

It's time to get serious about halting the porn epidemic

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Q. What is so wrong with watching porn? It is just the human body, and it doesn't seem to hurt anyone.

A. The numbers are out there, and pornography is one of the biggest businesses in our society. The porn industry makes more money annually than NBC, CBS, ABC, the NFL, etc. — combined. And that says nothing about the “free porn” accessible at no monetary cost. In addition, 90 percent of children between the ages of 8 and 16 have seen hardcore pornography.

I invite you to not ignore those numbers. I further invite you not to think that this is “someone else, somewhere else.” If your child has a smart phone or tablet, they have access to an entire world of pornography. Do not kid yourself: If you haven't placed the strictest controls on your child's device and continue to monitor where they are going, you are abdicating your responsibility as a father or mother. Put simply, you are not doing your job.

I apologize for being so blunt right off the bat, but I have seen too many people's lives destroyed (yes, destroyed) because of their use of pornography. And I have seen too many young people get sucked into a world in which people are treated as things, and the gift of sexuality is sold for pocket change. In fact, we have recently had to crack down during our middle-school retreats and events because sixth-graders were looking up porn on their iPhones or iPods during the retreat. I hate to have to say that, but until we begin to treat this seriously, there will be no stopping this epidemic.

According to The American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, 56 percent of divorce cases involve one party having “an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.” This makes complete sense. Porn takes a person (male or female) out of reality and into a fantasy world where everything is about me, and others are not persons at all but mere commodities or things for my pleasure. It is no mystery where this leads. If others exist for my sake, and I can easily dispose of them once they have served my purposes, how quickly would that mentality affect all of my other relationships?

It is this reality that apparently led St. John Paul II to say, “The problem with pornography is not that it reveals too much of the person, but that it reveals too little.” The human body is not the problem. The human body is good and is the only thing that reveals the person. The problem resides in the human heart. The human heart is fallen. As such, we are often incapable of seeing “the person” when they are presented to us in the way that pornography presents them.

Of course, there are people who will point to porn actors and actresses who claim to enjoy what they are doing, but the statistics speak for themselves. Eighty percent of women in porn use drugs regularly. At least 66 percent of porn performers have some kind of sexually transmitted disease. Eighty-eight percent of scenes in the top 50 porn films depict aggressive or violent behavior. The average porn performer dies by age 37!

If you or someone you love struggles with pornography, there is always help. First, get to confession and let Jesus Christ forgive and strengthen you. In addition, integrityrestored.com is a fantastic tool for those who are deeply trapped in a cycle of porn. And Covenant Eyes is the single best software out there for accountability. It is carried on all platforms: computer, tablet and phone, and people serious about getting rid of porn in their life will not hesitate to pay the minimal monthly fee.

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