

Unplugging Pornography – Equipping Parents and Teachers to Fight the New Drug, and Helping Students Stay Pure

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Abstract

Pornography is overwhelmingly prevalent today. It has become the pervasive cancer of our society, sweeping across the world and infecting individuals of any age, gender or race. It is relentlessly trying to invade homes, workplaces, churches and schools nevertheless, and our Christian/Adventist schools make no exception. But there is good news in the battle against pornography. Many dedicated people are addressing the problem and using the research and resources available to fight the new drug. As a Christian psychologist, I am joining forces with all these dedicated people to raise awareness against the devastating effects of pornography and equip parents, teachers, students, and young people in general fight the new drug. Research directed at risky behaviors in general, and pornography in particular, indicates the crucial role families and schools play in preventing, educating and reducing such behaviors and the prevalence of addictions. Biblical and faith based concepts will be integrated into this discussion. Specific suggestions and ideas for preventing and fighting pornography addiction in the home and school setting will be provided.

Keywords: *Pornography, addiction, prevention, effects of pornography, character education, media literacy*

Introduction

Over the past few decades high-speed internet has become widely available and a great convenience to most people. Internet is a wonderful resource to people of any age, and it provides many educational and social benefits, such as the ability to stay connected (instant communication through email, social media), access information (educational research, facts), simplify aspects of everyday life (online shopping, paying bills online), download software, and enhance work efficiency. However, the reverse side of the coin is also a reality, and internet can be a means to bully, defraud, abuse others, engage in risky behaviors (gambling, drugs, etc.), become addicted to the internet or get hooked to pornography.

In recent years, pornography has become the pervasive cancer of our society, sweeping across the world and infecting individuals of any age, gender or race (see Appendix 2 for current statistics on pornography). On June 21, 2017, Bill Haslam, the governor of Tennessee, joined the fight against pornography with three other states (Utah, South Dakota, Arkansas) by declaring pornography a “public health crisis” and signing a joint resolution for education, prevention resources and research on the negative effects of pornography (The Governor of Tennessee Just Officially Declared Pornography a Public Health Crisis, 2017). You may legitimately ask: How is this so? And the answer will be: Because today, pornography is more accessible, anonymous, and affordable than ever before. Anyone with cable television and a computer or any electronic device can watch porn in the privacy and secrecy of their own home at the touch of a single button.

Pornography is relentlessly trying to invade homes, workplaces, churches and schools nevertheless. Furthermore, Christian schools make no exception. In this regard, it is crucial for parents, teachers, school administrators and school personnel to inform themselves about the dangers of pornography and take a key role in preventing and fighting this epidemic, educating and empowering the young people under their care.

Prevalence, Risk Factors, and Consequences

Prevalence

Pornography is overwhelmingly prevalent today. It can be viewed in a variety of ways: Online, movies, videos/DVDs, print (magazines/books), advertisements, music, fashion, etc., though the most prevalent way of accessing porn is via the Internet on a mobile device and the content can be streamed, downloaded or saved (D'Orlando, 2011; Chen, Leung, Chen, & Yang, 2013; Hardy, Steelman, Coyne, & Ridge, 2013; Owens, Behun, Manning, & Reid, 2012). But what is pornography? Pornography can be defined as sexually explicit text, pictures, videos, and audio materials designed, produced and distributed for the purpose of sexual enticement, excitement and gratification (Hinman, 2013). It has become the pervasive cancer of our society, sweeping across the world and infecting individuals of any age, gender or race. Pornography takes away innocence, destroys relationships, fosters violence, gradually erodes compassion, and kills love.

Not all internet users view pornography, and not all pornography viewers are addicted, but research shows that the numbers of individuals getting addicted to pornography is increasing. Internet Filter Review, providing data about users' internet searches, has shown that the average age for a child's first exposure to pornography is around 11 years old. However, that age is rapidly falling with children becoming more tech-savvy these days at earlier ages. A study conducted by security technology company Bitdefender found that children under the age of 10 now account for 22% of online porn consumption among the under 18 age in spite of age confirmation required by pornographic sites. Unfortunately, these sites have no actual way to verify the actual age of those who request access. This indicates that a growing number of children will visit pornographic websites from an early age unless they are carefully supervised by their parents. Hinman (2016) has suggested that "conversations with young people about the dangers of pornography should, therefore, begin around age 8, and certainly by age 11."

Risk Factors

Sin affects us all and we all "fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23, New International Version). No individual today is immune to the possibility of falling into the trap of pornography, but according to researchers of American adolescents' exposure to pornography, male adolescents and teenagers are mostly at risk, although approximately 40 percent of young females are affected by this malady as well (Albright, 2008; Carol, Padilla-Walker, Nelson, Olson, Barry, & Madsen, 2008; Lickona, 2017; Peter & Valkenburg, 2008; Wolak, Mitchell & Finkelhor, 2007). However, colleges seem to have become a major breeding ground of internet addiction as college students spend extensive time online for conducting research, completing and turning in assignments, or simply for communication. Here are some of the major factors influencing internet/pornography addiction among college/university students, according to the Center for Online Addiction (Note. Adapted from "Surfing not Studying: Dealing with Internet Addiction on Campus," by K. Young, n.d, *Center for Online Addiction*: http://netaddiction.com/articles/surfing_not_studying.pdf):

1. *Free and unlimited internet access* – most universities/colleges offer students the privilege of free, unlimited internet access, which can open the door to a world of temptation that many students and young people find hard to resist.
2. *Freedom from parental interference/control* – this is almost every teen's dream to do things that Mom and Dad would not approve of or complain about. When students transition from home atmosphere to new independence they face new challenges, are more exposed to risky behaviors, and can be more prone to cultivate internet/pornography addiction.
3. *Escapism* – due to academic pressures some college/university students may find themselves struggling and academically failing, and then desiring to escape college stressors. Students sometimes feel pressured to make top grades, fulfill parental expectations or face the competitive work market upon graduation. Instead of using the internet to accomplish their course work more quickly and efficiently, they rather turn to it to hide from difficulties and feelings of anxiety, fear or depression.

4. *Social intimidation/alienation and need for intimacy* – some students may find it difficult to make new friends especially on large campuses, or they may feel less popular than in high school; they may also feel they do not dress right or look right. Feelings of inadequacy and a desire for intimacy may drive them to the online community.

Other risk factors in the context of pornography include children/youth that were raised in Christian families with ultra-authoritarian tendencies and those from conservative backgrounds who prohibit sexual behaviors (Abell, Steenbergh, & Bolivin, 2006; Carnes, 1991, 2001; Coleman, 1988; Davies, 2003; Haney, 2006; Laaser, 1992, 1996; Schaumburg, 1997). Abell, Steenbergh, and Boivin (2006) examined the relationship between cyberporn involvement and religiosity among college male undergraduates, and found a prevalent involvement of participants in Internet-based pornography. Although previous findings have shown an inverse relationship between religiosity and addictive behaviors, such as smoking, gambling, alcoholism and substance abuse, Abell et al.'s study unexpectedly found that religiosity was not inversely related to the use of online sexual materials. In fact, the researchers found a significant positive relationship between spiritual beliefs scores and cyberporn involvement.

Coleman (1988) suggested in his study that people from conservative backgrounds who prohibit sexual behaviors were more likely to develop sexually compulsive behaviors. He indicated that people from conservative backgrounds use shame as punishment for engaging in any type of secretive engagement in sexual activity. Engaging in prohibited sexual behavior creates emotional distress, which is generally alleviated through sexual behaviors (e. g., pornography viewing, masturbation, etc.) that become compulsive over time.

According to Haney (2006), religion and spirituality can have a great impact on a teenager's sexual development. He emphasizes that youth raised by Christian parents with very rigid and legalistic religious views regarding sexuality, may experience shame and guilt surrounding sexual thoughts and feelings, and try to forcefully repress their desires. This may unconsciously lead them to long for the exact desires they are trying to ignore, which in turn may lay the foundation to sexual addictions. Educators, psychologists and counseling professionals can play a key role in helping young people develop a healthy view on sexual intimacy and wholeness, and also make good decisions and set firm boundaries regarding pornography viewing.

Consequences

What effect does pornography have on the brain? Pornography creates a powerful biochemical "rush" in the user's brain when the level of dopamine and other pleasure neurochemicals in the brain spike. Haney (2006) explains that when an individual is exposed to arousing images, "the adrenal gland secretes epinephrine into the bloodstream where it proceeds to the brain and locks that in. Once this has occurred, the simple thought of the image can trigger a feeling of arousal." Also, oxytocin and vasopressin help a person recall long-term memories by connecting a person's memory and the object that gave sexual pleasure. When overstimulation is maintained the brain adapts to find a level of tolerance – less pleasurable neurochemicals are produced in response to the same stimulus and more of a stimulus is needed to recreate the old pleasure sensation. The brain's normal reward system is hijacked and in order to release extra dopamine and experience more pleasure, an escalated and more deviant form of porn is needed for the same effect. This is called brain desensitization which can result in an increased appetite for porn and ultimately leads to pornography addiction (Haney, 2006).

To simplify this explanation, imagine that your brain is made up of about 100 billion special nerves called neurons which send signals, fire together, wire together, and form what is called a "neural pathway" (Doidge, 2007). A neural pathway is like a trail in the woods or a shortcut you take to get to the gym or your favorite store. This trail or shortcut gets a little wider and more permanent every time you use it. Similarly, neuronal pathways get stronger with every use as messages travel across them. The stronger the connection between the neurons, the faster the message can travel down the pathway, the better memory recall of information and the stronger the habits. Doidge (2007) explains

that the same way pornography manages to activate the reward center of the brain and trigger the release of certain chemicals to form long-lasting pathways in the brain. In order to experience more pleasure and release higher levels of dopamine, a greater amount of sexual stimuli becomes necessary to arouse habitual users, which eventually leads them to pursue more deviant forms of pornography in order to fulfill their sexual desires. This leads to desensitization and pornography addiction (Haney, 2006).

How can an individual develop an addiction to pornography? The desire for sex, like all rewards, is driven by the release of dopamine in the brain. When dopamine is released, “the signal touches several other areas in the brain: the frontal executive control regions add perspective to the raw full-strength dopamine’s desire; other areas bring meaning and context to the brain’s pleasure reward.” When balanced, this desire leads to pleasure and it motivates individuals to participate in healthy, pleasurable behaviors such as eating tasty food, doing a hard workout, or enjoying a kiss, which helps individuals survive and thrive. However, when this natural desire for pleasure gets out of balance, it basically hijacks the brain and starts to dominate and control individuals instead of simply motivating them, and that’s how addiction occurs (Hilton, 2013). Researchers indicate that an important role to all addiction (drug and behavioral) is played by a brain protein called DeltaFosB which works pretty much like a beaver to groom the trail in the woods and make strong mental connections between the porn being viewed by individuals and the pleasure they feel while viewing (Nestler, 2008; Pitchers et al., 2013). Essentially, the DeltaFosB is saying, “I like this and it feels good. Let’s be sure to remember it so we can do it again.”

According to Dr. Weber, an osteopathic family physician certified by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology, “internet pornography addiction can develop even more easily than a drug or alcohol addiction because it engages the most sensitive sense we have, our eyes.” How strong is pornography addiction? Dr. Weber indicates that pornography “is even more addictive than drug addictions because the images are directly stored in the memory and imagination which remain long after viewing internet pornography, altering the structure and function of the brain” (“Teen Boys at Most Risk: What Parents Need to Know,” 2014)

Other consequences of viewing pornography is a decrease in gray matter, which is a major component of the central nervous system (Kuhn & Gallinat, 2014); increased violence and sexual aggression (Alexy, Burgess, & Prentky, 2009; Hunter, Figueredo & Malamuth, 2010; Ybarra, Mitchell, Hamburger, Diener-West, & Leaf, 2011), erectile dysfunction in males (Park et al., 2016); depression (Grubbs, Stauner, Exline, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2015); feelings of physical inferiority in women (Peter & Valkenburg, 2014); a negative effect on families and marriages with addicts losing the ability to show emotion with physical affection and being more likely to be unfaithful to their spouse (Fagan, 2009; Paul, 2005). With pornography addiction on the rise, clinicians, researchers and the FBI are witnessing an increase in violent sex crimes and child pornography, as well as sex trafficking (Weiss, 2015; Weiss & Schneider, 2015)

Young people and especially teenagers’ brains are still developing. Exposure to pornography at this age can distort the normal sexual development and deform the pleasure centers of the brain and recovery from pornography addiction is much more difficult than for older males (Peter & Valkenburg, 2006). Additionally, Hinman (2016) suggests that “minors are not capable of cognitively processing explicit material and have difficulty differentiating between sexual fantasy and reality.” Furthermore, Fordham (as cited in Hald & Malamuth, 2008) emphasizes that “pornography creates unreal and unrealistic expectations in the minds of boys and men in regard to their sex lives, frequency of sexual activity, the kinds of acts performed, responsibility and the role of wives in fulfilling men’s expectations” (p.66).

Children and youth cannot comprehend the dangers of pornography viewing and addiction on their brains, bodies and hearts, and the extent to which this vice can impact their capacity for intimacy and wholeness, as well as their future intimate relationships. Pornography significantly affects young people’s brains. Their brains are still growing and the processes of “pruning” and “myelination” are not completed until the mid-20’s, which makes youth more vulnerable to “building an addicted brain

than adults” (Hilton, 2013). Additionally, Dr. Hilton (2013) explains that “the immature brains of youth have an impressive reward system that is primed to learn, and pornography is a powerful and ready teacher.” In the long run, pornography distorts young people’s attitudes and perception about the nature of sexual intercourse, increases their tolerance for sexual aggression, abnormal sexual behaviors and promiscuity, and enables them to view women and even children as “sex objects” for their own pleasure (Fagan, 2009). As already mentioned, pornography can be very addictive and have a substantial effect on the body as well. Fagan (2009) explains that porn consumers tend to be more sexually permissive and at increased risk of contracting “a sexually transmitted disease or of becoming an unwitting parent in an out-of-wedlock pregnancy.” Pornography doesn’t affect only the body and brain, but also people’s emotional health. Research indicates that young people who view pornography struggle with feelings of shame, low self-esteem, depression and sexual uncertainty (Fagan, 2009; Grubbs, Stauner, Exline, Pargament, & Lindberg, 2015; Peter & Valkenburg, 2014).

Awareness is the first step in addressing any type of addiction. Parents and teachers, and school personnel should be informed about the “red flags” or warning signs of pornography addiction. Effective intervention assistance is dependent on recognizing the signs of addiction as early as possible (see Appendix 2 for a list of warning signs of pornography addiction).

Prevention

Research has indicated that the most at risk to develop cybersexual and pornography addictions are children ages 10-17, young people in general but especially males (both Christian and non-Christian), people who suffer from low self-esteem, a severely distorted body image, untreated sexual dysfunctions, a prior sexual addiction, or being raised in an authoritarian family (Mesch, 2009; Yoder, Virden III & Amin, 2005; Young, Griffin-Shelley, Cooper, O’Mara, & Buchanan, 2000; Wolak, Mitchell, & Finkelhor, 2007).

Taking these factors into consideration, it is important for educators and parents to be proactive and explain in appropriate ways to children and young people why pornography is harmful and detrimental to their physical, spiritual and emotional being. Internet blockers and filters can provide some protection against porn viewing (some digitally savvy young people can get around that), but in addition to parental supervision, “a child’s conscience is best protection against porn” (Lickona, 2007). This is why Thomas Lickona emphasizes that parents and teachers need “to be very articulate in giving children and young people very specific reasons to avoid letting this into their hearts, minds and souls,” and the Bible emphasize the importance of teaching our young people to “guard [their] heart, for everything [they] do flows from it” (Prov. 4:23, NIV).

In an interview given to the Family and Media Research Group, developmental psychologist Thomas Lickona offered parents and teachers a set of seven reasons they could use in their discussions with children and young people, depending on the age and personality of each child and on the parent/teacher’s moral and religious convictions (Lickona, 2017). The following are the seven reasons:

1. Pornography treats people as objects to be used and abused for the sexual pleasure of viewers and the profit of the porn industry. This is wrong and immoral because every person has human dignity and should never be disrespected or exploited.
2. Sexual intimacy is a gift from God meant to express and deepen love between people. Porn separates sex from love. It gives a false picture of human sexuality – exactly the opposite of what sexual intimacy is really like in loving relationships.
3. The mind stores everything. Once you let pornographic images in, you may not be able to get rid of them even if you want to.
4. Pornography changes the brain. Just like a drug it can quickly become addictive and take over your life. Because it changes what the brain finds sexually attractive, it can reduce your ability to have normal sexual relationships with real people.
5. For boys, pornography is usually accompanied by masturbation, another habit that’s hard to break. Both habits will reduce your self-control and self-respect.

6. Carried into marriage, both of those habits can cause problems between husbands and wives. A woman whose husband uses pornography often feels like the victim of an affair. Masturbation – having sex with yourself – weakens the sexual relationship between spouses.
7. From a faith perspective, pornography goes against God’s plan for how we are meant to use his gift of sex and violates the sexual purity God expects of us.

Suggestions for Family and School Personnel Support

These are some helpful tips and suggestions for parents and teachers as they join forces to prevent, educate and fight the pornography drug in the home and school setting.

Be proactive. Protect electronic home and school devices with software that blocks/filters/monitors all internet access to pornographic sites. Some of the most common software blockers are: Net Nanny, K9 Web Protection, WebWatcher, while Covenant Eyes is a good app for smartphones, iPod Touch and iPad. However, filters and internet blockers are only partially protecting children and young people from inappropriate internet viewing. The greatest filter that will ultimately work is the personal internal filter, or their conscience.

Teach the difference between the “feeling brain” and the “thinking brain,” and how they work together. It is extremely important and valuable to teach children and young people how to identify their feelings, how to understand where they come from, and how to appropriately express their feelings. Equally important is to teach them that in order to know right from wrong and make good choices they need to use their thinking brain. And ultimately, it is important to teach them that both brains work together to keep us safe and in control (Jenson & Poyner, 2016).

Teach character education and media literacy. The good news in the battle against pornography is that parents, educators and institutions can make use of existent educational tools and apply them in fighting this battle. Dr. Thomas Lickona (2017), a developmental psychologist, suggests that teaching and educating young people “how to respect the gift of their sexuality and how to exercise good judgment, modesty, self-control and authentic love” in this vulnerable compartment of their lives is crucial. This can be achieved by incorporating character education classes as part of the curriculum in the school or family setting, and teaching children and young people “how to think critically about all forms of media (e.g., Is this media good or bad for me? Who created this? What are the messages?)” and “how to think critically about their own media habits and its effects on them” by helping young people think of how any piece of media they access influences their values, beliefs, attitudes, goals, the amount of time they spend viewing it, and ultimately the kind of person they are becoming. This type of “media literacy” is essential for building character because it challenges students to do a self-examination and think critically about media, and it ultimately equips them in confronting the problem of pornography. Don’t forget: “a child’s conscience is the best protection against porn” (Lickona, 2017).

Keep calm and be firm but gentle. In case children/young people have already been exposed to pornography either accidentally or intentionally, or because of peer pressure, the first step is to listen patiently how that happened and then explain calmly and lovingly, but clearly and firmly, why pornography is wrong and harmful (use the seven reasons suggested by Dr. Thomas Lickona under the “Prevention” section), and teach/remind them how to avoid any future exposure by designing a specific plan: “if somebody shows it to you, what do you say, walk away” (Lickona, 2017). Losing control, shaming, blaming or condemning children and young people for such behavior would be very damaging, as they already might deal with feelings of anxiety, shock, disgust, fear, anger, or embarrassment. By doing this will only “increase shame and secrecy, two essential ingredients to developing and strengthening an addiction” (Hinman, 2016). The Bible teaches us to stay calm, be gentle and be slow to anger as we deal with difficult situations: “A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict, but the one who is patient calms a quarrel,” (Proverbs 15:18, NIV); “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger,” (Proverbs 15:1, NIV); “Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end” (Proverbs 29:11, NIV). As people of faith, we should also pray with

and for our children and young people, for their future protection and also for any emotional, psychological, and spiritual healing as needed.

Teach about God's plan for sexual intimacy and wholeness. "The antidote for pornography viewing/addiction is not found in being anti-sex, but rather in a deeper understanding of God's creation plan for healthy relationships, for intimate connectedness in both platonic and romantic relationships, and for open, transparent accountability and character growth" (S. K. McDugal, personal communication, Sept. 28. 2017). The creation account in the book of Genesis and 1 Corinthians provide clear indications that sexuality is a gift from God designed and reserved for marriage (Gen. 1:27; 2:24; 1 Cor. 6:15-17; 1 Cor. 7:4). Sexuality and intimacy within the marriage covenant is intended for both joy and procreation (Gen 1:28). However, God's given gift of sexuality has been degraded and distorted by the media and our society. Media is increasingly more sexually explicit and widely available through the means of commercials and advertisement, television and films abounding in sexual promiscuity and the adult entertainment industry presenting a very distorted and dehumanized picture of sexuality and sexual relations and destroying many lives. This is in great contrast to healthy, caring and loving sexual relationships designed by God for his creatures. God's plan for sexual intimacy condemns lust and equates it with adultery (Matt. 5:28). Freedom and redemption from sexual sin is possible only through Jesus Christ and involves confession, repentance, and turning away from sin. The journey toward healing may include professional help from trained counselors and psychologists, the accountability partners and communities, the love and support of family members and teachers, and God's grace (Gal. 2:20).

Teach reverence for the human body and respect for others' feelings and needs. The Bible teaches us to take care of our bodies because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1Cor. 6:19). We need to teach our young people how to care for their physical, emotional and spiritual needs. Keeping their bodies clean and appropriately dressed at all times, knowing how to express their feelings, needs and desires, understanding that inward beauty is more valuable than outward appearance are very important values to learn from a very young age. When they learn to respect themselves, they will respect others as well.

Love the child/teen/young person, hate the sin. As you implement each of the above steps, you will need to constantly remind the young people in your care that, though you disagree with their actions, you will never cease to love them, to support them in fighting the porn drug, and to help them be restored to pure life. Teachers and educators should establish a warm relationship with their students and create opportunities to discuss delicate issues about sexuality, intimate relationships, and pornography.

Equip & Train Teachers & Parents. Provide training seminars/workshops to teachers and parents on the dangers of pornography and how to offer suggestions and support to students.

Refer. Direct and refer those addicted to pornography and their families to seek assistance to the school counselor/psychologist, or locally available trained counselors/psychologists.

Is there hope of recovery from pornography addiction?

The answer is YES! The neural rewiring caused by pornography could be reversed because of the brain's plasticity. This means that the same mechanism that created pathways for porn can replace those pathways and rebuild them by avoiding pornography and seeking healthy alternatives. Depending on the level of addiction, some individuals might achieve recovery on their own by quitting porn "cold turkey," but many may need specialized help from a counselor, therapist or support group (Clinton & Laaser, 2010; Lickona, 2017). Besides counseling, websites such as Sexaholics Anonymous developed by Drs. Patrick Carnes and Mark Laaser and based on the 12 steps originally used by Alcoholics Anonymous, have helped many people recover from various forms of sexual addiction, including pornography addiction.

Another efficient resource in the fight against pornography and other addictions has been developed by Dr. Kevin Majeres, one of the psychiatrists on Harvard University's Medical School faculty. He is teaching psychiatrists-in-training how to use a virtue-based approach to treating

pornography and other addictions, and he provides a wealth of resources on his website, www.overcomingcravings.com, such as self-help modules that explain the nature of addictions, including pornography addiction, and how to overcome them. His approach has helped many struggling with a variety of addictions.

Also, Dr. Peter Kleponis, a Christian psychotherapist created a seven-point pornography recovery program used successfully with hundreds of patients. In his book, *Integrity Starts Here*, he explains how certain factors can contribute to becoming addicted to pornography and how an individual can overcome pornography addiction by following the seven-point program: self-knowledge and commitment; purifying your life; support and accountability; counseling; a spiritual plan, including daily prayer; continuing education about healthy relationships and stress management; and doing “virtue exercises” every day that enhance character traits and protect someone from slipping back.

Conclusion

The Internet is extensively used today by both children/youth and adults for school/work activities as well as for personal benefit. Unfortunately, the Internet is not always a safe place especially for children and youth, as well as vulnerable adults. Over the past few years pornography has become easily available and more and more young people are falling into its trap. Pornography is wrong and harmful, it distorts and dehumanizes sexuality and sexual relations, and it is highly addictive.

Parents and teachers need to be proactive and educate children and youth how to respect the gift of their sexuality, how to exercise good judgment, modesty, and self-control, and how to think critically about all forms of media. Providing young people with a safety net to discuss the dangers of pornography without making them feel shame and guilt is much needed. Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to provide training seminars/workshops on this topic for school personnel and parents, and have open and honest discussions with the students about the dangers of pornography and sexually explicit material. Let’s remember that in our aim to educate our students for eternity, character education is as important as academics.

Real love cannot be bought, clicked or downloaded. I encourage you to take a stand against pornography, the drug of this century, and fight for real love and intimacy. For more resources for children/young people and parents/teachers on the topic of pornography, please see appendix below.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Resources for Children/Teenagers/Young People

- Anderson, B. (2007). *Breaking the silence: A pastor goes public about his battle with pornography*. Hagerstown, MD: Autumn House.
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Appendix 2

Statistics

- 4.2 million pornographic websites (12% of all websites in the world)
- Every day, there are 68 million search engine requests for pornographic material (25% of all search engine requests)
- Every second 28,258 users are watching pornography on the internet
- 64% of men and 41% of women admit to openly watching pornography
- 27% of Christian men and 6% of Christian women watch pornography at least twice a month
- 57% of pastors & 64% of youth pastors admit to have struggled with porn either currently/in the past
- Pornography use increases the marital infidelity rate by more than 300%
- Average age of first internet exposure to pornography is 10 and less
- Primary pornography consumer group is boys between the ages 12-18

Compiled from a variety of sources

Warning Signs/"Red Flags" for Teachers and Parents – Recognizing Pornography Addiction Signs

- Stays up late and is chronically late to class
- Neglects responsibilities (homework, assignments, work obligations, social or personal responsibilities) in order to watch more porn
- Spends an excessive amount of time online in the classroom and outside of classroom (mainly watching pornography)
- Isolates himself/herself from relationships and becomes emotional disconnected
- Spends less time with friends and passes up opportunities to have more time to use or view porn

- Avoids taking care of themselves (not showering, not eating, etc.)
- Mood changes – becomes easily angry, hostile, or irritable especially when asked about their pornography use or when unable to access porn
- Experiences anxiety, depression, poor impulse control
- Engages in watching porn in order to avoid stress
- Unable to stop viewing porn or engaging in other behaviors associated with porn, despite repeated attempts to do so
- Experiences cravings to view porn
- Continues to view porn in spite of negative consequences (problems in school or work)

Adapted from <http://using.com/pornography-addiction>