

Pornography is any material used in order to elicit sexual arousal.

Pornography can include images, videos, magazines, literature, television, movies, social media, and any other source that stimulates erotic behavior or feelings for a person. Pornography use is not exclusive to gender or age groups. The root of this sin is primarily spiritual and emotional rather than sexual. Pornography is often used in conjunction with masturbation, or by couples seeking sexual arousal and/or sexual experimentation.

Common Characteristics

Common reasons people use pornography include:

- **To get a natural “high”:** The chemical rush that occurs with pornography and orgasm can be addictive.
- **To take control:** Pornography provides an opportunity to find selfish pleasure in an endless number of ways without considering others' needs or desires.
- **To escape reality:** Pornography can be used to fantasize about a different life or experience when real life is not satisfying (For example: to feel desirable when you feel neglected or unwanted).
- **To numb internal pain:** Sexual pleasure can be used to medicate pain.
- **To feel something:** Emotionally numb people can become desperate to experience any sensation.
- **To fill a void:** Pornography can be used to fill the void of something “missing” in a person's life.

Regardless of why someone pursues sexual arousal apart from God's design for healthy sex (monogamy in marriage), pornography *cannot fix the underlying problem*. Porn, like most addictions, masks the true spiritual problem and can become a source of pain itself. It can lead to isolation, an inability to live in reality, impotence, loneliness, perversion, broken relationships, and separation from God.

Biblical Insights

God loves you. If you are trapped by the shame of pornography, know that God sees you and is pursuing you. Nothing you've done will cause Him to reject you. He wants you to turn to Him so that you can be free. He wants to heal you and give you an abundant life.

- *“But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” (Psalm 86:15)*
- *“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.” (Jesus Christ, John 10:10)*

The sin of pornography enslaves you. Sin is deadly. Pornography is a sinful corruption of the heart.

- *“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Jesus Christ, Matthew 5:28)*
- *“They promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption. For whatever overcomes a person, to that he is enslaved.” (2 Peter 2:19)*

Christ understands your temptation and is able to help you.

- *“For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)*
- *“For because he himself has suffered when tempted, [Christ] is able to help those who are being tempted.” (Hebrews 2:18)*

Jesus already paid for your sin. Christ died for all of your sin and offers forgiveness for every sin to anyone who accepts His blood as payment for sin. Those who accept Christ will never be condemned.

- *“But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.”* (Isaiah 53:5)
- *“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...”* (Romans 8:1)

Your body is precious. God wants you to care for your body and to honor Him with it.

- *“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.”* (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

You are powerless to change on your own, but God can transform you. Anything short of a spiritual transformation by the power of God is only behavior modification and is bound to fail. But God's Spirit working through His Word and through His people can free you from addiction.

- *“For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out.”* (Romans 7:18)
- *“So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.”* (Galatians 5:16)

You are not alone. Frequent porn use is a common struggle for men and women. Fortunately, many people who once struggled are now experiencing freedom in Christ and are willing to help you.

- *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”* (1 Corinthians 10:13)
- *“Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”* (Galatians 6:2)

Next Steps

- Ask Christ to heal you. (Romans 10:13)
- Identify and address the underlying need behind your porn habit. The next time you feel the urge to look at porn, slow down, pray and consider your motivation. Ask God for courage to address your habit and let others know your temptation. (Proverbs 14:8)
- Confess and ask someone for accountability. Commit to 24 hours of sobriety. (Matthew 6:11)
- Repent. Get rid of access to pornography. (Matthew 5:29-30)
- Practice communicating. Find a place like a *re:generation* recovery group where you can talk without fear of judgment and work through your struggles. Step out of secrecy. (1 John 1:7)
- Identify your stressors that often tempt you to look at pornography and decide how you will respond to them should temptation come. Prepare for vulnerable situations well in advance. (1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 5:8, Ephesians 6:13)
- Do not despair when you fall to temptation. God's grace and his love is unconditional. (Romans 8:1)
- Masturbation is often a common struggle linked with pornography. Read over the Masturbation Issue Sheet for more information.

God loves you, and there is hope and healing in Christ. If you have not yet experienced God's salvation, you can learn more at www.regenerationrecovery.org/freedom.

Additional Resources

- For stories of hope, go to www.regenerationrecovery.org: Noah, Nate
- Books for Men: *Pure Desire* - Ted Roberts, *Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time* - Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker, *At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry* - Steve Gallagher.
- Books for Women: *Dirty Girls Come Clean* - Crystal Renaud, *Create in Me A Pure Heart: Answers for Struggling Women* - Steve & Kathy Gallagher.
- Books for Wives: *Your Sexually Addicted Spouse: How Partners Can Cope and Heal* - Barbara Steffens & Marsha Means, *Every Heart Restored: A Wife's Guide to Healing in the Wake of a Husband's Sexual Sin* - Fred & Brenda Stoeker, Stephen Arterburn

**This Information Sheet is also available online at <http://www.regenerationrecovery.org/struggles/>*