

Theological Musings from Dave's Laptop

September 27, 2016

It is a sad thing, but the next time you watch some major sporting event, bear in mind that for many of the persons at the game, the day is going to go like this: **Game. Dinner. Drinks. Prostitute. Bed.**



Pimps move large numbers of prostitutes to follow major league and other sporting events, because they know this is how after-game evenings often go. Fans “get out of town” in order to have more than one kind of action, and this “after-game action” is big business indeed.

As we continue our consideration of human trafficking, it’s important to point out that with trafficking, as with the drug trade, **were there little demand, there would soon be very little in the way of supply.**¹ *And research suggests that the Internet’s easy access to pornography plays a significant role in increasing the demand for persons to be trafficked.*

Like trafficking, pornography involves the sale of someone’s body for sexual purposes. And like trafficking, pornography takes the God-given beauty of human sexuality and cheapens it into a tawdry commodity to be consumed. It seems to me that we moderns have turned orgasmic sexuality into an idol to be desired, sought, and experienced above all other pleasures. We have torn loving commitment and sexual intimacy asunder, degrading God’s wonderful and powerful gift into human exploitation and slavery. And this darkness has become much more pervasive through the power of the Internet.



The days of pinup magazines, peep-shows, and adult-video stores are mostly past. Most porn is now viewed on the Internet, with 70% of U.S. online porn access taking place during normal working hours. The largest porn sites are owned by a company called *MindGeek*, whose bandwidth use exceeds that of *Amazon* or *Facebook*. Some individual porn sites get more traffic than any other sites in the world besides *Google*, *Facebook*, *Amazon*, and *PayPal*.

¹ SOURCES: *2014 Pornography Survey and Statistics*, Proven Men Ministries, www.provenmen.org/2014pornsurvey; Katrina Forrester, “Lights. Camera. Action. Making Sense of Modern Pornography,” *The New Yorker*, September 26, 2016, 64-68; Luke Gilkerson, *Fight Porn in Your Church: What Works & Why It Matters*, eBook (Owosso, MI: Covenant Eyes, 2015); Belinda Luscombe, “Porn and the Threat to Virility,” *TIME*, April 11, 2016; Peggy Orenstein, “How porn is changing a generation of girls,” *TIME*, April 11, 2016, 47; Halee Gray Scott, “The Porn Paradox,” *Christianity Today*, July/August 2016, 38.

There's a staggeringly diverse and constantly expanding array of free, hard-core content online. One of the largest porn sites claims to have **2,400,000 visitors per hour**, with 4,392,486,580 (that's *billion*) hours of content watched in 2015 alone, which is more than twice as long as humans have been on earth. Here's how that works

Noah Church is a 26-year-old part-time wildland firefighter in Portland, Oregon. When he was 9, he found naked pictures on the Internet, and he soon learned how to download explicit videos. When he was 15, streaming videos arrived, and he watched those. Often. Several times a day, doing that which people often do while watching that genre by themselves.

After a while, he says, those videos did not arouse him as much, so he moved on to different configurations, sometimes involving just women, sometimes one woman and several guys, sometimes even an unwilling woman. "I could find anything I imagined and a lot of stuff I couldn't imagine," he says. After the appeal of those waned, he moved on to the next level, more intense, often more violent.

For Gabe Deem, 28, porn was as much a part of adolescence as homework or acne. "It was normal and it was everywhere," he says. He grew up in an era when what used to be considered X-rated was becoming mainstream, and he and his friends used to watch explicit videos constantly, he says, *even during class, on their school-issued laptops*. "It wasn't something we were ashamed of."



Noah and Gabe are part of a growing number of young men who are convinced that their sexual responses have been sabotaged because their brains were virtually marinated in porn when they were adolescents. Their generation has consumed explicit content in quantities and varieties never before possible, on devices designed to deliver content swiftly and privately, all at an age when their brains were more plastic—more prone to permanent change—than in later life.

These young men feel like guinea pigs in a largely unmonitored experiment in sexual conditioning, so they're beginning to push back, creating online community groups, smartphone apps and educational videos to help men quit porn. They have started blogs and podcasts and take all the public-speaking gigs they can get.

Porn has always faced criticism among the faithful and the feminist. But now, for the first time, some of the most strident alarms are coming from the same demographic as its most enthusiastic customers. They're not complaining because of any moral concern. They're complaining because they are finding that they can no longer respond sexually to anything except porn. Real people won't do at all.

Of course there are much broader concerns about porn's effect on society that go beyond the potential for sexual dysfunction, including the fact that *pornography celebrates the degradation of women and normalizes sexual aggression*. In February of this year, these issues led British Prime Minister David Cameron's government, which had previously asked Internet service providers to filter adult content unless a user opted in, to begin the process of requiring porn sites to verify the age of their users or face a fine.



Like all of the other Sin that tempts us, pornography ultimately flows from the heart, from the core of our being (Mark 7:21-23). The biblical concept of “the heart” is that it is the seat of what we trust the most—our deepest commitments, our greatest treasures. Ultimately, persons are drawn to porn not just because of the naked bodies but because it promises to give us something we long for, something we have elevated to the position of an ultimate good in our lives.

The Bible calls this heart-attitude idolatry, and idolatry is the wellspring of every kind of sin. Repenting of any sin is not about white-knuckle, try-harder strategies, but about identifying the idols of our hearts, turning from them, and turning to God who offers us much better promises than what idols can offer. As one man pondered these things, he observed that “When I think about it, I’ve wasted years of my life looking for a computer or mobile phone to provide something it is not capable of providing.”

If human trafficking is to be stopped, if we are really serious about “Not on my watch. Not in our time. We are slavery’s end,” then one of the places where we must begin is in unwavering commitment to turn from our own Sin.

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting (Psalm 139:23-24).

Dave

P.S. You can still be an IJM “Freedom Partner” by signing up at www.ijm.org/fp. Let’s stand together against human trafficking.

