

Married men: your porn habit is an adultery habit

I know a guy who cheats on his wife. He cheats on her every day. He cheats on her multiple times a day. He's a husband and a father and a serial adulterer.

I shouldn't know this fact about him, but it came up in conversation a few days ago. We were talking about the divorce rate; both of us gave our theories as to why the statistics are so high. I mentioned in my diagnosis a few studies that show pornography to be a root cause in over 50 percent of divorces annually.

He laughed. "People don't get divorced over porn." He went on to explain that porn isn't a "big deal" to most people. It's not "like it's cheating or something." He told me that he looks at it multiple times daily. His wife, he insisted, might be a little peeved if she knew the extent of it, but only because women overreact about "that kind of thing."

What kind of thing? Their husbands spending all day obsessively plunging through the darkest regions of the internet for graphic sexual images of rape, abuse, perversion, exploitation and other forms of filthy depravity previously unknown to mankind?

Yeah. That kind of thing. No reason why any wife should be too upset about that, apparently.

Listen guys, I know this is an uncomfortable conversation. But it's time we man up and get real about pornography. First things first: if you're married and you look at porn, you are cheating. Period. From a Christian perspective, this can't be debated. Christ laid it out very clearly: if you lust after another woman, you have committed adultery. When we look at porn we are choosing to succumb to that lust; we are indulging it, fertilizing it, giving it respite in our minds. We are diving into it headfirst and soaking in it like a sponge. We are lessening ourselves, betraying our wives and participating in the violent exploitation of women (and girls). Our minds and our bodies belong to the Lord and to our wives; pornography, therefore, intrudes on their domain. If we look at porn, we are adulterers. We are adulterers in all the worst ways.

We don't even need to refer to Scripture to figure out the simple equation that porn equals adultery.

Why wouldn't it?

Because you aren't physically in contact with another woman?

So what? That's merely a matter of semantics and circumstance. The absence of physical touch doesn't automatically free you of the scarlet letter — if it did, 'sexting' with other women would be fair game, I suppose. How would you feel if you looked through your wife's phone and found racy, sexually graphic text messages she'd sent to a man at her office? Would you be alright with it as long as she could prove she never had any physical contact with him? Or is that totally different because she knows the guy, whereas porn is anonymous and impersonal? See, we find ourselves constructing many arbitrary lines of distinction when we are determined to rationalize behavior we instinctively know to be immoral and wrong.

But, OK, what if she didn't know the guy? What if she was engaging in "fantasies" with men she never met? Imagine that, in your cyber travels, you stumbled upon a porn site featuring pictures and videos of a particularly alluring young female: your wife. How would that sit with you? Your wife selling digital sex all over the Internet — how would you like that? It might cause a bit of a marital dispute, wouldn't you say?

If you wouldn't want your wife being a porn provider, you ought to understand why she wouldn't want you to be a porn consumer. If you wouldn't want her to invite and encourage other men to violate her in their minds, you ought to understand

why she wouldn't want you to accept the invitation to violate other women in your mind.

I don't mean to concentrate only on married men. Porn is poison for everyone, married or not. And I'm not here to castigate you if you've stumbled. We live in a society that preys upon a man's weaknesses, shoving sex into his face at hyper speed every day, all day, all of the time. This isn't an excuse; just an attempt to put things into context. I won't yell at a guy who fights a porn addiction anymore than I'd yell at a guy who fights a crack addiction. But at least the crack addict likely won't encounter very many people (besides his dealer) who will tell him that it's actually healthy to smoke crack. If he ventures outside of the abandoned shack where he scores his dope, he probably won't find any respectable people who will say, "hey, crack isn't a big deal — it's totally natural to smoke crack, man!" In that way, the crack smoker has a leg up on the porn addict. The porn addict, by contrast, has to fight both the compulsion itself and the myriad of creeps who will try to convince him that it's all just a bit of innocent fun.

That's a lie, of course. It's not innocent. It's not fun.

I could cite for you the mounds of psychiatric research proving the detrimental effects of pornography on the brain. But you can do that research yourself.

I could tell you about sex slavery, human trafficking, drug abuse, and child molestation, and I could explain how the porn industry wouldn't exist without these necessary ingredients. But these are conclusions you can draw on your own, if ever you take even a moment to think about it.

I could remind you that these women you find on your porn sites might not be women at all — they could be children — and there's no way for you to know for sure. I could then point out that any avid porn customer has most likely at some point been a child porn customer, whether he knew it or not. But this is, indeed, an obvious and inescapable reality.

I could tell you that many children view graphic porn for the first time before the age of 12. I could tell you that we haven't even begun to reap the atrocious fruits that will come from an entire generation raised on the heinous perversions of internet pornography. But it's probably too late for these warnings.

So what is left? Perhaps nothing, really. Pornography is evil, empty, deadening, dirty — this is something we all know. That's why, unless you are either psychotic or utterly despicable, you wouldn't want your daughter to get into the porn business. That's why most people hide their porn habits. That's why it still isn't considered acceptable to browse "adult" websites at your desk at work or at a table in Starbucks (although people still do, in both scenarios). That's why you only find porn shops and strip clubs in the slummy, rundown parts of town. No matter how hedonistic and "open minded" we become, we still recognize porn as something that ought to be stowed away in the dank, dark corners of our lives. This is Natural Law, and we can't escape it. We have an innate understanding of right and wrong, whether we want it or not.

Married men: I think we should be spending our free time with our families, or reading interesting books so that we can sharpen our minds, or building things, or exercising, or doing anything else that will make us better men. Porn will not make you a better man. It will make you smaller. It will make you a liar. It will kill that instinct inside you that calls you to protect and honor women. It will turn you into something you never wanted to be. It will turn you into a sneaky, shameful pervert. It will turn you into an adulterer.

Real men don't look at pornography.

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