



Counselor's Corner

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By Daniel Moore

The Battle for Purity

In the last edition, Mrs. Tosha Haynes wrote about some of the battles of the heart that high-school students experience. This week I want to write specifically about one of the prevalent issues people all over the world face in this battle over their hearts.

Sexual brokenness (sin, lust, addiction, etc.) has been around since the Fall, and is nothing “new under the sun.” How could we forget that even King David, a “man after God’s own heart,” showed weakness in this area when he saw a beautiful woman bathing and gave into his own lust for sexual gratification? His sin led to an affair, murder, and the death of David’s unborn child. It seems that even men (and women) who desire to know God and live for his glory can still struggle with sexual brokenness.

Sex is God’s good gift to His people, to be enjoyed within the context of marriage. Sexual desire, arousal, and longing are, in and of themselves, good and normal. But, according to C.S. Lewis in his discussion of this topic, something has gone seriously wrong with our appetite for sex. In our world today, sexual desire and pursuit have grown out of control, and are often seen as the highest achievement and best experience to pursue. Go to any magazine rack at any drug store, or watch television for more than thirty minutes, and what I am saying will be obvious. Sexual temptation is everywhere!

And now, with the invention and development of the internet over the past twenty years, sexual brokenness has a new and effective pathway to our eyes and, therefore, our hearts. In fact, with the normalcy of the internet in today’s culture, pornography has become like “second-hand smoke,” in that people are harmed by sexual images whether they intentionally seek them out or not. In fact, one in three kids have unintentionally viewed porn by age ten, and the average age of a child’s first exposure to pornography is 11 years old.

In working with youth all over the country for the past 13 years as a counselor and former youth pastor, I have heard many stories of teens and young people stuck in sexual sin. So many times, these are folks who love God and want to live holy lives, but accidentally viewed porn at an early age. Exposure to porn then piqued their curiosity, desensitized them to sexual images, and sometimes led to sexual addiction later in life. Statistically, nine out of ten young men, and one in three young women, report using pornography on a regular basis! “Sex” and “Porn” are ranked 4th and 6th, respectively, among the top ten most popular word searches on the internet.

So how can we, as parents of young people, help our children navigate their God-given sexuality in light of our sex-saturated culture? Let me first suggest that you *establish dialogue* with your child on this issue. Do not ignore the problem and hope it goes away. Do not judge your child for their struggles, and do not use shame to scare your children into conformity. Shame is actually the opposite of freedom in Christ and is what generally fuels sexual brokenness and hiding. On the other hand, do talk to your children openly about this in a way that communicates that you believe in their goodness, even if they struggle with sexual sin, and want to know their hearts more than you want them to conform to right behavior.

Second, *supervise* and know your child's online activity. Internet porn can be accessed through family computers, laptops, iPods and iPads, cell phones, and video-game systems. Use age-appropriate filters on all internet-capable devices, and consider using monitoring software, particularly if you know your child has been exposed to porn or has a history of sexual behavior.

Finally, establish an agreement with your child that they will come talk to you if and when they are exposed to sexual images, inside or outside of your home. Your kids want you to know what is going on in their lives, even when they pretend they don't and hide their activities from you. They desire to be known, even in this area. Focus on their hearts, not just on the rules or their behavior.

We cannot keep sin from harming our children, but we can stand up, wise up, and fight for the hearts of our children. My admonition for you is to know the dangers out there; believe in the inherent goodness of your children, even if they are caught in the trap of sexual brokenness; and communicate openly with your kids about the reality of God's gift of sex. Please, educate yourself about the darkness that wants to own and then destroy your children in the realm of sexually explicit images and brokenness.

Finally, www.Enough.org is a website dedicated to protecting children from potential dangers of the internet. I strongly encourage all parents to visit this site to educate themselves more in the area of internet safety.

A prayer for today: "Lord, thank you for the gift of sex. Please protect me and my family from the damage of sexual brokenness. Let Your words in John 1:5 be true for my family, where You said, "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it." Amen.

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Christ Presbyterian Academy, an educational ministry of Christ Presbyterian Church, assists Christian families in helping students come to know God, evaluate all knowledge and all life by His truth, and live transformed by His truth for His glory.

Our Motto

Soli Deo Gloria — To God Alone Be the Glory