

Pornography

You may be surprised that we feel it necessary to raise this issue. It might therefore shock you even more to realise that pornography is a major problem among Christians. A recent survey has shown the astonishing statistic that 50% of Christian men and 20% of Christian women are "addicted to porn". In a church of one hundred adults that works out at one in three! Whilst it is true that statistical surveys can be misleading, it does highlight the scale of the problem.

There are many reasons why pornography has become endemic. There is an increasing permissiveness in our Western, Northern Hemisphere society, so what was considered porn a generation ago has now become part of mainstream culture. The other obvious factor is the availability of new technologies, especially the Internet, thus making it readily accessible all over the world and in secret. A psychologist has described the power of porn by talking about "the triple-A engine": accessibility, anonymity and affordability.

Whilst it is true that addiction to porn is largely a man's problem, this is not exclusively so, as increasingly women are affected. Porn has a negative impact on the user. It distorts their view of sex, women and marriage. It is enslaving and spiritually weakening. It erodes their confidence, ministry and personal walk with the Lord.

There are many reasons why people turn to porn including boredom, tiredness, sexual frustration, loneliness, rejection and so on. Porn offers false promises: a safe alternative to intimacy, escapism, self-gratification, self-worship, and affirmation.

Of course, the answer to these things must be found in Christ. It is in Him we find the intimacy we crave and the affirmation we need, and He is the centre of our worship, not ourselves.

What are the steps to freedom for those caught in the porn trap?

There needs to be:

- 1 an absolute determination to know freedom;
- 2 a true hatred of porn itself, not just the shame it brings;
- 3 a willingness to leave all unreality and fantasy;
- 4 a willingness to address all underlying trigger issues;
- 5 a commitment to avoid temptation including controls on the computer; (There are software packages that protect people by sending a message to a designated friend if ever a porn-related website is accessed. Sites include: Covenanteyes.com or X3church.com)
- 6 accountability to another person who can help;
- 7 a setting of sights on the beauty of God, His calling and His positive blessings rather than dealing with negative issues alone.

There is help available to any who are caught in this addiction. An atmosphere of forgiveness and grace is vital for healing and release. Avail would be able to facilitate that help if approached.