Tracy said.

3. Reach out to law enforcement and government service organizations with a servant's heart. Ask how your church may assist them as they recover victims who need a legion of services. Be willing to learn equally as much as you seek to educate.

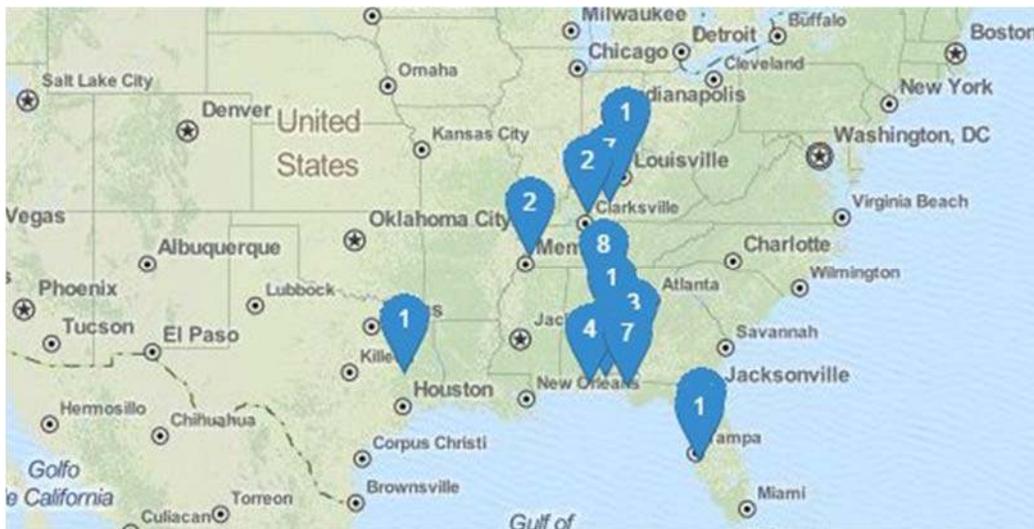
4. Ask God to give you wisdom and knowledge and creativity as you seek to grapple with this subject. We need more safe houses to help trafficking victims recover from their trauma. Currently we have more restorative services for stray cats and dogs than victims of trauma. We also need folks who are willing to engage in the messy work of building long-term relationships with traffic survivors.

Begin praying how God might use you in these areas. Be willing to do some research on your own as to what is available in your area and what those agencies need from a volunteer. We need people willing to think outside the box and offer fresh approaches to fighting this scourge.

John Meekins holds a degree in managing and marketing and works as a consultant for the Office of Victims and Crime Training. He uses his technical skills to track minors being sold on Backpage. He posted this update on Facebook May 3rd:

“The other day I found a minor being sold on Backpage in these places on the map. She is only 15!!! I notified law enforcement and things are in the works. It's a sad world when someone can get online and just order a child and have

them delivered to your door in a matter of a couple of hours. Here in America in quaint old southern towns like Birmingham, Pensacola, Mobile, Chattanooga. May makes my fourth year in the fight against this crime. It is what I was born to do! I have the perfect skill set for doing this.”



5. Make certain your local and state representatives keep this subject front and center. Recently, in a rare demonstration of bi-partisan leadership, the US Senate voted to hold Backpage in contempt for refusing to supply subpoenaed testimony and documents related to its investigation of online sex-trafficking. Contact your Senator and thank him, let him know you would like to be updated on the steps forward.

6. Do not be intimidated when you face opposition. Not if. When. “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,” 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV). There are a number of critics who name-call faith based ministries as “incompetent do-gooders filled with puritanical hysteria, doing more harm than good.” Remember that as far as it depends upon you, treat your enemy with respect, but don’t allow him to cause you to shrink back from what God has called you to do.

When the Christian community sought to speak into the arena of counseling from a Biblical perspective, critics used a similar language and many sadly relinquished their call to godless “experts”. Is it any wonder that addiction and suicide rates are at an all-time high? We alone have the true message of hope found in Christ Jesus.

7. Finally, Pray intentionally with greater specificity. Get to know the names of people on the front lines in this fight and pray for them. Want a

name to get you started? Chicago Sherriff Thomas Dart is one individual who took on Backpage. Talk about thinking outside the box— Dart contacted the major credit card companies and informed them that when their cards were used on Backpage, it was often to purchase sex from an unwilling victim. Most of the major credit card companies immediately opted out of Backpage. The company retaliated against Dart in court. The man could use your prayers!

8. Pray for specific ministries engaged headlong in this battle.

Anyone who has worked with sex traffic victims for any length of time will tell you they “do not wrestle against flesh and blood,” Ephesians 6:12-13 (ESV). Shannon Forsythe,

“No one held these folks’ hands and led them to the perfect anti-trafficking ministry.”

founder of Run 2 Rescue, a California-based nonprofit that aids domestic sex-trafficking victims, told [WORLD](#) magazine, “You’re stepping into a really dark area. The oppression, the nightmares my girls have, it’s just demonic. This is a warfare.”

In 2014, Forsyth launched Anchors of Hope, which is “one team working with one girl, in as many communities as possible.” They train teams in churches and communities across the country to bring a rescued victim into their community for restoration. Perhaps they might train yours. No one held these folks’ hands and led them to the perfect anti-trafficking ministry. They humbly sought adequate preparation and training and prayerfully asked God to give them courage and open the doors of opportunity.

Finally, let me leave you with an exhortation from Charles

Spurgeon: “Brethren, do something, do something, do something. While committees waste their time over resolutions, do something. While societies and unions are making constitutions, let us win souls. Too often we discuss and discuss and discuss while Satan only laughs in his sleeve.”

Tiny Hands International: Helping Those Enslaved by Sex-Trafficking

An Interview with Vicki Tiede

By Dave Jenkins



Vicki Tiede is an inspiring Bible teacher, conference speaker, and author. Her passion is to open the Scriptures with women in order to share God's grace and enduring faithfulness. Vicki's candor and humor are a delight to her audiences, who feel like they've met a new friend moments after she begins to share a glimpse into her life. She consistently points her audiences

back to God's Word and presents fresh insights into the Scriptures. Living in Rochester, Minnesota, Vicki is a wife, homeschooling mom, and a certified health coach. Vicki holds Master's degrees in Ministry and in Education.

T4L: Thank-you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *Theology for Life Magazine*, Vicki. Can you tell us a bit about yourself, including the current ministries you are involved in?

Vicki: I am a wife of one, mom of three, certified health coach to forty-five, Bible teacher, author, and speaker...and I cook and clean as necessary (just kidding...not really). I'm active in my local church and am passionate about the work of Tiny Hands International.

T4L: Haha! Awesome! Can you please tell us a bit about the work of Tiny Hands International?

Vicki: Every year, an estimated 30,000 people are trafficked into India from Nepal and Bangladesh to be sold as slaves. Those numbers have increased substantially after the two earthquakes on April 25th and May 12th, 2015. Through their transit monitoring programs, Tiny Hands has prevented more than 9,000 women and children from experiencing a life of torture and unimaginable brutality.

Throughout the developing world, children are cast aside by poverty, war, and the destruction of families. Orphaned, abandoned, and abused children often become drug addicts, prostitutes, or succumb to disease and violence. Tiny Hands finds these children and places them in loving homes with carefully chosen parents.

T4L: Can you tell us more about how the Lord is working to save people from the sex-trafficking industry there in Nepal, India, and Bangladesh?

Vicki: Before I answer your question, I have to add that we recently began working in South Africa. We're very excited about the doors God has opened there. In answer to your question ... Most anti-trafficking work is done in one of two categories: pre-trafficking and post-trafficking interventions. As you can imagine, **post-trafficking** interventions respond to cases after someone has already been trafficked. These are rescue and rehabilitation interventions. The goal of **pre-trafficking** interventions is to prevent trafficking before it happens through awareness or education of those who are greatest risk to be trafficked.

Tiny Hands is unique in that they combat trafficking while it is actually happening, but before victims have been exploited or enslaved. Transit Monitoring is our prima-

ry strategy and greatest investment to protect innocent girls from the experience that awaits them in a brothel. We currently have more than 20 Transit Monitoring stations along the border of Nepal as well as in the other aforementioned countries. Border monitors watch for “red flag” signs that a young woman or child is being trafficked and they literally intercept that person before they cross the border; or step on a bus or plane that will take them directly into the sex trade. In April, Tiny Hands surpassed their 10,000th interception! It costs roughly \$100 to intercept one person.

T4L: So, how serious is the problem of sex-trafficking?

Vicki: The latest approximations regarding the number of enslaved people worldwide ranges from 20,000,000 to 30,000,000. Read that twice, my friend. Count the zeros. Millions of [REDACTED] people are enslaved.

Note that I said these figures represent “approximations”. In reality, I suspect the number is much higher. The opening line of a recent Huffington Post article read, “Nearly 170 victims of child sex trafficking, *many of whom had never been reported missing*, were rescued in the last week as

“Of the 27,000,000 worldwide slaves today, half are children.”

part of an annual nationwide crackdown, the FBI said Monday” (italics mine). Those were American children, and they had never been reported missing. Let that soak in. How much more likely do you suppose it is that a child in America might be reported missing than in a poverty-stricken village in remote Nepal?

Of the 27,000,000 worldwide slaves today, half are children.

12,000 – 15,000 girls are trafficked annually from Nepal into India. That’s one girl every hour.

20,000 girls are trafficked annually from Bangladesh into India— two girls every hour— some are as young as 6 years old.

Sharing statistics makes me nervous because the unsatisfying reality is that we simply don’t know or currently have reliable ways to determine how many people are being trafficked in these places. The closest realistic approximation is very likely a range so wide that it would be impractical for communicating the severity of the problem. UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) Bangkok summarizes the struggle, “When it comes to statistics, trafficking of girls and women is one of several highly emotive issues which seem to overwhelm critical faculties. Numbers take on a life of their own, gaining acceptance through repetition, often with little inquiry into their derivations. Journalists, bowing to the pressures of editors, demand numbers, any

number. Organizations feel compelled to supply them, lending false precisions and spurious authority to many reports.”

I want to be cautious about propagating unreliable statistics that might ultimately do more harm than good to the anti-trafficking effort, which is why I present these numbers as estimates, not facts. I’m asking you to trust me when I say that the numbers are staggering, and the issue would be no less nefarious if there were 27 rather than 27,000,000 slaves.

T4L: Wow, those numbers are unbelievable! So, how can the Church help support the work and or get involved in the work of Tiny Hands International?

Vicki: Visit www.tinyhand.org. They need the help of individuals and churches! On their website they lay out specifics regarding how to fundraise, donate, pray, and advocate for them!

“Contrary to those who believe Calvin’s doctrine of predestination and election would make evangelism nonsensical and useless, Calvin’s writing doesn’t show this supposed contradiction or weakness.”

T4L: And what kinds of assistance does Tiny Hands International provide for those who’ve been rescued from the sex-trafficking industry?

Vicki: As I noted before, Tiny Hands isn’t a post-trafficking organization. As a rule, they intercept women and children before they are exploited. With that in mind, most of the time, the young people are able to return to their families. Of course, while they wait for their families to come and get them, they stay in our safe homes and learn about the dangerous of sex trafficking. Most of them had no idea what was about to happen to them. They need to be educated in order to avoid becoming victims again. They also hear about Jesus while they are in the safe home. (All of our transit monitoring stations are run by local churches!) If a girl is unable to return home for some reason (rejection, abuse, no family), then we have a small Women’s Empowerment Center where they learn a trade and are equipped to support themselves. We also partner with other NGOs who offer similar training and opportunities.

T4L: That’s excellent! Could you please tell us a bit about the work of the Dream Center at Tiny Hands International?

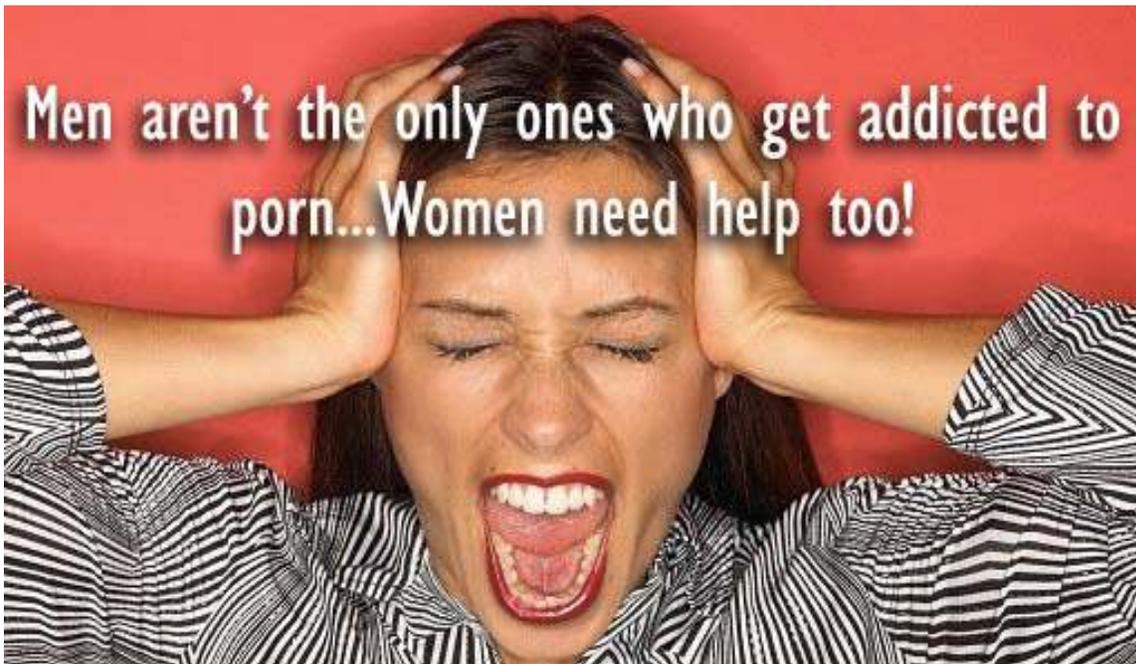
Vicki: The Dream Center is one way we are caring for children in Nepal who are most vulnerable to be trafficked. Jesus’ words indicate that a single needy child is the greatest piece of heavenly treasure to be found on earth. How much more, then, is a community of children’s homes, full of children blossoming and growing, learning and loving this God they are beginning to know? For several years, Tiny Hands has talked and dreamed about a place of laughter and joy where children learn, play, wonder, and wor-

ship and are surrounded by beauty. It would be a place that would inspire creativity and a greater desire for godliness. It would be a place of community, not inwardly focused, but where the goodness of God would overflow the surrounding neighborhood and city. We are now watching as those early dreams turn into an exciting reality of this and the implications are huge for the future of these children. There will eventually be 6 individual homes with approximately 15 children each. We currently have 2 completed homes and 2 more on which they are about to begin construction. We have a temporary “Dream School” building onsite, which provides the best education in Nepal for both Tiny Hands children and other Nepali children in the surrounding villages. I’ve been to the Dream Center and it is truly a God-honoring and joy-filled place for these kids to thrive!

T4L: That is simply amazing! Thank-you so much for taking the time to let us interview you, Vicki!

Women Like That: Four Things You Need to Know About Women and Porn

By Jessica Harris



Few things make pastors, leaders, and church members alike squirm more than the mention of sex and/or pornography. Mention women struggling with pornography and the response can even borderline on anger. I've been speaking about women and their struggle with pornography, not as wives or girlfriends of addicts, but as the actual addicts themselves, for years. When I first started, many pastors and church leaders would say, "We don't have women like that here."

Women like That?

There is a prevailing idea that sexual struggles are an issue for men, yet not an issue for women. When we speak to women, it is as the lovers of sexually struggling men or as the immodest women who make struggles so hard for men. It is a dangerous division that is leaving plenty of women alone, trapped behind a wall of shame.

Christians can be relatively silent about the reality of women struggling with sexual sins. As a result, the wife who reads “smut”, the mom addicted to porn, and the daughter sending sexts are all left feeling very alone and far beyond the reaches of grace. Instead of finding freedom, hope, and grace, they are met with silence and shame.

Recently, I presented at a global summit addressing the epidemic of pornography. After my session, a pastor stopped me in the hallway. He works with a ministry that reaches out to college “sugar babies”. After telling me about their outreach, he asked me a question, “I understand why men get into pornography. You know, the whole objectification and sexualization of women. I get that. But women? Why?! What kind of woman gets into that stuff?” It was a bold question, especially since he knew I was a woman who had spent years addicted to hardcore pornography. He may as well have asked, “What kind of woman are you?” Women who struggle fear reactions just like that.

The good news is, the conversation is slowly changing. Churches, conferences, and recovery groups are beginning to address the struggles women can face, shining light into very dark places and bringing hope and freedom to many. Still, there can be old stigmas and stereotypes that carry over and make it hard for there to be a conversation that leads to freedom.

If you are getting ready to start that conversation, or perhaps are trying to figure out how to continue it, here are four things you need to know about a “woman like that.”

1. She Can Come from Anywhere.

It might be tempting to believe that a woman who struggles with issues like pornography, fantasy, lust, masturbation, sex, or sexting must come from some sort of broken background. This is because we typically classify women as relational and men as physical, meaning that men are drawn to pornography for physical reasons while women escape to it for relational brokenness. Therefore, if a woman doesn’t come from an abusive or broken home, she couldn’t have these sorts of struggles.

While many women who struggle with pornography may come from broken families or may have been abused and/or molested in the past, not all women have experienced relational trauma. Women from strong Christian families with all the right filters in place can still find a way to indulge in pornography. Never assume a “great family” excludes a woman from struggling.

2. She Can be Anyone.

We can tend to place women in one of two categories. A woman is either a “Proverbs 31 woman” or a “Proverbs 5 woman”. When we try to picture a woman who struggles with pornography, we might mistakenly picture an overtly sexual woman—a harlot. When we think about needing to address sexual sin among women, it can be tempting to boil it down to a certain demographic of women who we think need to hear the message. Bring it up in front of the wrong group of women and you might risk offending them, or, in the case of young adults, offending their parents.

It is important to remember, though, that a struggling woman could be any

woman in your church. Anyone from the pastor's wife to the new girl in youth group. In fact, many women may try to overcompensate for their struggle by being the best Christian they can be. It is not uncommon for a woman who struggles to be thought of as "the last person" you would think would be caught up in that.

3. It's More than Fantasy.

This is a huge and dangerous mistake that is made in the conversation about women struggling with pornography. In the wake of *50 Shades of Grey* and *Magic Mike*, we began talking about "mommy porn" and so started to differentiate the struggles men and women face. Men, we say, struggle with real pornography—the violent, degrading images and videos online—while women struggle with fantasy. Therefore, when a woman says, "I struggle with pornography" the assumption is made that she's really talking about fantasy and romance novels. Not so.

"Women, including women in the Church, watch "real" pornography as well."

Women, including women in the church, watch "real" pornography as well. For years I watched nothing but hardcore pornography in increasingly violent fetishes. I used to tell people I watched "man's porn". If a woman tells you she struggles with pornography, don't make assumptions about her struggle.

4. She's Ultimately Looking for Hope, and She Can Find It.

While the church may be silent when it comes to this issue of women struggling with sexual sin, the good news is, God is not. A woman may not hear the message of Grace. In fact, she may hear quite the opposite. She might hear that she is too far gone. She might hear that she is a freak. She might believe that God could never love her, or she just needs to love Him harder. She might be caught in the lie that she has to fix this herself before she can come back to Jesus. There is hope, though, and a blueprint for it is found in John 4 and the interaction of Jesus and the woman at the well.

The Sunday school coloring book version of this story is that Jesus is the Living Water. While that is true, this is a Biblical account of how God interacts with a woman living in outright sexual sin. For whatever reason, she has been married several times and is currently living with a man who isn't her husband. In the midst of all of that, though, she is a 'religious' woman. How do you know? Well, immediately after Jesus calls her out on her current living conditions and lack of a husband, she asks about worship. Worship of all things!

You might think it was just an antagonist nationalist question. After all, Jews and Samaritans were at odds about where to worship. However, immediately after Jesus responds (John 4:21-24), the woman continues by expressing her hope for Messiah.

This woman, living in outright defiance of the law, living in sexual sin, has just expressed a heartfelt hope for Messiah. She is looking for Jesus—waiting for Him to show up and sort everything out. That’s when Jesus reveals that He is exactly who she has been waiting for. There was no “what do you think you’re doing? You don’t know me. Get your life together, girl.” No. Instead, there was simply the life-giving offer of Himself. There was grace, and hope. And it was that hope that gave that woman life to run back into town thrilled, not terrified, but thrilled that she had met the Messiah. It is in this context that we find verses that have been printed on missionary promotional materials for years, most notably verse 35:

“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.”

You may feel ill-equipped to reach out to women who struggle with sexual sin. You may be hesitant to talk about women struggling with pornography. It may feel like an un-needed message because you don’t have “women like that”. Ultimately, though, “women like that” are really just like all of us—sinners in desperate need of a Savior and hope that they can be free. They are part of our mission field, and should be part of our outreach. The Gospel we know is available to all, including women just like that.

Gender Roles and the Biblical Standard of Purity

An Interview with Grant Castleberry

By Dave Jenkins



Grant serves as the Executive Director for CBMW. He is also a PhD student in Church History at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is Marine Corps veteran. He holds a B.S. from Texas A&M and an M.Div from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and his wife, GraceAnna, reside in Frankfort, Kentucky where Grant also serves as Pastor of Evangelism at Buck Run Baptist Church.

T4L: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *Theology for Life Magazine*, Grant. Can you please tell us a bit about yourself and the current ministries you are involved in?

Grant Castleberry: Absolutely. My life is very simple. I am a husband, father, and ultimately am called to serve the Lord in pastoral ministry. I am an Assistant Pastor at Buck Run Baptist Church and the Executive Director of The Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. Between doing all of those things, my time is pretty much dictated for me.

T4L: Wow! Sounds like you stay pretty busy! So with regards to your work with CBMW, how does a biblical view of gender roles, as advocated by The Council on

Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, help Christians to fight against the cultural tide of pornography and uphold biblical purity?

Grant Castleberry: I think the biblical view of gender roles calls men to the highest standard of purity. The biblical standard. They are called to lead in the home and in their churches with uprightness and holiness. This means that all men should aspire to the character qualities that Paul mentions in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 of being a “one-woman man” and “beyond reproach.” Moreover, every Christian is called to a life of purity in mind and action (Philippians 4:8). This means that men must repent of past sin, and follow Christ with their whole hearts. That is the essence of true faith. Moreover, in following Christ, Jesus demands that we take radical steps in our own lives to pursue purity. True discipleship means cutting off our hand or gouging out our own eye for the sake of holiness (Matthew 5:27-30). Jesus goes even as far to say that the eternal resting place of our souls depends on it.

“We must care more about holiness than our comfort.”

T4L: So, how should Pastors and ministry leaders speak to the problem of pornography and for biblical purity?

Grant Castleberry: I think we have to take the problem much more seriously than we have and address these issues head on in the church. The statistics regarding men and pornography are absolutely staggering in the Western world. And we can't be naive and think that men in the church aren't affected or struggling with it. Many are. If God is going to bless the church again, repentance must start with the house of God. We must confess our sins, repent, and seek Christ-like holiness by walking in the light in accountability with other godly men. We must care more about holiness than our comfort. In short, I think the answer is not ignoring it or only addressing it periodically, but pastors must be much more pro-active addressing it in men's discipleship ministries. And if churches don't have a men's discipleship program, then beginning one would be a great place to start.

T4L: And, as a Pastor, how do you counsel people who tell you they are addicted to pornography?

Grant Castleberry: I remind them that they stand on the righteousness of Christ if they have trusted in Christ and not on their own merits (2 Corinthians 5:21). Yet we are called to walk in a manner worthy of this great calling (Ephesians 4:1). Pornography, like other lusts, is an addiction, which once fed, grows bigger and more monstrous in its need to be fed. Moreover, studies have shown that pornography changes the way men think about the female body in negative ways, often leading to

sexual dysfunction. These problems are real and it means many men face a long road ahead in the process of sanctification. We all do. We are all struggling to be conformed to the image of Christ. But there are steps we can and should begin to take. As I mentioned earlier, men's discipleship is a must in this process. Men must be held accountable and exhorted to righteousness by older, wiser men (see Titus 2 on God's blueprint for discipleship). We must be renewing our minds in the Word daily (Romans 12:2). We must be putting on the whole armor of God to stand against Satan's attacks (Ephesians 6:11). God has not left us without armor to face Satan's schemes. The question is: are we putting it on?

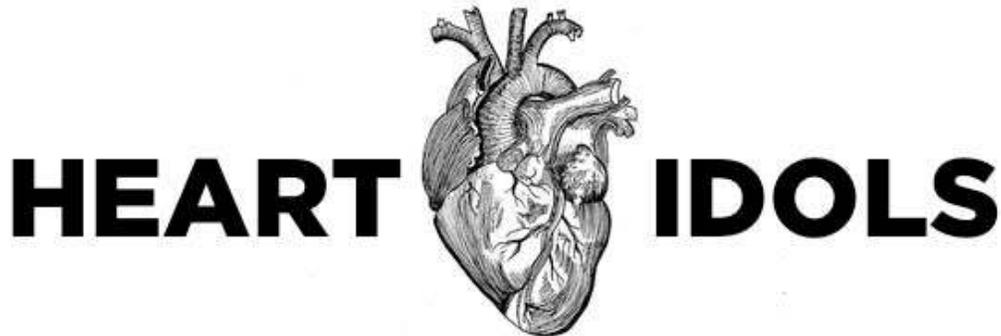
T4L: Very good point. It seems as though the armor of God is often something we forget in our daily lives. In light of this, how can a vision of biblical manhood and/or womanhood help those coming out of an addiction to pornography to discover their God-given purpose, meaning, and identity as male and female created in the image and likeness of God?

Grant Castleberry: In our day and age identity is so important. People are searching and longing for meaningful identity. Whether it's sexual orientation, business or sports accomplishments, wealth, or the ideal body, people are searching for worth and value. The biblical worldview informs us that ultimately our identity is found in the fact that we are image bearers of God (Genesis 1-2) and that if we are Christians, we are in Christ (Galatians 3:22). Being male and female is part of that identity and that means that in appreciating that, we don't use or defile someone else's identity. We don't use them, like in pornography, as an inanimate object. No, truly understanding our identity means that we value the humanity of all people, especially the weak and the oppressed, who are marginalized and taken advantage of. This is why the Christian worldview has no toleration of pornography.

T4L: Excellent insight, brother! Thank you so much for taking the time to let us interview you, Grant. Until next time!

Pornography and Temptation: Getting to the Heart

By Jason M. Garwood



“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.” (1 John 2:15-26)

The problem of pornography in our culture isn’t a new thing. Access to this ungodliness has surely *changed*, but the underlining issues have always been the same. Sexual desire, by means of the internet, magazines, and movies has always been there; the modes have been altered a bit, but the root cause has never changed. The reason this article is called *“Pornography & Temptation”* is because the latter explains the former. Porn exists in the world because men refuse to be governed by God. When men refuse to be governed by God, they do not become un

-governed individuals, but rather, they become *rebellious* individuals. And rebellion isn't something that's just talked about in theory; it's put into practice however the heart sees fit.

Notice the verse cited above from the first letter of the apostle John. He says that the world (i.e., the systemic evil that exists because of sin) can only really produce impotence (ironically). There are desires of the flesh, desires of the eyes, and the pride of life are all byproducts of instant gratification. Instead of waiting on God, and cultivating the Spirit's work in our lives, we go the short route. And John didn't just pull these things out of thin air—these three things point all the way back to Adam and Eve, our very first parents.

Recall to mind the story: Adam and Eve were told not to partake of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God, in His covenantal sovereignty, explained to them that to do so would invoke the covenantal curse of death. They would be severed from the Garden, the very presence of God, and forced to be vice regents, not of God, but of the Tempter. Lo and behold, the Serpent deceives Eve, and notice what the text says: "So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh], and that it was a delight to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise [pride of life], she took of its fruit and ate, and she gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate" (Genesis 3:6).

"We must care more about holiness than our comfort."

To use the Apostle James' words: "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15). The biblical corpus is abundantly clear on the problem of temptation. Temptation arises in the hearts of men who have, instead of worshipping Christ, begun to worship something else. Our "own desire" then gives way to temptation—the door is open. Once those desires grown and the temptation remains (instead of being put to death), it conceives within us sin, and sin only leads to death.

This is ultimately where the pornography discussion must go: the heart. Proverbs 4:23 reads, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." In other words, when the guards fall asleep, the heart starts producing enemies. It is, after all, a factory of idols (Calvin). If we're going to deal with the problem of pornography, we deal in terms of the heart.

Often, when I counsel folks in my study, I will share with them that, like a medical doctor, I am interested in doing a little "surgery". Counseling for me is never just helping people solve problems; counseling is heart surgery. It's an investigatory look underneath the hood. We have to peel back the layers and find what desires lie

below. Here are three steps to help you get to the heart of the issue with pornography:

Step #1 – Identify Your Idols

- What do you daydream about? When drifting off at your desk, what do you cling to? The scandalously dressed woman across the way? Fantasies about being with another woman? Idols are those things that we care most about either having, keeping, or increasing in some fashion.
- What do you have nightmares about? Oftentimes losing an idol scares us. It's something we think can't live without. It keeps us up at night and we worry constantly about it.
- What is it that you think you really need in life? If only I had this, *then* I could start living for the Lord.

Identifying an idol like sex really doesn't take much time. Where does your mind go when you're tired? Lonely? Lazy? When the heart isn't focused on the glory of God, it doesn't stop focusing, it looks to something else. That's your idol. Now we must do something to it.

Step #2 – Slay Your Idols

In order get past something like pornography, we must put to death that which causes unrighteous desires. Accountability is very important here, so if you're a husband, have your wife help here (and vice versa). If you're not married, have a friend. Surely *Covenant Eyes* and other technological advances can help. But it's not enough to just *think* about slaying your idols: we actually have to do it. We have to give up relying on our own wisdom ("I'm fine having a smartphone, I can handle it.") We have to give up relying on self-will ("It's not that big of a deal, I'll stop when I'm ready.") We have to fight against self-righteousness ("This makes me feel really good in the long run.").

We must slay our idols through those means mentioned above, but also by means of the Holy Spirit's work in our hearts. He works to demonstrate the folly of our ways by pricking our conscience and convicting us with guilt. We must go in prayer to God and plead the heavenly throne room for help. And we must focus purely on Christ who is our righteousness. To slay an idol is to slay a desire. To slay a desire is be at war with indwelling sin. To be at war with sin is stick close to the gospel at every moment.

Step #3 – Repent and Believe the Gospel

Having identified our idols and burned them with fire, we must hit "repeat". Part of the process laid out already is the repentance part. It's an ongoing attitude towards lust that repeats this refrain: "I do not need this. I do not need this. Christ is enough." But that's only one side of the gospel coin. We must also *believe*. We must cultivate godly loyalty through the means of grace given to us. To believe the gospel isn't to just

mentally ascent to theological propositions; it's to actively use our head, hearts, and hands for the glory of God. Porn is hard to come by for the man whose time is spent serving his neighbor.

Lastly, having established the problem and put forth some biblical solutions, I want to quote Romans 8:1—"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Here's the thing. The beautiful thing about the doctrine of justification by faith alone is that the Judge doesn't go back and undo His ruling. Because Christ made perfect satisfaction for the believer, the "Not guilty!" is etched into eternal permanency. Which means that you don't *have to heap condemnation upon yourself*. A lot of times lust, addiction, and other sins manifest themselves because we think there's still a price to pay. *There's not*. It's paid in full. The tab is covered. The Bank account is full.

"Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24) Answer: Jesus Christ. Porn can't deliver you. **Jesus can.**

Five Ways to Help You Grow in Christ and Defeat Your Addiction

By Dave Jenkins



Sam struggles with pornography on a weekly basis.

Every time he looks at pornography he feels guilt and shame.

Sam has read the books and articles on how to fight pornography but still thinks, "Help, I'm addicted to pornography and don't know what to do!" There are many people like Sam out there. In this article, my purpose is to help the many "Sams" out there to understand five critical truths that will help them (and you) to grow in the grace of God.

Over the course of two Sundays in 2005, the Lord convicted me of my addiction to pornography. In the middle of the second Sunday gathering in 2005, I remember praying, "Lord help me to be the man you want me to be." About six months after praying this prayer, I met my wife of nine years.

Recovering from a porn addiction is hard for many people. It requires that one's mind be renewed by the Word of God, the help of godly accountability, and often the help of a professional Christian counselor. While these are all powerful tools that you should seek out, what I want to highlight is a few other ways you personally can take ownership of your own growth in Christ.

Get into the Bible

If you've never read through the Bible, I encourage you to start with the Gospel of John. Read slowly and digest it. Find others to go through the Bible with you. Share what you're learning as you read. If you like to write articles, consider writing your way through a book of the Bible, sharing any insights or thoughts you might have as you go through it. Some people find it easier to listen to the Bible on their smartphones through apps like YouVersion. I like to do this in addition to reading a physical Bible. The point here is to get into the habit of regularly reading (or listening to) the Bible. The Bible is authoritative for faith and practice. This means not only reading the Word dai-

ly, but being fed by it and submitting to what it says.

Get in a Bible Believing Local Church

The Christian life is not to be lived in isolation, but in community with other Christians. Christians are taught over fifty times in the New Testament to “one another” (love one another, pray for one another, etc.) each other in the context of the local church. These fifty-one another statements help church members to know how to treat one another.

Find Godly Friends

If you are a guy, find an older seasoned man at your local church who is willing to come alongside you and help you grow. If you are a woman, find an older seasoned woman. Seasoned men and women, we come to you for your wisdom and guidance. The challenges we face are very real, and we need your help to walk with God.

Confess Your Sin

When you struggle with any habitual sin, especially with a sexual sin, you

“The Gospel calls us out of a world filled with guilt and shame by understanding that Jesus took our guilt, shame, and sin upon Himself at the cross.”

must confess your sin to God, repent, and seek to walk by His grace once again. Rather than continuing in your sin, bring it out into the light. Your local church and godly friends are vital to recovery.

If after a short time you struggle and relapse, then confess, repent, and seek to walk by His grace once again. Each time you relapse, I encourage you to tell your accountability team. This will be hard, but it will also help

you to learn the place and importance of community.

Celebrate Any Victory

You’ve made some progress by God’s grace. If you struggle one day and then have a day of victory the next, celebrate! If you haven’t struggled for a week, then praise the Lord for that as well. Few issues are as hard to overcome as an addiction to pornography. This is why you need to be in community with other Christians and be honest with them about your struggles *and victories*.

If you struggle with a porn addiction, please stop hiding and come out into the light. I cannot tell you how many e-mails and conversations I have had with people over the years about this issue. Someone who struggles often displays excessive feelings of guilt and shame. The Gospel calls us out of a world filled with guilt and shame by understanding that Jesus took our guilt, shame, and sin upon Himself at the cross. He offers both forgiveness of sins through His shed blood and new life through the resurrection of Christ. I encourage you to look to Christ. He is all you need. He is sufficient and able to set you free.

All around you are people like Sam who need the hope of the Gospel. They are living in a world of perpetual guilt and shame. If you are like Sam today, I encourage you to come to Jesus to be filled and satisfied by the bread of life in Jesus Christ. Won’t you come taste and see that the Lord is good and drink from

the well of everlasting life in Jesus? Come and be satisfied you who hunger and you who thirst, come drink from the living well of water in Jesus Christ.

Won't you come to Him whose love you really need? Won't you come and be filled and satisfied by the bread of life in Jesus Christ? Won't you come taste and see that the Lord is good and drink from the well of everlasting life in Jesus? Come and be satisfied you who hunger and you who thirst, come drink from the living well of water in Jesus Christ.

The Real Victims of Pornography

By Zach Barnhart



When it comes to the topic of pornography and the Church, our default is to point to the man. We are inundated with statistics that reveal just how prevalent pornography is among men in and out of the Church. We have all seen them — the outrageous percentages that somehow find a way to shock us every time. Our counseling and restoration processes are intensely focused on getting men in honest community and accountability relationships, where

they can not only express their struggles, but be welcomed into a place where they can begin to heal and change. A quick search of “recovering from pornography addiction” in Google led me to search results that were overwhelmingly about men. Because that’s what we think: porn’s key victim is men. That’s the message of the culture, and the message of the Church.

But what about the woman? I’m not talking as much about the woman that views porn, though I know it’s just as much a problem for females and males, and I know it affects and hurts them all equally. What I’m talking about is the segment of the people involved that always gets objectified, that always gets overlooked. I’m talking about the *performer* herself.

It is a bit of an unspoken, but I sense that the Church’s general feelings and thoughts about women who work in the adult industry are negative at best, and hostile at worst. Culture’s word for it is *slut-shaming*:

Slut-shaming is the experience of being labeled a sexually

out-of-control girl or woman (a “slut” or “ho”) and then being punished socially for possessing this identity. Slut-shaming is sexist because only girls and women are called to task for their sexuality, whether real or imagined; boys and men are congratulated for the exact same behavior. This is the essence of the sexual double standard: Boys will be boys, and girls will be sluts.¹

Sure, the double standard is alive and well in the culture. For example, our music is one of the most explicit demonstrations of this double standard. Male rappers and rockers sing about the glory of their no-strings-attached sexual escapades, while in the same vein condemning women at any hint of the same. We see this paradox play out in all sorts of mediums. It makes sense for people without a Christian worldview to make such mistakes. But what is the Church’s excuse? Why do we gladly and eagerly welcome in men who struggle with pornography, while at the same time having a sneaking sense of rejection of the women quite literally involved in it?

This article that I seek to write is, in many ways, addressing men specifically. However, I think our *focus*, if we are ever going to make strides against pornography, may need to shift a bit. The truth is, as men, we cannot fix ourselves. No program, no method, not even well-meaning community *solves* these problems. Only the transforming power and grace of God is able. My point is, perhaps our best course of action going forward as men is to turn the focus off of ourselves for a bit. **The Church’s best offense against the adult industry will not be found in “fixing men,” but found in loving women well.**

In Covenant Eyes’ 2015 Pornography Statistics Report, there was a brief, but telling section outlining how pornography affects the performer. Not that this would shock most people, but a quote from the owner of an amateur-based adult film company sends a chilling message about the nature of their business, that “amateurs [as opposed to veterans] come across better on screen. Our customers feel that. Especially by women you can see it. They still feel strong pain.”² In other words, they hope to build an empire off of outright exploitation. The fact that an entire company is comfortable padding its pockets and building its brand by inflicting pain, even violence, on women, is terrifying.

MaryAnne Layden (Ph.D.) says this kind of treatment of women in the adult film industry leads to disastrous circumstances:

The experience I find most common among the performers is that they have to be drunk, high or dissociated in order to go to work. Their work environment is particularly toxic...The terrible work life of the pornography performer is often followed by an equally terrible home life. They have an in-

creased risk of sexually transmitted disease (including HIV), domestic violence and have about a 25% chance of making a marriage that lasts as long as 3 years.³

The most sobering account came from an ex-performer in the industry. Her re-telling of the norms of working in the industry as heartbreaking:

Guys are punching you in the face. You get ripped. Your insides can come out of you. It's never ending. You're viewed as an object — not as a human with a spirit. People do drugs because they can't deal with the way they're being treated.⁴

Stories like these should simply make us grieve the reality of what goes on behind the scenes. But more than this, it should cause us to realize that maybe in the grand scheme of pornography and the widespread negative effects it has, the ones being hurt most significantly are those involved in it, particularly women. Men are certainly victims of porn's terrible grasp, but these performers have been abused and victimized unlike any other. The thread that ties together these anecdotes from an adult film owner, a doctor, and a former actress, is that there is no genuine love for women in pornography, whether behind or in front of the screen, on or off camera.

The popular retort to this argument is that this is the path the performer chose, and therefore why fault ourselves when they're the ones making these choices? This, of course, deserves its own treatment, but suffice it to say, how dare we go here? While these women are certainly grown up and should be held at least spiritually accountable for their choices, we still carry a responsibility to empower and encourage women, not exploit and cast them off for bad decisions. No image-bearer, no human divinely created and knit together by the power of God, deserves this kind of treatment from a fellow human being.

So the question becomes, "Where do we go from here?" The tendency is for accountability programs and church leaders to just create a multi-step process for men to walk through to fix the issue, but this won't do here. You know all too well, don't you, Christian Brother? The lists to killing lust are infinite, but the devil isn't afraid of them, and the internet is no less tempting because of them. We see articles that discuss dealing with looking at porn "again", because that's the reality of the problem; it is a nearly-unshakable issue for many Christian men.

As Christian men, we have to respond. We cannot continue to allow such non-chalance around these egregious behaviors. The only way we are going to make true progress, I am convinced, is when we redirect our focus to how we can love women well instead of how we can fix ourselves. This means loving our wives well, loving them enough to be willing to suppress temptation, to find accountability, to set up guards. This means loving our sisters in Christ well, loving them enough to let them know that they are valued because their *soul* is beautiful, and it matters to us men.

This means loving the woman on the other side of the screen well, loving her enough to not fan the flame of deception and abuse and depression that she faces in order to pay the bills or to find the happiness only God can give. We may not know this person, and that's okay, but we should know that she is, truly, *out there*, and that we have a real way of demonstrating our care for her by not participating.

Most of us get up in arms about human trafficking, and that's a good thing. People of all different kinds of races and classes and political ties want to put an end to human trafficking. Sadly, the guise of pornography has slipped out of view in this conversation. While many of the women in the adult industry haven't been forcibly kidnapped, they have been lured and coaxed into a lifestyle that didn't bring that promised satisfaction. This is human trafficking, only on a much grander, more culturally acceptable scale. It has to come to an end, and we as the Church have to be ready to help these women find grace and healing.

I leave you with this: take a moment to imagine what it would be like if the men of the Church—men who should, more than anyone else, understand humanity as God's crown jewel in creation—made a commitment to quit “fanning the flame?” And let's take it a step further. What if we, as the Church, began to see *women* as the real victims of the pornography industry, welcoming *them* into our congregations and small groups, giving them the grace and love we were given ourselves? Again, we may not actually be in community with such women. But creating a culture that loves women well will begin to chip away at the notion that women are only as valuable as their sex appeal. Loving women well in community, and treating them with their image-bearing dignity, will make the adult film industry the only victim. *That's* a goal worth fighting for.

1 - Tanenbaum, Leora. “The Truth About Slut-Shaming.” Accessed 4 April 2016 on Huffington Post at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/leora-tanenbaum/the-truth-about-slut-shaming_b_7054162.html

2 - “Pornography Statistics 2015,” page 6. Accessed 4 April 2016 on Covenant Eyes. Download full report at <http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>

3 - *ibid.*

4 - *ibid.*

Finding Freedom in Christ: Letting Go of Condemnation

By Dave Jenkins

If you were to open my email inbox in the morning and read my emails you'd see that, outside of getting emails from publicists, the vast majority of emails I get are from people struggling with an addiction to pornography. Whether on my social media pages or in my email inbox, I'm almost daily corresponding with someone who wants to talk about their struggle with pornography. People are struggling greatly in this area. The good news is that, as Christians, we have hope to offer them in the Gospel.



Pornography and Self-Condemnation

As I talk to people struggling with an addiction to pornography one of the main themes that keeps coming up is self-condemnation. Most of these people are very hard on themselves. They feel an immense amount of guilt and shame.

I know well the struggle of being hard on myself. I'm regularly my own worst critic. Whether it's after writing an article, a review, recording a podcast, delivering a sermon, or even after Bible study, I'm wondering if I did "good enough". While I understand that it isn't my performance that matters, I still care that I do a good job. I want everything I do to be done with excellence. Yet, fear of man's opinion is real, and craving the approval of man is fleeting. The fear of God is greater. Here we are confronted with the reality of self-condemnation and the hope we have now in Christ.

No More Condemnation in Christ

Jesus began His ministry with a message that was contrary to the message

being delivered by the religious leaders. Jesus opened the scroll of Isaiah 61 and read from it. He proclaimed that He came to set the captives free in Luke 4:18. This message is still revolutionary today.

The Gospel is *good news* for addicts, for people who struggle with fear of man, and the best news in the world for people who struggle with feelings of self-condemnation. **The Gospel says that through Christ we are accepted, loved, and even the beloved of God.** Our identity is no longer one of self-hatred, self-condemnation, beating ourselves up like we don't matter, or any such thing. Instead, the Gospel provides the hope of God. The Gospel provides hope and healing, deliverance from feelings of self-condemnation.

Paul opens Romans with a frank discussion on the reality of sin in chapter one. He further continues to show that it's not our morality that saves in chapter two. He then explains how depraved we are. And finally, at the very end of Romans 3 (verse 26), he says, "It was to show his righteousness at the present time so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." Paul knows that man left to his own devices will always continue on in sin. He also knows that only the Gospel can provide hope.

He continues on in Romans 4-5 to talk about justification that we can be declared not guilty by Jesus who was utterly innocent and sinless in every way and yet plead guilty so we could be forgiven. In chapter six and seven, Paul teaches about our new identity, and how now as Christians, we still have indwelling sin.

After going deep into the heart of Christian theology, explaining the sinfulness of man, justification, our new relationship with God, and how we can grow in communion with God, Paul opens chapter 8 with an interesting phrase and the focus of this article. He says in Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

Assurance and No Condemnation in Christ

Whenever Paul uses the word "therefore" you one should always take note. He is about to say something very important. Take a minute and think about what Paul is saying here. He has just talked about the sinfulness of man, justification, our new identity, and the reality of indwelling sin. Now he says for those who have union with Christ, they now have communion with Christ—there - there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

When I counsel people dealing with pornography, and I start talking about how they are beating themselves up and being too hard on themselves, they often think I may be cheapening God's grace. They often feel like they have no hope. They live in a perpetual cycle of false repentance, guilt, and shame. They can't see it, taste it, or know the grace of God in the midst.

As we work through their issues, we talk about the reality of sin. I ask them to explain the Gospel to me. I ask them lots of questions about their understanding of salvation and whether they are Christians. Often people who struggle with pornography also have issues with assurance of salvation.

In my experience, most of my counselees can articulate an adequate understanding of the Gospel, but can't explain and don't understand that their fellowship

with God is broken because of their sin. They have security with God, not because of their own works, but because of God. We would not remain Christians, Dr. John Piper has said, one second without the preserving work of God's grace.

The struggle for many porn addicts is not with understanding the right theological information. Many have been Christians their entire lives. They could give you an answer to any theological question you would ask. Here's the thing, though—they lack assurance because they don't understand that their sin is deadly seriously to God. John (in 1 John 1:7-8) tells us that if we say we don't sin we deceive ourselves. He's speaking here to the people of God. He's telling them, like the Apostle Paul does in Romans 6:1—that they can't just live any way they want.

Paul's also telling them that if they think they haven't ever sinned or don't sin now they are deceived. The reality of indwelling sin is real. This is why John gives us markers to know that we are saved in his epistle. Christians are those who love the truth, love other people, and demonstrate in word and deed that they love God. To use James' language, we should not only be hearers of the Word, we should be doers of the Word (James 1:22).

“Jesus cuts through our fears, dives headlong into the heart of our lives, and transforms our story.”

You and I can say all the right words till we are blue in the face. We can pledge allegiance to all the right ideas, but miss the point. There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. Are you in Christ right now? Have you been born again by the Spirit? Can others see even a tiny amount of change in your life? Do you notice even the tiniest sliver of God's transforming work of grace in your life? This is where the rubber meets the road. We can say the right words, or we can be honest. We can say, “Yes, my sin is offensive,” or we can say, “No, it's not”. When we open up and be honest with people about our struggles we open ourselves up to questions about our lives.

Earlier I shared my story of how I came out of an addiction to pornography. I was clearly convicted by the Holy Spirit for my sin. Over the course of two Sundays the Lord graciously convicted me of my pride and self-righteousness. He showed me the ugly horror of my sin. The more I grow in my own understanding of the Gospel, the more I grow in the application of the Gospel. The Gospel is the ground, means, and enablement the Holy Spirit uses to grow people in His Church.

Hope for Those Struggling with Self-Condernation

You might be reading this issue and seriously struggling with feelings of self-condernation. I want to plead with you right now that there is hope in Christ alone. Your feelings are not supreme, Jesus is. Jesus is greater than whatever you are feeling now. Christ alone justifies the ungodly. He takes enemies and makes them friends. He takes rebels and makes them servants of His grace.

You don't have to *feel* this to know it's true. Your feelings don't make it any more less real. Jesus is above our feelings. His standard isn't our feelings—it's Truth.

Jesus cuts through our fears, dives headlong into the heart of our lives, and transforms our story. He did it with me. He continues to change me from the inside out and gives me a continuing desire for holiness and more of a love for Jesus.

How are your affections doing today? It was an innocent question I asked to one of the people I counseled. He answered me, “To be honest, not well.” Just the other day I asked someone after they had shared a long story of how they were struggling in their walk with God, “When was the last time you spent private time with the Lord?” What I’m really asking here is a spiritual health question. I’m wanting to know how you are really doing, beyond just how your job is, and the whole list of things on your heart and mind. What you’ll share in that moment with me tells me a lot. It tells me if you are taking your cares to the Lord and resting in the Lord or whether you are anxious, struggling with doubt, or more.

Many of us lack practical peace with God because we don’t understand the objective peace of God. Jesus is the standard bearer of our lives. When we feel like beating ourselves up we are in essence saying Jesus isn’t enough for me at this moment, at this time, or perhaps ever. We question God’s goodness and make an assault on God’s character. Instead of trusting in the promises of God, we rely on our own strength. Instead of fearing the Lord, we fear what others will think if we tell them about our struggles.

The Gospel frees us to share openly and honestly with one another. It frees us to share about our troubles, our sins, and to find freedom and hope in Jesus.

When I think of Paul’s words in Romans 8:1, that there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, I think of the great hope of God in the Gospel. Jesus bled and died in my place and for my sin. There is no more condemnation when I feel condemned. Even in the midst of divine chastisement, there is hope in Jesus. God is shaping me, modeling me, and challenging me to be who I am now in Christ. God’s purposes are far and away greater than my own.

When you feel self-condemnation go to the Word. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate His Word to you. Regularly dive into the Word of God headlong, and begin devouring the feast that is prepared before you in His Word. Take time daily to pray. Don’t just say a few quick prayers. Linger long in prayer. Listen to worship music. Take time to stoke the fires of your new affections. The feelings of self-condemnation cannot stand a chance against your new affections being stirred afresh for the glory of God.

This is where we need to go—back to the Gospel. We need to return to our first love in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is hope for strugglers in Jesus name. There is hope and healing for those who feel self-condemned but only Jesus can provide it.

I urge you today to run to Jesus. Don’t just look at Him but know Him. Grow in Him. Don’t stay in spiritual infancy beating yourself up and wondering why God isn’t using you. He desires to do more than use you in the lives of others, He desires to remake you. He longs to do a remodel. He wants the image of God that has been marred

“This is where we need to go— back to the Gospel. We need to return to our first love in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

by sin to shine brightly before others that they might see and know the goodness and greatness of our God.

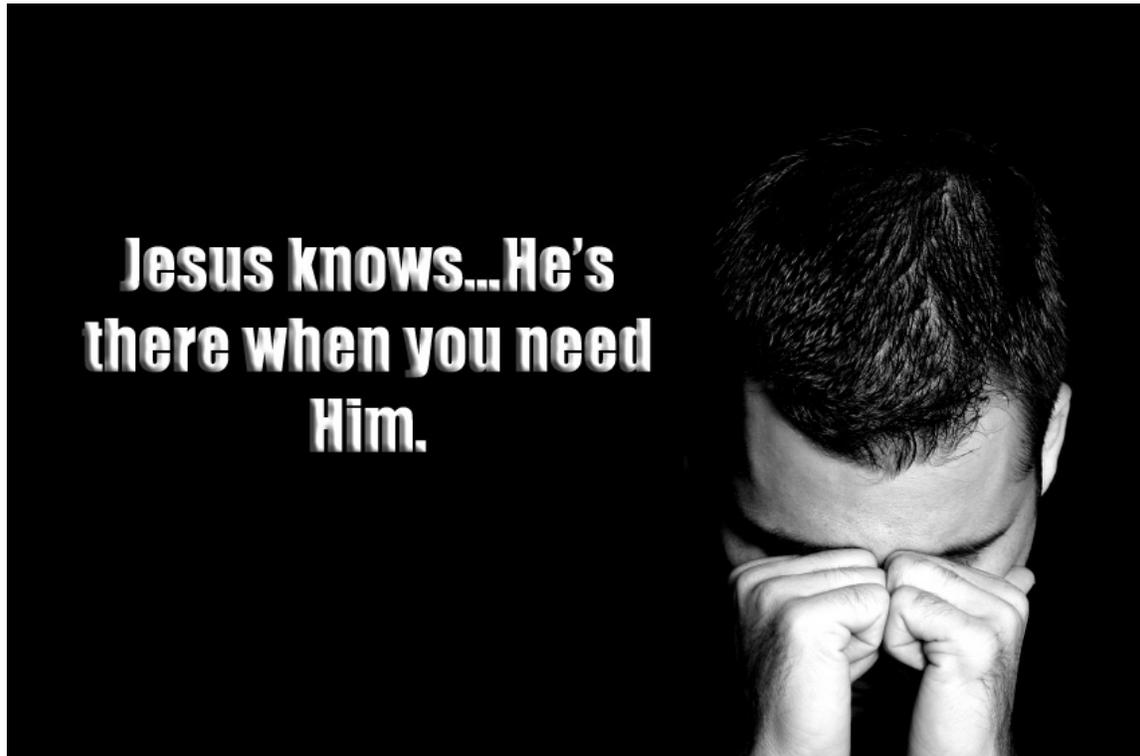
Some Final Thoughts...

The next time you feel self-condemned, plead guilty to it. There is hope and freedom in the Gospel. Find some good godly friends to share openly with about your struggles. Instead of beating yourself up, think about how Jesus took the punishment you deserve in your place and for your sin. Rehearse the Gospel to yourself. Stop repeating the same story about how much of a “loser” you are, how defeated you are, or how messed up you are. Instead, proclaim the triumph, victory, and exaltation of our great God and King—the Lord Jesus—who reigns in and overall.

Then you’ll begin to find as you do this that those feelings of self-condemnation will be replaced with new thoughts about Christ; about the glory that God called you into because of Christ. You’ll begin to think of how, now in Christ, you are approved by God to be a worker for Him, instead of defeated and a loser. Because of Christ, you are His friend and a servant. I don’t know about you, but at the end of the day, there’s hope and freedom there; not to mention it’s also the power of God in the Gospel.

Counseling Pornography Addicts

By David Dunham



Pornography is not usually about sex. Sexual addiction is often a symptom of a deeper heart issue, and while we must correct behaviors and habits, if we never get below the surface in our counseling we will not ultimately be helpful. To help a sex addict, we must understand what heart motivations drive them towards sexual sin.

It is, of course, never easy to get to the heart of someone's problem, to uncover their motivations. There's no formula, but good questions can help us unpack such motivations. We should ask questions about the nature of their sin: what do they do; what do they view; what do they desire? We should ask questions about the timing and loca-

tion of their sin: where are they most tempted; when are they most tempted; how do they spend their time? We should ask questions about life: what's going on in their life right now; how do they deal with stress; what do they most want out of life; how do they deal with disappointment? The more questions we ask the better our picture of their struggle will be, and the deeper we can get into understanding their heart motivations.

Rarely are the motives simply tied to sex. Sexual sin is related to so much more of our lives than simply biology. As you ask good questions, it is likely that you will begin to see various motives at work in the heart of your counselee. There are a number of important/common motivations that tempt people to give in to sexual sin. Exploring each of these common motives will help us to see the deeper issues at work in sexual addictions.

Some people turn to sexual sin because they are

bored. Perhaps their life is not as exciting as they want it to be, not as dramatic as they had hoped, and sexual sin, in particular, offers a tantalizing outlet for fun. This can be an especially important motivation for those who have struggled with pornography for years. They train their brain to default to lust when they have nothing else

“A bad day at work does not cause a man to lust. The two are not connected in that way.”

to occupy their mental activity. It's a default setting. Some people eat when they are bored, some lust. It's important to help people identify this trigger, and more important for them to see that they are not entitled to be entertained all the time. The idolatry of pleasure lies deep at the root of this tree. It is not their right to never be bored. Begin to help them unpack this, even as you offer them helpful strategies for dealing with their boredom in more God-honoring ways.

But this is not to suggest that there is no place for joy in our lives. Good counseling will help a person seek healthy joy, godly joy. Joy that comes from the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22). The Scriptures teach us that God invites His children into joy. The Psalmist declares, “In your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16:11). Jesus himself invites his disciples to take part in His joy (John 15:11; 17:13). True joy can be found in God alone. Good counsel will help sexual addicts find greater expressions and experiences of joy in Christ.

Other people turn to sexual sin because they are stressed. A bad day at work does not cause a man to lust. The two are not connected in that way. But sexual climax can provide a sense of relief from stress. In a healthy marriage sexual intimacy between a husband and wife can be a great way to unwind from a hard day. Sexual sin, however, is never healthy. For many a young man and many a woman life's pressures can be a driving force behind their abuse of sex. People use promiscuity and pornography as outlets for “de-stressing.” One young woman I counseled mentioned that after an especially hard week she would convince herself that she “deserved a little fun.” She saw it as a way to unwind and unload baggage. In one

sense pornography and masturbation can become a means of comfort for people. Only this comfort never truly achieves its intended purpose. Relaxation only comes for a brief moment. Sexual addicts need to see more clearly from where true comfort comes.

The Spirit of God is called our “comforter” in John 14:25-31. The Holy Spirit provides comfort for the stressed. He can give peace and rest. We can find relaxation in the confident assurance of God’s care and provision when we are willing to meditate upon it and seek it. Lust, masturbation, pornography, and promiscuity do not provide true comfort. Sexual sin doesn’t deal with the issues that are

“If I were to have talked to him only about sexual issues, about lust, we would never have gotten to this place where he began to see his real need was intimacy, not simply orgasm.”

causing stress, and sin only compounds our problems. Brad Hambrick has keenly noted:

If the motive of stress leads you to sexual sin, then examine whether your “comfort” is real or a form of relational self-medication (False Love, 35).

Self-medication never deals with problems; it only numbs us for a while to the frustration and pain we feel. We need to help people see the absurdity of this kind of escapism, and then help them address the issues that “stress them out.” We need to point them to greater comfort in God’s Holy Spirit.

For still others there is a desire for intimacy. My one friend’s biggest fear when dating was facing rejection. When he found those same fears realized in marriage, he turned to pornography. This may sound like it’s about sex, but my friend doesn’t see it that way. In fact, as we spent time working through his heart issues, he came to see his porn addiction as a type of self-medicating against his own loneliness. The more he indulged in this sin the less he thought about how his wife refused to sleep with him. If I were to have talked to him only about sexual issues, about lust, we would never have gotten to this place where he began to see his real need was intimacy, not simply orgasm. That breakthrough was huge for him, and though lust is certainly an issue (and one he continues to address) there has been greater success for him in fighting temptation as he has sought out a healthy relationship with his wife.

Of course we do not always find the level of intimacy we are seeking in other people. There are seasons of life where we do very much feel alone. Turning to God in those seasons for the comfort, care, support, and reassurance that we need is important. Pornography has become a friend in these circumstances, one to whom lonely men and women turn for comfort. The Scriptures tell us, however, that we have a true friend in Christ who loves us and proved it by dying for us (John 15:13). We can turn to Christ when we are experiencing loneliness, instead of turning to sexual sin.

Lastly, some are simply hungry for power and control. It would come as no surprise to many to hear that pornography is often about power. In fact, I have argued elsewhere that some porn is simply power eroticized. It’s not the sex, *per*

se, that arouses some men and women—it is the power associated with certain kinds of sexual acts. Many romanticize bondage and sadomasochism, as is evidenced by the recent *50 Shades of Grey* mania. But the fusion of hatred and sex should not merely be treated as an issue of sexual lust. There is a power-lust that needs addressing. The long-term damage that exposure and indulgence in this kind of sin can do is serious. All sexual sin views others as objects to be used for our own ends, not as people made in the image of God. But the kind of sexual sin that slaps others, chokes them, or ties them up has profound consequences for how individuals view others. To overlook the heart issues going on here, even if a person is successful in breaking their addictive habits, is to miss the real issues needing attention.

It's not that lust isn't part of the problem, of course it is. But sexual sin requires us to see a bigger picture if we are going to actually help others. Porn addiction in particular requires us to look past the computer screen and see what's really going on. Tim Chester is absolutely correct when he writes:

Porn is never simply a substitute for sex. Indeed, there's a real sense in which sex is the one thing porn doesn't offer – not real sex. Your wife may not act like a porn star, but then neither does the porn star – not in real life. Porn is not offering you a real experience of sex. It's offering a fantasy substitute for power or success or worship or reward. The problem doesn't lie with your wife, but in your heart (Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free, 39).

If we only offer counsel based on actual behaviors then we will fail to serve and disciple our people well. To be sure we must help them wrestle with their actions. They must stop looking at porn, stop sleeping around, and stop fantasizing about others. But, our counsel must promote more than just behavioral modification; we want heart transformation for them.

The heart change isn't our job. Only the Holy Spirit can do that. But we want to help expose the idols of the heart driving them to sexual sin, and then point them to the true promises of God that replace such idols. We want them not to run to porn for reward, but to God, the rewarder of those who seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Think of the woman at the well using sex to find satisfaction for her life, and Jesus comes to her and says, "I can offer you a drink that will quench your thirst forever" (John 4). That's the kind of transformation we want to set our people up to experience. We want people to run, not to a one-night stand for relief, but to God. Promiscuity can't give you refuge, but "the Lord is my rock, my fortresses, and my deliverer," cries the Psalmist (see Psalm 18:1-3). The promises of God address the real heart issues that can help people overcome sexual sin, but if we don't look past their behaviors we won't be able to help them.

There are, of course, many other components to long-term counseling of sex addicts. Simply telling them to look to Jesus will not be enough. They need help seeing Jesus more clearly, seeing themselves more clearly, and developing new habits. We must help them put up barriers to sin, involve themselves in serving others (as

opposed to using others), and help them to manage their emotions, stressors, and triggers in godly ways. Yet, if we do all this, but fail to help them address the specific heart motivations driving them towards sin, we will not help them truly change.

As you counsel people, ask questions that get to the heart of the issue. Don't just address their symptoms, but probe into the driving force behind their behaviors. We can fight sexual sin in our churches and alongside our people, but only if we stop looking simply at their sex. **Sometimes sexual sin isn't about sex!**

The Fight for Human Dignity: Pornography, Sex-Trafficking, and the Hope of the Gospel

By Dave Jenkins



Few issues in recent days have seen as little coverage as sex-trafficking. While there is lots of good work being done in this area of ministry, my goal in this article is to articulate a biblical view of mankind with the goal of pointing us towards the Gospel.

Biblical View of Mankind

God created mankind to dwell in perfect harmony with the Lord. Adam lived in the Garden with uninterrupted and unhurried time to lift up the Lord, to take dominion over the earth, and to enjoy his wife, Eve (Genesis 1-2). Then sin came into the world. Adam was told not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and yet he did so. Through Adam's sin, mankind now has a sinful nature and are sinners by choice.

Unlike what modern psychology teaches, mankind is not improving, they are only sinning more.

Man, instead of choosing to obey God, is bound in slavery to the shackles of his sin. Through the Fall, man—while making many advances in the last century—is still a sinner by nature and by choice. Mankind chooses to rebel against God and to use the gift of technology in inappropriate and ungodly ways.

Man invented the printing press to spread the glories of the Gospel. Now the printing press is used as a tool of secular media and Satan to spread humanism, false religion, and every ill the world now knows. Man created TV and now uses it to watch dirty videos. Man created movie theaters, and they are now used as a tool for Satan. Man created electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, and now even this technology is used for Satan. All of this can lead to despair. We may wonder,

“Can there be anything done about the sin of mankind?” Yes, there can, but only in the strength that the Holy Spirit provides to God’s people.

God created man in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Theologians call this the *imago Dei*. Man was created in the image of God for the explicit purpose of knowing and enjoying Him. The Westminster Shorter Catechism, in Question One, Answer One, says that God created man to glorify Him and enjoy forever.

The Fight against Pornography and Sex-trafficking is One for Human Dignity

The fight against pornography and sex-trafficking is first and foremost an issue of human dignity. Do humans deserve to be worshiped, or is God alone worthy of worship and adoration? When a man chooses to rebel against God, Romans 1 clearly teaches that man will worship what is created rather than the Creator.

You and I live in an overly sexualized world where people feel they can do whatever they want. We live in a feelings based culture. When the objective truth of God’s Word is denied and tossed aside there is only one basis for truth and knowledge, and that is man’s opinion. Our man-centered culture tells us to focus on how we feel and tells us what we can do to improve.

“While our culture says to the woman who’s had an abortion that her “rights are all that matter”, the guilt and shame still linger.”

How can a “feel good” culture help people who are struggling with pornography? What hope does a “feel good” culture have to offer to the mother of a child whose child was just taken away and sold into sex-trafficking?

While our culture says to the woman who’s had an abortion that her “rights are all that matter”, the guilt and shame still linger. To the mother whose child was just taken, our culture says, we will do our best to find your child, even though they may never do that. To the feel good culture of our day, our culture says pornography is acceptable, even permissible. “Feel good about yourself and do whatever you want...” is the message our culture loudly proclaims. For example, it’s often thought that there’s nothing wrong with pleasuring yourself even if you’re married—just go ahead and do it. The truth is that our culture offers much, but at the end of the day doesn’t promote anything other than a false gospel which provides no hope for sinners or for broken families.

The Problem of Sex-Trafficking and the Relation to Porn

Sex-trafficking is a very real problem in our day. Often times, children are abducted, taken away from their families. In countries all over the world, including the United States, children are stolen away from their families and sold into bondage. People today don’t realize this, but even in the United States sex slavery is very real and active.

Over the past few years especially I've become burdened on the issue of sex-trafficking. I've witnessed several friends engage in the good work of rescuing children affected by sex-trafficking. When they come back home to the U.S., they tell me their stories—and, wow, it's so powerful. It's amazing to see how God is rescuing precious children, and even whole families from the sex-trafficking industry.

Let's say you go to a porn website—no, I'm not advocating you go to one, just using an example—and you view the content, and then you feel guilty, as you should. Your conscience is telling you that going to that website is wrong. You are being convicted of your sin by the Holy Spirit. But you've become excited by what you saw, so you go back later. What you need to understand next is that you are on the fast track towards addiction. By looking at that pornography website, **you are supporting the slavery of men and women, boys, and girls into the bondage of sex slavery.**

Now, imagine yourself in a locked room. In that room, you are chained to the wall. You don't have the key, so you can't escape the chains that hold you fast. You can't even move. Day in and day out you are chained there, with no end in sight. You don't have a window in this room to see anything out of it. You are overwhelmed by hopelessness. The reality is that many people around the world live in such

“Instead of the chains being broken, and those people walking in newness of life, many would rather live enslaved to pornography.”

rooms, both physically and spiritually. Spiritually people today live in rooms like this all the time. This is why they are in bondage to sin. Instead of the chains being broken and those people walking in newness of life, many would rather live enslaved to pornography. While many young children live in sex slavery, these people support the sex slavery industry through the pornography industry. The really are one and the same. The porn industry feeds into the sex-trafficking industry. Both industries make billions of dollars each year.

The fight for human dignity in our world is very real. It's a matter that I believe God takes very seriously. He created us in His image and likeness to reflect His glory to the world. The image of God in man, since the Fall, has been marred by sin. Man is a sinner by nature and choice. Pornography and sex-trafficking are ultimately assaults on the glory of God. God created man to know Him, man rebelled, and thus needed a Savior to die in his place and for his sin. This Savior is Jesus, and He bled and died in the place of sinners. What was once seemingly unthinkable is now possible because of Christ. Christ redeems men—He takes them from the room of bondage and transfers them into the glory of the light. Mankind can only be freed from the slavery of sin by knowing Jesus the Master who frees men from slavery through His death, burial, and resurrection.

We live in a dark world. People today, if they were to understand how dark and evil our world is, would fall into despair very easily. Many people who understand how dark and evil our world is have fallen into despair, discouragement, and depression.

It's a sad place out there, with people hurting others, murdering people, and taking them captive for their own pleasure. This is ultimately what pornography does, it takes and takes, and takes. Sex-trafficking does the same, it takes, it takes, and it takes until at last there is nothing to take from this person and they take from another. The process continues on. We live in a consumer culture and this is multiplied a thousand times over in the sex-trafficking and pornography worlds.

The Gospel is the Cure

The Gospel is good news in the midst of a feel good consumeristic culture. While people today want everything immediately, God often calls His people to wait. He doesn't promise a bed of roses. Instead, He says that in this world there will be tribulation (John 16:33).

Those working in the areas of sex-trafficking and helping pornography addicts come out of an addiction know this well. The war that wages for the souls of mankind is very real. Paul talked about this in Ephesians 6:11-18. We are to gird ourselves up for battle as soldiers and to take our own sin seriously. While we are saved from sin and to Jesus, we are to still actively put our own sin to death before we minister to others. We are not to live how we want as Christians. Instead, we are to point others to the One who brings true satisfaction and pleasures forevermore.

As a child, I loved going to the ocean. My family and I would go to the beach in Oregon and enjoy our time there. My brothers and I would race go-carts and they had this bikes called banana bikes you could ride on the beach. I loved going to the beach. As a teenager, I fell in love quickly with golf for much the same reason as I loved going to the beach. I loved being outside, spending time in God's creation. I also loved the athleticism of golf. While I haven't been back to the beach for a long time now, I continue to play golf. I love going and playing golf with my friends. During my high school years, golf was an idol for me. I spend all my time, effort, and ability on getting better. I thought I could go professional. My identity, worth, and value were wrapped up in my ability to play a good round at tournaments. Sadly I often failed. Golf was a poor idol. My own worst enemy wasn't golf, it was Dave Jenkins.

"My own worst enemy wasn't golf, it was
Dave Jenkins."

You see, while I pursued pleasure for pleasure's sake, God desires that His people seek pleasures forevermore in Him. Instead of living in a slavery like the imaginary room I mentioned earlier, God has unshackled His people. They are no longer slaves and servants to Satan and his minions. Instead, God's people have been freed by the King to proclaim the acceptable time and season of the Lord in the Gospel. God is for freedom. He is for taking captives and turning their lives around, inside out and using them in a powerful way.

Perhaps today you are a captive. You never saw yourself enslaved and ensnared by sin. Perhaps you even support an addiction to pornography by viewing it on one of your devices. Perhaps you are a producer of pornography. Or perhaps you are a sex-

trafficking victim or a trafficker of children yourself.

Wherever you are today there is hope and freedom for you. Like you, I'm my own worst enemy—I deserve hell and damnation but God says otherwise. Instead of enslavement and domination, Jesus desires to set the captives free. He longs to redeem those who are stuck in the muck and mire of sin, like the Prodigal Son who gave away his inheritance only to find out that his true riches were his family. As Christians, we have a true family, and we have a Heavenly Father who loves us.

Final Thoughts...

Today I want to close by urging you in three ways to get involved in the sex-trafficking industry. First, pray for those enslaved to pornography and engaged in the sex-trafficking industry. We have a High Priest in Jesus who in every way understands what we are going through. Yet, He is also unlike us in that He never sinned. As Christians, we can come boldly before the throne of God's grace. Let's get serious about praying for those enslaved in the pornography and sex-trafficking industries. Let's pray for those engaging in producing pornography and in trafficking people that they will lose their taste for this work. Let's pray the Holy Spirit will open their eyes to the glory of Jesus. Let's pray that Jesus puts people in their path to share Christ with them.

Second, get involved and speak up. Now that we've talked about the issue of human dignity and sex-trafficking in this issue, you have an obligation to speak up. It's not enough to learn about this issue and be silent. Instead, I pray that the Spirit would bring conviction to your heart and convince you that you need to speak on this issue. Don't just read this issue and then put it down. Instead, as you finish this issue find other good resources like from Tiny Hands International among others and learn more about it so you can raise your voice against the injustice of pornography.

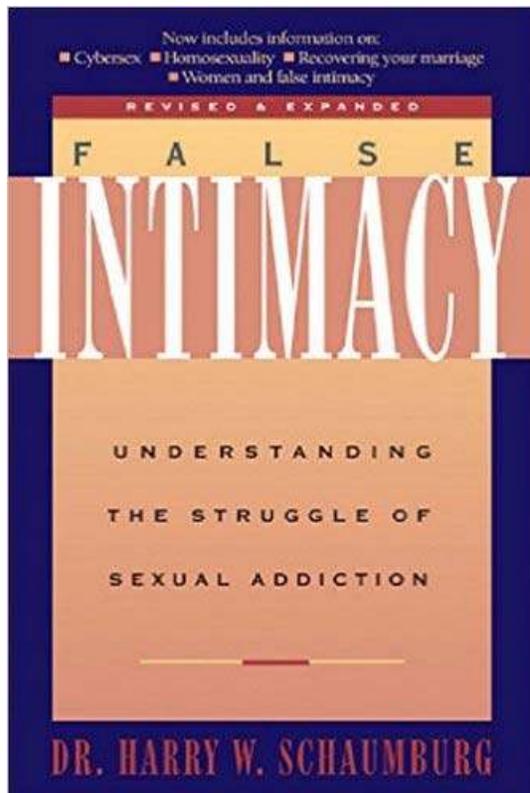
Third, faithfully proclaim the Gospel. As Christians, we've been saved from sin and to Jesus. We have been given the mandate to fulfill from our Commander and Lord Jesus Christ in the Great Commission. While there is much work to be done, we must preach the Gospel first and foremost, and keep the main thing the main thing. We must plead with sinners about the glories of Christ. We must call Christ followers to be laborers in the harvest field.

Let's you and me as God's people commit to preaching the Gospel. Let's commit afresh to the work of discipleship and the work of the local church. The fight we face is against a real, but vanquished, foe in Satan. Let's proclaim the Kingship of Jesus and rejoice as God opens eyes, calls people to Himself, and uses them in powerful ways, all for the glory of His name.

A Book Review:

False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction

By David Dunham



As a counselor, I probably speak with more men about pornography and sexual addiction than I do any other subject. Porn addiction has become an epidemic in the church, and helping guys fight for sexual purity has become almost a full-time job. As a result, I am always on the lookout for more helpful resources. Several works I've read referenced this book and after picking it up I can appreciate why. [False Intimacy: Understanding the Struggle of Sexual Addiction](#) is a fantastic resource. Where many books tend to focus either on the science and addiction components, or on the Biblical teaching on sexuality, Schaumburg combines both. This work is unique in its belief in the reality of sexual addictions and its use of Biblical/theological categories.

Dr. Harry Schaumburg is a counselor particularly focusing in the area of sexual addiction and misconduct. He's also a trained theologian, with a doctorate from New York Theological Seminary. In this [volume](#), he walks readers through a rather extensive amount of material to help them understand the nature and causes of sexual addiction, as well as recovery

from it. The book's eleven chapters and three appendices give a great depth of insight into this study.

The first three chapters introduce foundational issues: the nature of sexual addiction (dealing with definitions and internal/external dynamics), sexually addictive behaviors, and causes of sexual addiction. Here readers are given some insight into the

advanced counseling discussions. Schaumburg writes for the lay reader, the work is intended to be engaging and accessible, and he achieves that goal. His discussions about the internal logic, so to speak, of the addicts mind is very helpful, as is his discussion of rationalizations and justifications that they use to excuse and justify their sin. And sin is the word that recurs throughout the book.

Despite being an addictions counselor, Schaumburg does not shy away from using theological language. In fact, he distinguishes between two models of causation: the medical disease model and the Biblical model. He opts for the latter and makes a compelling case for it. His compassion for the addict exudes from the pages of the work, yet such compassion does not lead him to remove moral culpability and spiritual implications from the equation. In this regard, Schaumburg offers a unique [book](#).

In chapters 4-6, he begins to redirect readers towards the process of recovery. It begins with communicating hope, counseling the spouse of an addict, and establishing some guidance for restoring a marriage broken by porn. His use of both case studies and examples, along with Scriptural exegesis give lots of hope to readers. In fact, his chapter on hope was laced with more Biblical references than any other chapter in the book. Despite his expertise in this field, Schaumburg is convinced that a great deal of help and hope for recovery comes from repentance, dependence upon the Spirit, and the motivating power of the Word of God. That's not to suggest that he doesn't have a litany of practical advice, but it comes after an understanding of our need for God.

The remaining chapters in the [book](#) cover more nuanced issues: women and sexual sin; sexual addiction and children, and healing for church leaders. Here Schaumburg's expertise shines through. He guides readers through a host of less frequently discussed issues and helps them to wrestle with the specific unique features of each. No doubt it will be a reference resource for me for in the future as I run across more unique cases of sexual addiction.

I greatly appreciated this book. Some books have seemed to completely ignore the element of sexual addiction; while others have so inflated it as to make it the only point worth discussing. Schaumburg maintains a strong balance. He is more than willing to discuss the nature of addiction and the complicated factors associated with it, but he does not shy away from the Biblical content that informs all our understanding of sin. *[False Intimacy](#)* is the kind of book every counselor needs to have on their shelf, even if only for reference. I highly commend *False Intimacy* to all readers—whether spouses of addicts, addicts, or counselors. It is work worthy of your time.

Pursuing a Vision of Biblical Purity for Manhood and Womanhood

By Dave Jenkins

Over the past five years (or more) now, I've been reading and writing a lot on the topic of biblical manhood, pornography, and purity.

During the course of that time, I've noticed a disturbing trend. Often times the conversation is about how men can overcome an addiction to pornography. Resources are needed to help men and women overcome pornography and you won't ever hear me say otherwise. The main problem is that the impression I get from these resources, and the message they send, is in emphasis. The emphasis is clearly on overcoming an addiction to pornography. What happens after one has overcome an addiction to pornography? Are they to be in the local

church? How can they continue to grow and continue to fight sin? What kind of man or woman are they to become? While I often ask myself the other questions it is, in particular, the last question, "What kind of man or woman are they to become?" that I am most concerned about when it comes to the purity movement as a whole.

That last statement needs a little clarification and qualification. There are great ministries out there doing excellent work in the area of biblical manhood and womanhood. You won't hear me say otherwise. These ministries are emphasizing that men and women are equal, in dignity and worth, but distinct in role and function. They understand well what the Bible teaches. My concern though is that there is so little written from the specific angle of fighting pornography and the goal of becoming a biblical man in the case of men and in the case of women, a biblical woman that the impression can become—great, I'm struggling with pornography, but wonder in the back of their minds, **"What kind of person should I be becoming?"**

In this article, I want to lay out what kind of person I believe men and women should become. Biblical manhood and womanhood is first about God. God is the One who created man in His image and likeness. He then took from man's rib and made Eve to be a helper to man. Man is to lead in the home and in the church. Women are to



have a significant ministry to other women, specifically older women instructing younger women (Titus 3:3-5). Women can also serve as deaconesses, writers, counselors (to other women), and a great help and support to their husbands as they preach and teach (if their husband is a pastor or an elder).

The proper way to view these roles especially in relation to women is through the prism of servanthood. Every single Christian is a servant of God's grace. Every single Christian has God-given gifts, abilities, and talents. God is not saying, "I gave you this gift, now you can't use it..." rather He is saying, "I gave you this specific gift to function this specific way, as I've designed within my Church, just as I created you." The question is not whether women can serve but rather why shouldn't they, since every Chris-

"We've just seen recently in the news that President Obama has decreed that all public schools must allow those who believe they are transgender to be able to go into whatever bathroom they want."

tian is to serve. Yet, many men and many women are failing to adhere to the vision that God has ordained for their respective gender. We see this especially today in the current discussion on homosexuality and transgenderism.

We've just seen recently in the news that President Obama has decreed that all public schools must allow those who believe they are transgender to be able to go into whatever bathroom they want. This means that a teenage boy, if he thinks he is transgender, can go in and take a shower in the women's bathroom—with teenage girls present! And vice versa with teenage girls. The level is confusion on sexuality is *not improving* at all, and this is only the start.

Pornography and the Objectivity of the Opposite Sex

Pornography trains the mind to view the opposite sex as an object of pleasure. Instead of sexual pleasure being enjoyed within the confines of covenant marriage, between one man and one woman, those addicted to pornography lust after the opposite sex outside of God's established boundaries. Biblical sexuality is concerned that men function as men and women function as women, as God has decreed in His Word.

Instead, our culture trains men to be superheroes. They view women as a conquest to conquer over and then move on to the next woman. "Say," our culture says, "if you don't like your wife, there's this thing called no-fault divorce. Sure you can get a divorce. It might hurt your pocketbook, but you can do that. There's no consequence for divorce." We live in a culture of mass confusion when it comes not only to marriage, but also to biblical sexuality in general.

Biblical Gender Roles and Pursuing Purity

Biblical gender roles are applicable to the discussion on pornography and purity because they help us make sense of how God views each specific gender. As men,

we are to be the pastor-theologians in our homes. Men are commanded to love our wives (Ephesians 5:33). As Christians, we are to hate our sin and turn from it to Jesus. This goes for whether you are a man or a woman and profess faith in the Lord Jesus.

Part of your God-given identity is to take hold of the newness of your new life in Christ. This new life entails the idea that while you are a sinner by nature and by choice, Christ has transferred you from the Kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:13). You are wholly His, and He is yours. You have union with Christ for the purpose of communion with Christ.

By understanding biblical gender roles, we come to understand the aim of our fight against pornography. We are not just men and women struggling against a particular sin. Instead men and women are created in the image of God. Through Christ, we are new creations in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). He is making all things new in our lives. As we turn from our sin to Jesus, the nature of God in us that was marred by the Fall is being restored increasingly through the present ministry of the Holy Spirit. As He puts a spotlight on our sin and convicts us of sin, He also points us to the finished work of Jesus, and then empowers us to go out on mission to make disciples, for His glory.

Many men and women today are failing at their God-given assignment. Instead of being biblical men, many men even in the Church (I was one of them when I was addicted to pornography) are apathetic to their God-given responsibilities. I'm convinced, in my ministry to men, that pride and apathy are killing us. Men need role models like what Paul outlines in his pastoral epistles, men who take seriously their own walk in godliness and come alongside other men as Paul instructed us to do (Titus 2:6-8).

“Both men and women have abdicated their responsibilities as outlined in the Scriptures.”

Likewise, many women now are struggling with pornography. Whether it's with illicit images, videos, or romance books that take women into a fantasy world where they can depart for a few hours or minutes, women are struggling with this issue. God created woman to be a helper to her husband. Both men and women have abdicated their responsibilities as outlined in the Scriptures. So what do we do?

Six Ways Local Church and Proclaim Biblical Manhood and Womanhood

First, local churches should commit to preaching series somewhat regularly on biblical manhood and womanhood issues. Local churches should have specific groups for guys and one for ladies. Both groups need small groups where they can study the Word and share together with each other, with a view to caring for and pray with one another. Such groups should be led by men, but where women participate and contribute to the discussion.

Second, men's and women's ministries should be designed to help men become biblical men and women to become biblical people. Men need specific instruction on

how to become men of God in private, in the home, in the church, and in society. Women need to understand how to respect their husband, how to deal with the stress of motherhood (if they have children) while ministering to others (if they work outside the home), and if they don't work outside the home how to care for their husband, children (if they have them), and how to be a good church member. This is not an exhaustive list of the responsibilities of men or women. There is much ground for men's and women's ministries to cover, but it is all covered in the Word of God. So my encouragement if you are in a men's ministry is this: guys, teach the Word to the men and proclaim the Gospel. Women, if you are in a women's ministry let me encourage you: ladies, teach the Word and proclaim the Gospel to the each other!

"The fight for purity, whether it is against sex-trafficking or against pornography, is a real fight."

Third, men and women should not be shamed when they come out of sexual sin. Instead, the local church should come alongside them and minister to them. People who struggle with sexual sin often feel a debilitating sense of guilt and shame. When someone opens up about their struggle with porn, they need first a big hug, prayer, and a whole heap of God's grace. They need lots of room for people to listen and to care for them. They also need help.

If someone comes to you and admits to struggling with sex sin, listen to them, pray for them, love them with the love of Jesus, and speak the truth in love. Help them find the help they need and be an accountability partner to them.

Fourth, the Church needs more resources and voices on this topic. This issue of *Theology for Life* has aimed to cover a lot of ground. To be fair even this article alone could take up an entire issue on its own. With that said, we desperately need more people writing and speaking on this topic. If you don't know where to start please, don't hesitate to contact me. I would love to help you get started writing and speaking on this topic.

Fifth, the fight for purity is a fight for a vision of biblical manhood and womanhood. As I've tried to make clear in this article—our world is confused about biblical gender roles. God has established these roles for the good of civilization. When civilization fights against these roles, they are ultimately fighting against God's design for the sexes. The fight for purity, whether it is against sex-trafficking or against pornography, is a real fight. It is ultimately a fight not against flesh and blood, against real people who are living and working in these industries, but for the Gospel. Men and women are captivated by their sin. The only hope and cure for the pornography and sex-trafficking industry is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Church must proclaim a biblical vision of manhood and womanhood and continue to do so.

Lastly, the fight for purity is a fight for a vision of God's glory. The glory of God is impugned when men and women look at pornography of any kind or type. When either gender supports the trafficking of men and women created in the image of God,

they have sinned against their Creator. Men and women were created by God to reflect His image. They are sinners by nature and by choice. The good news is that while an enemy of God, they don't have to stay that way. Instead, they can become friends of God through the death, burial, and resurrection of King Jesus. Instead of assaulting the glory of God, men and women can know God, enjoy Him, glorify Him, and live within the God-ordained role and function that He has designed.

Final Thoughts...

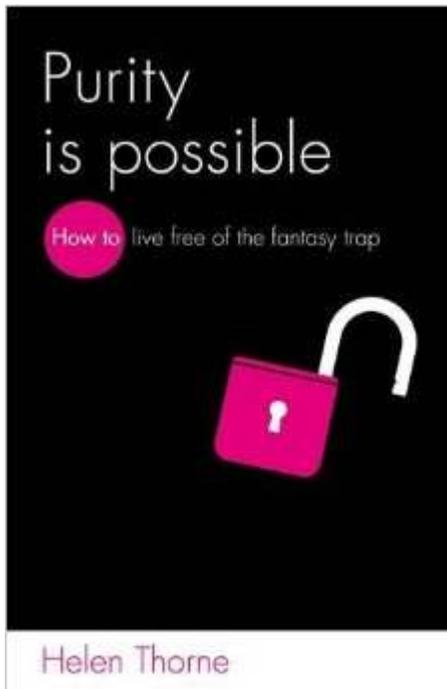
The more men and women understand of the Gospel, the more they will desire to become men and women of God. The more this happens, the more Christians will desire to become like Jesus. He is the ultimate example of biblical manhood. He called the religious leaders out, yet cared for the broken. He taught men and women, and yet He didn't excuse their sin. He healed the sick, mended the broken-hearted, and taught His disciples. Jesus is unlike us, however; He is utterly sinless and we are sinners. Jesus has to die in our place and for our sin and rise again. You and I need Jesus. We need the bread of life that He provides. We need the living water that He promises. You can know Jesus today by believing that He is who He says He is, and did what He said He did in His death, burial, and resurrection (Acts 16:31).

If today you are a Christian struggling with pornography there is hope in Jesus. He is still waiting for you like the prodigal son's father in Luke 15. He is the Father you need and the Father who loves to lift up the struggling out of the pit of despair. He took upon Himself all your sin and shame, and died in your place for it. Turn to Jesus, look at His loveliness and be captivated once again by the grandeur of His grace.

A Book Review:

Purity is Possible: How to Live Free of the Fantasy Trap

By Michael Boling



The issue of purity, especially when it comes to matters of a sexual nature, is not just a problem for men. Women also face the pernicious allure of sexual impurity and the draw of fantasy, whether that is through mental images parading across their thought life, or the plethora of sexualized material available in print and video. With that said, women can become victorious over sexual impurity through the power of Christ. Helen Thorne, in her book *Purity is Possible: How to Live Free of the Fantasy Trap*, provides the reader with valuable insight, tools, and a biblically based approach to uprooting improper sexual issues within their lives.

At the outset of this helpful book, Thorne states, “Gone are the days when films were just made by men for men. There are now alternatives to the seedy scenarios where blondes swoon at the first glimpse of the photocopier repair-man and give in to his every whim. Now female directors are producing short pieces that are specifically designed to arouse pleasure in women. The material is sensi-

tive, sensual...appealing.” Furthermore, this material is available seemingly everywhere. Long gone are the days when perversion was only available in an adult bookstore. Now such vile trash can be obtained and viewed with the touch of a finger on a smart phone.

Of additional concern is the transformation of what beauty means. Thorne aptly notes that true beauty is not the kind promoted by *Cosmo Magazine*. Conversely, “[women] were made for the kind of beauty that starts in the

heart and overflows into every part of our being. It's a beauty that is utterly captivating, precious beyond measure, and deep; so deep that it's foundational to everything we say and do." Such beauty only comes by understanding that women were made in the image of God.

Moreover, God's design for proper relationships is not to be found in the pages of *Cosmo* or the seduction of that cable repair guy who is ringing the doorbell on that video, for reasons far removed from fixing the reception. God's design for proper relationships is explained by Thorne as being rooted in biblical beauty, namely a daily dose of Jesus, "loving him, knowing we're loved by him, and seeking to live his way." Taking that approach, according to Thorne, postures women to understand true beauty and by extension, positions them to engage in God glorifying relationships.

Throughout this book, Thorne addresses a number of key issues from dealing with fantasy, guilt, liberty, and intimacy. While the entire book is quite excellent and will most certainly help the reader understand and deal with sexual issues in their life, one particular chapter was a standout for me: specifically Thorne's discussion of liberty. Given this is a book focused on that very subject, a biblically-based outline of how victory over sexual issues can be obtained is vitally important. To that end, Thorne is quite successful. She appropriately comments that victory is first understood as taking place when one grasps that we are a new creation. Our identity is found in Christ and not the pages of "smut" or perverted fantasy. I appreciated her declaration that, "Putting on our new self means letting the priorities that God has put in our heart start to ooze out of our being." When we invest in others by loving God and loving others, there remains little room for "the self-centered fake world we had indulged in."

One may ask why a man, such as myself, chose to read a book concerning sexual issues for women. As a husband and a father, I feel it is vital to understand what my wife and daughter are dealing with, to be able to grasp how matters of sexuality impact their lives. Having a better understanding of such issues as a husband and a father will in turn enable me to better serve my family. I highly recommend this book first and foremost for women, but also for men, in particular husbands (and fathers) to read.

A Parent's Role for Purity in the Home

An Interview with Luke Gilkerson

By Dave Jenkins



Luke Gilkerson and his wife Trisha are the primary authors of IntoxicatedOnLife.com. Luke recently worked as the Educational Resource Manager at [Covenant Eyes](http://CovenantEyes.com), a company dedicated to protecting eyes and minds from harmful sexual content online. Luke has a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Religion from Reformed Theological Seminary. He is the author of several family Bible studies, including [The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality](http://TheTalk.com).

T4L: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with *Theology for Life Magazine*, Luke. Can you please tell us a bit about yourself and the current ministries you are involved in?

Luke Gilkerson: My wife and I primarily write books for Christian parents—and one of the most important areas we write about is sex education. On our blog, intoxicatedonlife.com, we dialogue with moms and dads every week about this and many other parenting subjects. We are always aiming address things from both a biblical and research-oriented perspective.

T4L: So, what areas of opportunity do you see in the current purity movement?

Luke Gilkerson: I assume "areas of opportunity" is a nice way of saying "ways in which the purity movement has done a bad job in the past and has room to improve."

While the word "purity" is a biblical word—and thus a perfectly acceptable word to use—defining a whole movement around the term certain weaknesses. "Purity" stresses the *absence* of something—the absence of some kind of *impurity*, separation from something that taints us. This represents only part of the biblical narrative of what holiness is and only part of Christian sexual ethics.

I would much prefer our conversations about sex to major on positive terms, stressing both the *goodness* of sex and the *power* of sex. In our modern, ethically liberal culture, only the *goodness* of sex is stressed, but its power is downplayed—sex is good anytime, anywhere, with anyone, but its power to unite and bond two people together (and create life) is largely ignored.

In more traditional, conservative circles, the *power* of sex is stressed while its goodness is downplayed—sex is treated like a nuclear reactor that needs to be kept in an airtight steel cage. But when we stress *both* its goodness and power, we can present a well-rounded and biblical sexual ethic to the next generation. We can tell children and teens, "The reason God places limits on the whos and whens of our sexuality is because it is so good and so powerful."

T4L: What role should parents take in protecting their children from pornography?

Luke Gilkerson: A parent's role cannot be understated. Parents are the gatekeepers of the home, and one of the big gateways is digital media of all types. More than 9 out of 10 boys and 6 out of 10 girls see porn before their 18th birthday. Porn is no longer the exception. It is norm.

Parents should do everything they can to limit exposure to pornography. This includes, at a minimum, good Internet filtering technology and parental controls, but should also include good monitoring and accountability services. Parents should know the websites and apps their children use so they can catch small problems before they become big ones. Parents should always operate with this rule: *we will not allow in the home what we do not monitor.*

T4L: So, how can parents teach their kids about the dangers of pornography and promote purity?

Luke Gilkerson: Parents should have open and honest dialogue with their kids about sexuality and pornography. This can start even from a young age. Parents often have the mistaken idea that talking about sexual topics will rob their children of their "innocence." Parents should understand, however, innocence is a function of *attitude*, not *information*.

When children are young and (hopefully) have not yet seen pornography, simply draw correlations to things your kids have seen—the billboard along the highway, the magazine cover at the grocery story, the big displays in windows at the mall. Tell your children, "There are a lot of images like this out in the world—some of them even worse than these, showing off even more of a person's private parts."

"It takes sex, something God invented, and rips it away from where it is supposed to be—away from a husband and wife."

Tell children there are three major problems with porn: (1) Pornography offends God; (2) Pornography hurts the people in it; (3) Pornography hurts the people who watch it.

First, tell your child the primary problem with pornography is that it offends God. It takes sex, something God invented, and it rips it away from where it is supposed to be—away from a husband and wife. It presents sex as something to be shared with anyone and everyone—not an act of love between married people. This makes God very sad to see people misusing his good gift this way.

Second, pornography hurts the people who are in it. Tell your child, the people who are in these photos and videos are people made in God's image, and yet they are being treated like objects that can be bought and sold. The making of pornography involves real people, and these people are often treated very badly in the making of pornography.

Third, pornography hurts the people who watch it. It can be very addictive. It hurts our hearts and minds, which hurts the way we see others and the way we relate to other.

Of course, there's a lot more that can be said about these topics, and as a child gets older, you can go deeper and deeper with these lessons, drawing more and more personal applications and tying in relevant Scriptures.

T4L: So, as someone who is actively engaged in the purity movement, how can pastors and ministry leaders minister to those facing an addiction or coming out of an addiction to pornography?

Luke Gilkerson: Whole books have been written on this. In fact, if you want a lengthier treatise on this, I wrote a mini-book for Covenant Eyes called [*Fight Porn in Your Church: What Works and Why It Matters*](#). You can download it for free from their website.

A lot of this boils down to two essentials: *safe place, safe process*. Some churches have only one or the other. Other churches have neither. Few have both. Churches that have safe *processes* that leads addicts and their families through recovery—but they aren't safe places to confess sins—will have a small porn recovery group filled only with men who "got caught" and now have everything to lose. No one else will come for help. Churches that are safe *places* to confess—but lack safe processes—will see many people at their altar calls and counseling offices, but no one will get the quality of help and community support they need.

T4L: And how do you think Pastors and ministry leader's ministers equip parents to help their kids face the dangers of pornography and promote biblical purity within homes of their congregants?

Luke Gilkerson: The best thing you can do is pass along as many "scripts" for parents as possible. Most parents don't want to "think on their feet" when it comes to talking about sex or porn. Most parents don't know how to open up the Bible and use it to help them break the ice on these subjects. So pass along great pre-written scripts for parents to use, especially things they can use for family devotionals at home.

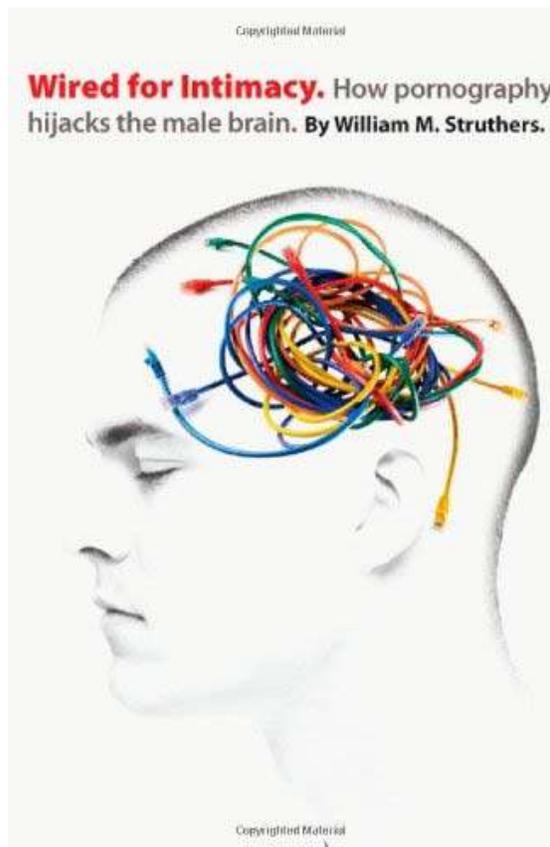
Pastors can write these themselves, or there are some excellent ones out there on the market already. When I wrote by book, [*The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality*](#), my hope was that it was something pastors could give to the parents in their churches to spark these kinds of discussions. That's just one example, of course, but I'm honored to see it helping so many parents.

T4L: Once again, thank-you so much for taking the time to let us interview you, Luke!

A Book Review:

Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain

By Dave Jenkins



Pornography has very quickly become a popular conversation among Christians. Pornography is a rising problem not only in our churches but also in our culture. Pornography disrupts how men interact with women. Countless Christian men (and an increasing number of women) struggle with the addictive power of porn. And all too often our responses, such as prayer and accountability groups are of limited help. In his new book, *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*, neuroscientist, researcher and Christian, Dr. William Struthers writes to explain how pornography affects the male brain and what we can do about it. In his book, Dr. Struthers convincingly demonstrates how viewing pornography changes how the brain works by showing how we form our memories and make attachments. **By better understanding the biological realities of our sexual development, we can cultivate healthier and biblical perspectives about sex and interpersonal relationships.** In this book, the

author exposes false assumptions about pornography and casts a vision for a re-

deemed masculinity, showing how our sexual longings can actually propel us toward growing in our sanctification. This book offers real help for men who struggle with porn in that it points them to the hope and freedom of the Gospel.

Since I've read a lot of books and written several articles on pornography over the years, and having overcome an addiction to pornography, I always find books on this topic fascinating and quite beneficial. What makes this book so unique is, rather than merely going at this topic from a biblical-theological perspective, the author uses his specialty (understanding the brain through neurology) to help his readers understand why people struggle with pornography. While the book is not easy reading, it is very *beneficial* reading.

Whether you are struggling with porn or know someone who does, reading this book will help you. It is not often that I read a ground-breaking book, but if there was ever one that that could fit into that category, it would be this book. This book will help every man understand how his sexual choices affect this crucial part of his humanity. Finally, I believe that those who are struggling with an addiction to porn and who embrace the message of this book will be greatly helped.

Recommended Books on the Purity, Pornography, and Sex-Trafficking

This season at Servants of Grace, we've been considering the topics of pornography, purity, and sex-trafficking. We are living in a time when many people are either struggling with pornography, or they are engaged in some way—either in the porn or sex trafficking industries. With this issue of *Theology for Life Magazine*, it was our hope that readers would grow, not only in their understanding of how to fight against pornography, but also become knowledgeable about the sex-trafficking industry, and learn to become the men and women God wants them to be.

If you've found this subject interesting and want to study the issue further, please check out the recommended reading list below. These books are at the top of this genre in both excellence and readability. I promise you'll find them worthwhile. Please note that this list is provided in no particular order.

- *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity With the Power of Grace* by Dr. Heath Lambert
- *Sexual Detox: A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn* by Tim Challies
- *Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn-Free* by Tim Chester
- *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain* by William Struthers
- *Undefined: Redemption from Sexual Sin, Restoration for Broken Relationships* by Harry Schaumburg.
- *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ* by John Piper, Justin Taylor, and others.
- *Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is): Sexual Purity in a Lust-Saturated World* by Josh Harris.

And here are a couple of free e-Books from *Covenant Eyes*: [Porn Free Church](#) and [Your Brain on Porn](#). I hope you'll enjoy this further reading list! For additional resources, feel free to check out <http://servantsofgrace.org>.

In Christ Alone,
Dave Jenkins
Executive Editor of *Theology for Life Magazine*

Men's and Women's Devotional Bibles for Making and Growing Disciples of Christ

Find encouragement in the life-giving
Word of God along with sound devotional content
aimed at challenging hearts, enlightening minds, and
transforming lives into the image of Christ.



About the Authors:



Michael Boling

Michael Boling lives in Belleville, IL, a suburb of St. Louis, MO with his wife Erica, adopted daughter Alissa, two cats Molly and Sweetie Pie and horse Beckham. Michael holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Religion (Biblical Studies) from Liberty University and is currently closing in on completing a Master of Arts in Religion (Biblical Studies) from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary. He is an avid reader and blogger operating the website Christian Apologetics and Intelligence Ministry (<http://intelmin.org>) which provides both original content and relevant posts and articles from around the web. Mike serves as the Managing Editor of Servants of Grace, and the editor for Servants of Grace Apologetics.



Sarah Jenkins

Sarah Jenkins is the Design Coordinator and Copy Editor of *Theology for Life Magazine*. She also works in the IT department at NASA, and has a web-design degree from the College of Western Idaho. In her free time, Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband, Dave Jenkins, and reading as many books as she can get her hands on.



Luke Gilkerson

Luke Gilkerson and his wife Trisha are the primary authors of IntoxicatedOnLife.com. Luke recently worked as the Educational Resource Manager at [Covenant Eyes](http://CovenantEyes.com), a company dedicated to protecting eyes and minds from harmful sexual content online. Luke has a BA in Philosophy and an MA in Religion from Reformed Theological Seminary. He is the author of several family Bible studies, including [The Talk: 7 Lessons to Introduce Your Child to Biblical Sexuality](http://TheTalk.com).

About the Authors (Cont'd):



Dave Jenkins

Dave Jenkins is the Executive Director of [Servants of Grace Ministries](#), and the Executive Editor of [Theology for Life Magazine](#). He and his wife, Sarah, are members of Ustick Baptist Church in Boise, Idaho, where they serve in a variety of ministries. Dave received his MAR and M.Div. through Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary.



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David Dunham is Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Counseling at Cornerstone Baptist Church in the Detroit Metro. He has a Master's of Divinity from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.



Jason Garwood

Jason Garwood (M.Div., Th.D.) serves as Lead Pastor of Colwood Church in Caro, MI, and is the author of *Be Holy: Learning the Path of Sanctification*. Jason and his wife have three children. He blogs at <http://jasongarwood.com>. Connect with him on Twitter: @JasonGarwood.

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Zach Barnhart

Zach Barnhart currently serves as a church planting resident with Fellowship Church and is pursuing pastoral ministry. He is a college graduate from Middle Tennessee State University and lives in Knoxville with his wife, Hannah.



Gaye Clark

Gaye Clark works as a cardiac nurse in Augusta, Georgia, and as part time correspondent for WORLD magazine. She also volunteers with iCare, a local faith-based organization that provides assistance to trafficked victims. She is also the widow of Jim Clark. She writes in her free time about sex trafficking, Christian living, and lay-ministry. She has two adult children, Anna and Nathan.



Jessica Harris

Jessica Harris is an author, speaker, blogger, and recovered porn addict. In 2009, she launched her website where she writes about her journey of freedom, offers insights into the problem of female sex addiction in the church, and tackles other topics such as singleness, dating, and purity. She has been featured in the documentary “The Heart of the Matter” as well as on ABC Nightline. In 2016, she released her self-published memoir, *Beggar’s Daughter*, and is currently working on her next book, a Bible study on John 4. Find out more information by visiting her site, <http://beggarsdaughter.com>.

About the Authors (Cont'd):



Vicki Tiede

Vicki Tiede is an inspiring Bible teacher, conference speaker, and author. Her passion is to open the Scriptures with women in order to share God's grace and enduring faithfulness. She transparently relates life experiences that resonate and draw others into a lifelong pursuit of knowing God. Vicki's candor and humor are a delight to her audiences, who feel like they've met a new friend moments after she begins to share a glimpse into her life. She consistently points her audiences back to God's Word and presents fresh insights into the Scriptures. Living in Rochester, Minnesota, Vicki is a wife, homeschooling mom, and a certified health coach. Vicki holds Master's degrees in Ministry and in Education.



Joey Tomlinson

Joey Tomlinson is a chief of sinners, saved only by the person and work of Christ. He lives in Yorktown, VA with his wife, Brayden. They are expecting their first child, Henry Jacob in July. Joey has served as a pastor at Coastal Community Church for almost 10 years and he is pursuing his doctorate in biblical counseling at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a certified biblical counselor with IBCD.

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