



Q & A

Q: I'm not really into porn, I just get curious once in a while. Is that so bad?

A: Our Church Fathers describe sin like a fire: when it starts, it's just a little spark. But that little spark can start a raging wildfire. No one plans on getting addicted to porn, but it happens to lots of people, all of the time. If you're not addicted yet, that doesn't mean you won't be soon. And meanwhile, you're filling your head and your heart with images of sex, and that's not what God wants for us. So snuff out the spark. It's a whole lot harder to put out a wildfire.

Q: Isn't it better for me to watch porn than to act on my desires in real life?

A: Jesus said that when we lust after someone, we've already sinned in our hearts. That doesn't mean we can say "well, I've already done it in my heart, so I might as well go do it for real." What we watch, hear, think and let into our hearts really matters. Our Church teaches us to guard our hearts like soldiers guard the gate to a king's castle. We are the temple of God Himself, and we have to be vigilant in order to keep His Temple pure, both body and soul.

- Online Resources:**
- *Christianity Today*, Addicted to Porn: www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/hottopics/sexabstinence/15.50.html?start=2
 - *Books:*
 - *Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time*, Stephen Arterburn, Fred Stoeker, Random House, 2000.
 - *Every Woman's Battle: Discovering God's Plan for Sexual and Emotional Fulfillment*, by Shannon Ethridge, Stephen Arterburn, Waterbrook Publishers, 2009.

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If you or someone you know is dealing with porn addiction, speak to a friend, a trusted adult, or your parish priest to help you set attainable goals. Check out www.safefamilies.org/recovery.php for practical tools to overcoming addiction.

Find us on Facebook!
 www.facebook.com/GOYAministry

GET THE FACTS

- Most people don't initially seek out porn, but inadvertently come across it on online.
- Pornography often unintentionally becomes an addiction. Many end up addicted to porn as others are addicted to alcohol or drugs.
- Habitual viewing of pornography usually leads to increased isolation and a compulsion to view more.
- Viewing pornography misinforms the viewer about sexuality, as it removes sexual interaction from the context of a loving, committed relationship and instead emphasizes the self-centered seeking of pleasure.
- Pornography is fueled by a multi-billion dollar industry seeking to lure in new customers, whom it only seeks to profit from, not entertain.

NAVIGATING THROUGH YOUR TEEN YEARS: PORNOGRAPHY

KNOW THE SIGNS

Pornography has always existed, but before the internet, it was definitely more difficult to come across. Now pornography is available to anyone with a computer, cell phone, iPod—pretty much anything that's wifi-enabled. Its addictive properties are well known to counseling professionals who deal with millions of people whose marriages, careers and entire lives are damaged by this activity. Some people who are addicted to porn exhibit the following:

- Giving up other activities in order to be alone in a place where porn can be viewed.
- Becoming desensitized to graphic sexual images because of repeated exposure.
- Increased isolation from friends, family, and the church.

THE CHURCH SPEAKS

God is not embarrassed in the same way we are by certain sins. He has given us His commandments and His ways for our benefit, so we can live the best lives possible. Sex was designed by God as a way to express and experience true love between a husband and wife. Pornography portrays sex in a way that removes the holy love that joins a married couple and replaces it with lust. Viewing porn can provide a "high" similar to that received from drugs, and is often sought as a relief from life's pressures. While it may seem to promise relief and an escape from stress, it never delivers, often leaving us with feelings of isolation and loneliness.

Sex is Holy

God created sex and offers it to a husband and wife as a reflection of the love which binds the persons of the Trinity: the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately pornography perverts that reflection, meaning that it literally deviates from what it was intended to be, that is, its original purpose.

God is Love

God's greatest commandment, to love one another, should be echoed in every aspect of our lives. Watching porn devalues God's creation by treating men and women as sexual objects.

The Truth will set you Free

When viewing inappropriate images, we create a false sense of reality that often allows us to fall deeper and deeper into the grasp of pornography addiction. The Church offers us a solution—freedom in Christ (Romans 8). When we are able to fully submit ourselves to Jesus Christ, we are no longer bound or enslaved by our own human desires.

The Way Out

God offers us the gift of Confession, where we can be free from those things that bring us down. He always wants us to come back to Him, no matter what we've done and how far we've strayed. Don't let excuses stop you from approaching Confession, because this is the first step toward healing.