

Pornography: How Can I Make a Difference?

Many people think pornography is photographs of beautiful nude women. Two decades ago, perhaps, this was true. But the situation has dramatically changed. Today, obscene and often violent material is produced in sexually vivid magazines and video tapes. It features graphically depicted material ranging from deviant sexual behaviour between humans to incest, bestiality and the sexually violent torture of women and children.

Pornography promotes sex without responsibility, union without obligation, physical satisfaction without love. It exploits and dehumanizes women and children as discardable objects for the satisfaction of male lust. It scorns marital fidelity, morality and commitment to family life.

The Scriptures exhort us to avoid all that is immoral, sexually perverted and lustful. "Do not be deceived; neither the immoral, nor idolaters, nor sexual perverts ... will inherit the kingdom of God. The body is not meant for immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body" I Corinthians 6:9-13.

God has made both men and women to experience love and sex as beautiful, enjoyable and productive gifts within the bond of marriage. Pornography destroys what is precious in the sight of God.

KNOW THE DANGERS AND EFFECTS

Research has shown that consumption of pornography can bring about a progressive addiction. Those who are exposed to pornography may continue through a near-universal four-step pattern:

1. **Addiction.** This addiction of the mind can be as powerful as any substance addiction. Individuals hooked on pornography obtain an aphrodisiac effect from the materials. They keep coming back for more so they might get this sexual arousal.
2. **Escalation.** Progressively coarser material may be sought to satisfy the addiction. The need may escalate requiring rougher and more sexually shocking material in order to get the same sexual satisfaction as before.
3. **Desensitization.** With continued exposure over time there occurs a desensitization to the material's effect. What is, at first, gross, repulsive or immoral, in time, becomes acceptable and then craved.
4. **Acting Out.** As thought breeds deed, fantasy may become reality. There can be an increased tendency to start acting out sexual activities seen in the pornography. If, over a period of time, a person's sexual fantasies are shaped by materials showing women, animals and children involved in sordid and perverse sexual activity, and other far worse acts, there is an increased chance the person will go into the community and seek the opportunity to perform these sexually deviant activities.

AVOID PERSONAL EXPOSURE

Practising a life of personal holiness is parallel to a concern about pornography. Personal and family standards must exhibit wholesome values.

Set standards that defend human dignity and morality. Teach your children about the sacred nature of the human body and the joy of proper sexual relationships.

Avoid situations where you may be exposed to pornography. Be aware of unsuitable material that increasingly exists in entertainment media. Monitor and control family exposure to television, movies and music. Carefully select what is used for family entertainment. Discuss these matters with your children.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Now is the time to join the fight against pornography. It is a winnable war, and you can make a difference. The most effective tools are your prayers, your pen, your patronage and participation.

There are many kinds of action, and not everyone can take part in the same way. Some people will feel led to pray. Others can write letters to elected officials. Still others can participate in groups and organizations that are taking positive action against pornography.

If a local store sells or rents offensive material, tell the manager (kindly but firmly) that you want to patronize that business but cannot if it undermines your family's values. Merchants interpret each customer expression as representing 100 others who feel the same way but remain silent.

Pledge your support to police officials to help enforce current obscenity laws. Let them know that you and your neighbours or group encourage enforcement of the Criminal Code of Canada.

Use your pen to express concerns or commendations to television station managers, as well as newspaper and magazine editors. Write to companies which sponsor offensive advertising in publications or television programs.

Write to legislators and other elected officials asking them to strengthen current obscenity laws where needed.

Participate with other service clubs, community groups and religious organizations in combatting the blight of pornography. Such groups can be effective in urging merchants to discontinue the sale of offensive materials. They also can be helpful in the enforcement of current obscenity laws and the establishment of more effective laws.

WILL IT MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

More and more victories are being won. Slowly the tide is changing. It is difficult to be patient in the face of such great evil. There must be perseverance and determination on our part.

"Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain" I Corinthians 15:58 (NIV).