

PASTORAL PENSÉES

# Seven Reasons You Should Not Indulge in Pornography

— Andrew David Naselli —

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**Abstract:** You should not indulge in pornography for at least seven reasons: (1) It will send you to hell. (2) It does not glorify God with your body. (3) It is a poisonous, fleeting pleasure. (4) It foolishly wastes your life. (5) It betrays your wife and children. (6) It ruins your mind and conscience. (7) It participates in sex slavery.

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Boys and men today regularly indulge in pornography—even guys who profess to be Christians.<sup>1</sup> By “indulging in pornography,” I mean that you sinfully allow yourself to enjoy the pleasure of printed or visual material that explicitly describes or displays sexual body parts or activity in order to stimulate erotic feelings. The most common way this is happening in our culture is by viewing sexually charged images and videos on the Internet.

My goal is to motivate you to say no to pornography by God’s grace. This article does not comprehensively address how to deal with pornography. Other resources do that well, and I recommend several of them below. My burden in this article is to *motivate* you not to indulge in pornography. I am particularly burdened to motivate people who habitually indulge in pornography and who are not killing their sin of lust. If that describes you, then this article is a way of metaphorically taking you firmly by the shoulders, looking you directly in the eyes, and soberly warning you, “Wake up! Do you realize what the consequences are for indulging in pornography?!”

You should not indulge in pornography for at least seven reasons.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This article lightly revises what the author presented at a “Pure Pleasure” conference for the men of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis on April 16, 2016. Consequently, the article directly addresses men though most of it also applies to women.

<sup>2</sup> There are other reasons, but these seven reasons are some of the most compelling and motivating. Cf. Tim Chester, “Looking beyond the Frame,” in *Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 15–35, 148–49.

## *1. Indulging in Pornography Will Send You to Hell*

In his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus addresses lust:

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.” But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell. (Matt 5:27–30)<sup>3</sup>

Jesus authoritatively interprets what “You shall not commit adultery” means. It does not merely prohibit you from stealing someone else’s wife. It prohibits you from lusting. Jesus says that looking at a woman for the purpose of lusting is sin. So if you indulge in pornography, you are sinning.

Jesus then reaches a logical conclusion: Since it is sinful to look at a woman with lustful intent, *therefore*, you should tear out your eye if it causes you to sin, and you should cut off your right hand if it causes you to sin. (The “right hand” is probably “a euphemism for the male sexual organ.”<sup>4</sup>) And Jesus supports those conclusions with two parallel reasons: it is better to lose your eye or genitals than for your whole body to go to hell.

People who habitually and unrepentantly indulge in pornography will go to hell. One evidence that you have genuine faith in Jesus is that you are fighting lust. Indulging in pornography is a form of sexual immorality. And the sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God. God’s wrath is against the sexually immoral:

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (Eph 5:3–6)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Cor 6:9–11)

“The sexually immoral” includes people who indulge in pornography. Here’s a paraphrase of 1 Cor 6:9–10: “Don’t think that you can get away with an unrepentantly sinful lifestyle. Don’t think that you can

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<sup>3</sup> Unless otherwise noted, Scripture quotations are from the ESV.

<sup>4</sup> D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *Matthew–Mark*, 2nd ed., Expositor’s Bible Commentary 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010), 185.

live that way and still be a citizen of God’s kingdom. Unrepentantly sinful lifestyles do not characterize citizens of God’s kingdom.”

And 1 Cor 6:11 is a reminder to Christians: You are not inherently better than non-Christians. The sins that characterize non-Christians used to characterize your heart before God saved you. The sinners in 1 Cor 6:9–10 are exactly who Christians used to be—past tense. The only difference is that God intervened: he “washed” you clean from your filthy lifestyle and forgave you; he “sanctified” you as God’s holy people, who are the Holy Spirit’s temple (1 Cor 3:16–17); he “justified” you, legally declaring that you are righteous.

So don’t think that your indulging in pornography is no big deal. Don’t think you can get away with an unrepentantly sinful lifestyle. The sinful people in 1 Cor 6:9–10 represent the type of people who are not citizens of God’s kingdom. If indulging in pornography characterizes your life, then you can have no assurance that you are a Christian.<sup>5</sup> Yes, Christians sin. But Christians are *repenting* sinners. So become what you are: clean, holy, righteous.

Your eternal destiny is at stake. Indulging in pornography is a treasonous sin against God. That is why Jesus pronounced, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matt 5:8). If you are indulging in pornography, then you are not pure in heart. And only the pure in heart will see God. *I’m trying to scare the hell out of you*—or more precisely, to scare you out of hell. Do you believe that indulging in pornography will send you to hell?

Do whatever it takes to win the battle over lust—even if it means plucking out your eye. Of course, plucking out your eye won’t solve the problem because lust is a heart-issue. There’s not a one-size-fits-all strategy for fighting lust, but you need to fight the battle with multiple weapons. It may mean that you install software like Covenant Eyes on your electronic devices. It may mean that you maintain transparent accountability relationships with godly men. It may mean that you refuse to go certain places, own certain devices, watch certain movies, or view certain websites. Whatever it takes for you to win the battle over lust, it is worth it because indulging in pornography will send you to hell.<sup>6</sup>

### ***2. Indulging in Pornography Does Not Glorify God with Your Body***

Glorifying God is a way of feeling and thinking and acting that makes much of God. It shows that God is supremely great and good. It demonstrates that God is all-wise and all-satisfying. We most

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<sup>5</sup> Cf. Donald S. Whitney, *How Can I Be Sure I’m a Christian? What the Bible Says about Assurance of Salvation* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994); D. A. Carson, “Reflections on Assurance,” in *Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace*, ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 247–76; Sam Storms, *Kept for Jesus: What the New Testament Really Teaches about Assurance of Salvation and Eternal Security* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015); Wayne Grudem, “Free Grace” *Theology: 5 Ways It Diminishes the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 41–97. ed. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000)

<sup>6</sup> The two most helpful resources on fighting lust that I am aware of complement each other: John Piper, “Faith in Future Grace vs. Lust,” in *Future Grace* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1995), 329–38; Heath Lambert, *Finally Free: Fighting for Purity with the Power of Grace* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013). They complement each other because Piper’s chapter emphasizes the powerful motivation that only the pure in heart will see God while Lambert’s book presents eight grace-empowered strategies for fighting lust: sorrow, accountability, radical measures, confession, your spouse (or singleness), humility, gratitude, and a dynamic relationship with Jesus.

glorify God when he most satisfies us.<sup>7</sup> That's what God created us for. And you glorify God with your physical body when you use it the way God intends. Indulging in pornography does not glorify God with your body:

“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything. “Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food—and God will destroy both one and the other.” The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. “Every sin a person commits is outside the body,” but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 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 Cor 6:12–20)<sup>8</sup>

In this passage Paul is addressing another issue in 1 Corinthians in which the Corinthians have adopted the worldly values of their pagan culture: excusing sexual immorality. It appears that men in Corinth who professed to be Christians were having sex with prostitutes, probably at the end of dinner parties.<sup>9</sup> While Paul specifically combats one type of sexual immorality in this passage (i.e., having sex with a prostitute), what he says *applies* to any kind of immoral sex—including indulging in pornography, which is a type of sexual immorality.

Verses 19–20 support v. 18c by explaining why committing immoral sex is a sin against your own body. To paraphrase vv. 19–20a, “Christian, your individual physical body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, whom God gave you. Consequently, you don’t own your body—God does because he paid for it at the cost of his Son’s death.” One of the most motivating reasons not to indulge in pornography is that “your body is a temple” (v. 19a). The temple-theme is a major theme in biblical theology.<sup>10</sup> Tracing how the

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the writings of John Piper, especially his signature book, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, 4th ed. (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> The English translation tweaks the ESV in three ways: (1) It extends the third slogan to include the words “and God will destroy both one and the other.” (2) It deletes the word “other” in v. 18b. The ESV says, “Every *other* sin a person commits . . .” (3) It treats v. 18b as a slogan rather than Paul’s statement by adding quotation marks. For a defense, see Andrew David Naselli, “Is Every Sin Outside the Body Except Immoral Sex? Weighing Whether 1 Cor 6:18b Is Paul’s Statement or a Corinthian Slogan,” *JBL* 136 (2017): forthcoming.

<sup>9</sup> Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001), 86–93.

<sup>10</sup> See G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). New Studies in Biblical Theology 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004). For a more accessible version, see G. K. Beale and Mitchell Kim, *God Dwells among Us: Expanding Eden to the Ends of the Earth* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2014). See also J. Daniel Hays, *The Temple and the Tabernacle: A Study of God’s Dwelling Places from Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2016). Unfortunately, neither Beale nor Hays deal penetratingly with 1 Cor 6:19 in light of the temple-theme throughout the Bible; Beale gives it about a paragraph (Beale, *The Temple and the Church’s Mission*, 252), and Hays doesn’t even mention 1 Cor 6:19.

temple fits in the Bible's storyline richly enhances what "your body is a temple" means in v. 19a.<sup>11</sup> It is unthinkable to indulge in pornography in the Most Holy Place. But now your physical body is the Most Holy Place. So don't defile it. Keep it pure because it is sacred space.

The final line (v. 20b) concludes vv. 18c–20 as well as the whole passage: "glorify God in your body." So here's one way to summarize Paul's main argument in vv. 12–20 in one sentence: *Glorify God with your body by not committing sexual immorality.* When you indulge in pornography, you sin against God himself because God owns your body. Indulging in pornography does not glorify God with your body.

### ***3. Indulging in Pornography Is a Poisonous, Fleeting Pleasure***

Moses chose not "to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin." That means sin can be pleasurable—at least for a time. But that pleasure is fleeting:

By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. (Heb 11:24–26)

Indulging in pornography is immediately pleasurable, but that pleasure is fleeting. It leaves you feeling empty, unsatisfied, yearning for more.

Could God say the same thing about you regarding pornography?

By faith *you* refused to indulge in pornography because you chose to enjoy God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of pornography. You did that because you considered enjoying God as greater than any pleasure that pornography could offer because you were looking to the reward.

Indulging in pornography is like eating a sugar-coated poison pill. Why would you try to satisfy your physical hunger with sugar-coated poison pills when you could feast on excellent food? And why would you try to satisfy your desire to be happy with the sugar-coated poison pill of pornography when you enjoy God himself? Indulging in pornography is always foolish; it is never wise (cf. Prov 6:32: "He who commits adultery lacks sense; he who does it destroys himself").<sup>12</sup> Indulging in pornography may satisfy your sinful urges short-term, but it will never make you happy long-term. It steals your joy.

So don't desire pornography; desire God. The pleasures of pornography are poisonous and fleeting; the pleasures of God are eternally and infinitely satisfying. "The way to fight lust is to feed faith with the precious and magnificent promise that the pure in heart will see, face to face, the all-satisfying God of glory."<sup>13</sup> "People are starving for the grandeur of God. And the vast majority do not know it."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> See ch. 9 in Andrew David Naselli, *How to Understand and Apply the New Testament: Twelve Steps from Exegesis to Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed, 2017).

<sup>12</sup> See Randy Alcorn, *The Purity Principle* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Piper, "Faith in Future Grace vs. Lust," 338.

<sup>14</sup> John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 147.

One way to fuel your desire to know and worship God is by reading or listening to John Piper's sermon "Sex and the Supremacy of Christ."<sup>15</sup> Piper concludes,

*Knowing the supremacy of Christ enlarges the soul so that sex and its little thrills become as small as they really are. Little souls make little lusts have great power. The soul, as it were, expands to encompass the magnitude of its treasure. The human soul was made to see and savor the supremacy of Christ. Nothing else is big enough to enlarge the soul as God intended and make little lusts lose their power. . . .*

My conviction is that one of the main reasons the world and the church are awash in lust and pornography . . . is that our lives are intellectually and emotionally disconnected from the infinite, soul-staggering grandeur for which we were made. Inside and outside the church Western culture is drowning in a sea of triviality, pettiness, banality, and silliness. Television is trivial. Radio is trivial. Conversation is trivial. Education is trivial. Christian books are trivial. Worship styles are trivial. It is inevitable that the human heart, which was made to be staggered with the supremacy of Christ, but instead is drowning in a sea of banal entertainment, will reach for the best natural buzz that life can give: sex.

Therefore, the deepest cure to our pitiful addictions is not any mental strategies—though I believe in them and have my own (called ANTHEM). The deepest cure is to be intellectually and emotionally staggered by the infinite, everlasting, unchanging supremacy of Christ in all things.<sup>16</sup>

#### ***4. Indulging in Pornography Foolishly Wastes Your Life***

"Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph 5:15–17). A drop of water seems infinitesimal compared to the Pacific Ocean. So does your short life on this earth compared to life after death. Right now there are so many people to love and serve, so much to learn, so much to do. But instead of swimming in the ocean of the Bible and strategically investing time and money to spread the gospel in your community and around the world, you may be foolishly wasting

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<sup>15</sup> John Piper, "Sex and the Supremacy of Christ," in *Sex and the Supremacy of Christ*, ed. John Piper and Justin Taylor (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 25–46. That is the published form of a two-part sermon series from the Desiring God 2004 National Conference: <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/sex-and-the-supremacy-of-christ-part-1> and <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/sex-and-the-supremacy-of-christ-part-2>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 43–44. Cf. what Piper preached at the 2012 Passion Conference in Atlanta: "Little hearts, little souls give little lust big power. Big hearts give little lust little power because they look little. When you see the magnitude of your treasure, your soul swells to get around it and you mark pornography as a powerless thrill. That's the way it works. You don't . . . just fight with saying, 'Say no, say no, say no.' That doesn't work. You got to see. Your heart has to get bigger and bigger and bigger so that this little temptation looks like the stupid suicidal insane little monster it is" (John Piper, "Seeing and Savoring the Supremacy of Jesus Christ Above All Things," *Desiring God*, January 1, 2012, <http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/seeing-and-savoring-the-supremacy-of-jesus-christ-above-all-things>).

your life by indulging in pornography.<sup>17</sup> When you indulge in pornography, you waste your time and energy and sometimes money. Instead of powerfully serving God with every ounce of your being, you waste your God-given life (see 2 Tim 2:20–22). You cripple the church you are a part of because instead of serving others inside and outside your church, you are like Achan, deceitfully loving your sin instead of forsaking it. Instead of freely serving God as a slave of righteousness, you live like you are enslaved to the sin of pornography (cf. Rom 6). When you indulge in pornography, you act like what the book of Proverbs calls a fool. “Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom” (Ps 90:12).

### ***5. Indulging in Pornography Betrays Your Wife and Children***

This reason applies to you if you are married or ever will be married.

When I married my wife, Jenni, I made a covenant with her. This is what I promised her: “I, Andy, will cleave to you, Jenni, as my wife according to God’s design for marriage. I will love you and lead you as Christ does the church. Until death parts us, I promise you my loving loyalty.” I included that term “loving loyalty” with the Hebrew word *hesed* in mind. That word occurs in the OT 248 times, and it refers to *loving loyalty* or *loyal love* based on a committed relationship that results in kind deeds. When it refers to marriage, that loving loyalty is a *covenant* loyalty. I would rather die than be unfaithful to my wife.<sup>18</sup>

If you indulge in pornography, then you are not loving your wife. You are breaking your promise to be lovingly loyal to her. You are betraying her. You are committing adultery against her. And you are making her compete with the database of racy images you have lusted after. Indulging in pornography can ruin your marriage.

And indulging in pornography will harm not only your marriage but your children. You will lose your moral authority with your family. Your children will suffer. And if it leads to divorce, then your children will suffer even more. (I know this firsthand; my parents separated when I was four and divorced when I was five.)

### ***6. Indulging in Pornography Ruins Your Mind and Conscience***

I’ll unpack this reason in four steps:

1. *Indulging in pornography ruins how you think about sex.* Sex is a gift from God that is exclusively for one man and one woman who have covenanted together in marriage. Sex in marriage is beautiful. Sex is God’s idea, and we should praise him for it. Pornography corrupts and perverts sex. If you indulge in pornography, you will think about sex perversely. If you are married and indulge in pornography, then you will delight in sex with your wife less and less.

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. John Piper, *Don’t Waste Your Life* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2003).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. D. A. Carson, *How Long, O Lord? Reflections on Suffering and Evil*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 107: “I do not know how many times I have sung the words, ‘O let me never, never / Outlive my love for Thee,’ but I mean them. I would rather die than end up unfaithful to my wife; I would rather die than deny by a profligate life what I have taught in my books; I would rather die than deny or disown the gospel. God knows there are many things in my past of which I am deeply ashamed; I would not want such shame to multiply and bring dishonor to Christ in years to come. There are worse things than dying.”

2. *Indulging in pornography ruins how you think about women.* Women are humans whom God created in his image, and they beautifully display God's glory. If you lust after the bodies of women, then you will think about women as sex objects to satisfy your sinful lusts rather than as fellow image-bearers.

3. *Indulging in pornography ruins how you think.* It destructively rewires your brain.<sup>19</sup> It ruins how you think and thus warps your affections.

4. *Consequently, indulging in pornography ruins your conscience.* Your conscience is your consciousness of what you believe is "right" and "wrong."<sup>20</sup> When you indulge in pornography, you desensitize your conscience because you suppress and silence your conscience and rationalize away your sin. Eventually, you can damage your conscience so badly that it doesn't condemn you when you sin. You may, for example, need to calibrate your conscience about viewing sexually charged nudity in videos.<sup>21</sup>

As a Christian, you must *renew* your mind with Scripture, but indulging in pornography *ruins* your mind and conscience.

## 7. *Indulging in Pornography Participates in Sex Slavery*<sup>22</sup>

When you indulge in pornography, you feed the system. And the system harms women. One way pornography harms women is that it ruins how women think about themselves. Many women are insecure about their body image and even hate their bodies and have eating disorders and are depressed because they can't compete with the impossible standards of pornography.

But pornography harms women even more significantly: *When you indulge in pornography, you participate in sex slavery.* Pornography is to sex slavery what gasoline is to the engines of motor vehicles. Gas fuels engines. Pornography fuels sex slavery.

### 7.1. What Is Sex Slavery?

A sex slave is a person who is the property of another person, and that owner forces the slave to obey them by performing sex acts, usually for money. Sex slavery is sex trafficking, which includes acquiring, transporting, and exploiting sex slaves.

Most prostituted women are sex slaves. Often a pimp physically and psychologically abuses prostituted women to coerce them to continue committing commercial sex acts. Sometimes people abduct children and adolescent women and force them into prostitution. Most women who enter prostitution have already been sexually abused. Prostituted women are often girls or adolescent women who are insecure and become emotionally traumatized and view themselves as worthless.

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<sup>19</sup> See William M. Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009

<sup>20</sup> See Andrew David Naselli and J. D. Crowley, *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 70–71.

<sup>22</sup> This section condenses Andrew David Naselli, "When You Indulge in Pornography, You Participate in Sex Slavery," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* 20:2 (2015): 23–29 (used with permission).



## 7.2. How Does Pornography Fuel Sex Slavery?

Pornography fuels the demand for prostitution and thus for sex slavery. I haven't heard anyone argue this more clearly and compellingly than David Platt does in chapter 5 of his book *Counter Culture*.<sup>23</sup> Platt tells the story of a nine-year-old girl in northern Nepal named Maliha. A charming slave trader deceived Maliha's poverty-stricken single mother when he promised to help provide for their family by helping Maliha get a well-paying job in the city at the bottom of the Himalayan mountains. He promised to send the money she earned back to the mother and to bring Maliha back to visit her family at least once each year. The mother eventually but reluctantly agreed, but the man did not keep his word. Maliha's new job was to sit outside a restaurant in the city, where customers would violate this beautiful girl. Sometimes twenty customers a day would rape Maliha.

Platt next tells a story of a sixteen-year-old girl named Hannah. She lived in Birmingham, Alabama. Her boyfriend started treating her like a queen and convinced her to flee with him to Los Angeles so that she could be a model. Then he pressured her to pose nude for photo shoots. Then he pressured her to have sex with truckers. Her boyfriend became her pimp.

Platt then shows how pornography connects to sex trafficking:

Research continually demonstrates a clear link between sex trafficking and the production of pornography. Federal legislation has acknowledged this, participants in the production of pornography have confirmed this, and while exact figures are hard to pin down, one anti-trafficking center reports that at least a third of victims trafficked for sex are used in the production of pornography. Another study on the relationship between prostitution, pornography, and trafficking found that one half of nearly nine hundred prostitutes in nine different countries reported pornography being made of them while in prostitution. When we hear such research, we mustn't miss the connection. Men and women who indulge in pornography are creating the demand for more prostitutes, and in turn they are fueling the sex-trafficking industry.

Yet the cycle is even more vicious than that. For the more people watch pornography, the more they desire sexual fulfillment through prostitution. Such desire drives men (and women) to engage in physical prostitution or even virtual prostitution as "every home computer [becomes] a potential red light district." Pornography thus feeds prostitution, again increasing the demand for sex trafficking.

Do we realize what we're doing? Every time a man or woman views pornography online, we are contributing to a cycle of sex slavery from the privacy of our own computers. . . .

No matter how many red Xs we write on our hands to end slavery, as long as these same hands are clicking on pornographic websites and scrolling through sexual pictures and videos, we are frauds to the core.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> David Platt, "A War on Women: The Gospel and Sex Slavery," in *Counter Culture: A Compassionate Call to Counter Culture in a World of Poverty, Same-Sex Marriage, Racism, Sex Slavery, Immigration, Persecution, Abortion, Orphans, and Pornography* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2015), 105–27, 255–57.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 120–22.

A journal that Johns Hopkins University produces also makes this connection. It “argues that there are a number of links between pornography and sex trafficking and that curbing pornography can reduce sex trafficking.”<sup>25</sup>

The growing evidence is horrific. More and more women who escape the bondage of sex slavery are testifying that pornography fuels sex slavery. Such women are often forced to pose nude for photographs and to endure sex acts for films, all while pretending to enjoy it. Not only are many of the women in pornographic pictures and films themselves sex slaves, but pimps regularly use pornography to instruct children and young women how to perform for customers.

You can’t indulge in pornography without being part of that culture, without fueling prostitution and sex slavery. Pornography is part of the law of supply and demand for prostitution and sex slavery. It fuels the demand for sex slavery.

Plant this deeply and firmly in your conscience: *Since pornography fuels sex slavery, indulging in pornography to any degree is participating in sex slavery.* This is the case even if the person you lustfully look at is profiting financially from that pornography. The point is that any and all pornography is part of the worldwide system that fuels prostitution and thus fuels sex slavery.

### 7.3. How Should Men Feel about Pornography?

What does it mean to be a man? It’s hard to improve how John Piper defines mature masculinity: “At the heart of mature masculinity is a sense of benevolent responsibility to lead, provide for and protect women in ways appropriate to a man’s differing relationships.”<sup>26</sup> Real men *protect* women. A man honors a woman when he protects her. “Women and children are put into the lifeboats first, not because the men are necessarily better swimmers, but because of a deep sense of honorable fitness. It belongs to masculinity to accept danger to protect women. . . . A mature man senses instinctively that as a man he is called to take the lead in guarding the woman he is with.”<sup>27</sup>

It is unconscionable for a man to harm a woman or child. And looking at pornography belongs in that same category because pornography harms women. Think about pornography from the vantage point of manhood.

Can you hear that story about the nine-year-old Maliha and not feel both pity for Maliha and righteous anger towards those who oppress her? There are millions of stories that are variations on Maliha’s life as a sex slave. When you hear how adults are enslaving girls and young women and raping them, does that not make you feel sick to your stomach? Do you not feel outraged against people who victimize children and young women? *That is exactly how you should feel about pornography.* Pornography should be as vomit-inducing to you as an evil man raping a nine-year-old girl. Pornography should be as revolting and disgusting to you as a group of evil men gang-raping a helpless woman. “If

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<sup>25</sup> Robert W. Peters, Laura J. Lederer, and Shane Kelly, “The Slave and the Porn Star: Sexual Trafficking and Pornography,” *The Protection Project Journal of Human Rights and Civil Society* 5 (2012): 1.

<sup>26</sup> John Piper, “A Vision of Biblical Complementarity: Manhood and Womanhood Defined according to the Bible,” in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood: A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. John Piper and Wayne Grudem (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991), 36.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 43–44.

you saw a woman being gang raped in a back alley, would you stop and masturbate?”<sup>28</sup> That’s essentially what you are doing when you indulge in pornography.

When you indulge in pornography, you participate in sex slavery. The pornography industry abuses women and children by fueling prostitution and sex slavery. Honorable men *protect* women and children. Honorable men don’t *abuse* women and children.

### 8. Conclusion

So those are seven reasons you should not indulge in pornography:

1. It will send you to hell.
2. It does not glorify God with your body.
3. It is a poisonous, fleeting pleasure.
4. It foolishly wastes your life.
5. It betrays your wife and children.
6. It ruins your mind and conscience.
7. It participates in sex slavery.

*Father, thank you that your grace trains us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions such as indulging in pornography. Thank you that your grace enables us to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from sins like pornography and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. We need your grace. Please give us grace not to indulge in pornography but instead to find our satisfaction in you. Amen.*

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<sup>28</sup> Toby J. Sumpter, “The Porn War,” *Having Two Legs*, April 30, 2013, <http://www.tobyjsumpster.com/the-porn-war/>.