



# The Good News

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## *The Issue of Pornography and Lust*

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**W**e live in a great time. The level of technology we've achieved means that information on just about anything is at most people's fingertips. If you want to know more about your favorite actor/singer/etc, just Google them! If you want to learn more about ancient civilizations, just Wikipedia them! You want to know how to say "I can't speak Spanish" in Spanish? "Mi no habla espanol"! See? I just looked it up! It's incredibly easy to access information on a wide variety of topics and issues. This is wonderful for Christians and our efforts to learn and teach others also, as God's Word is readily and freely available to anyone, anywhere. However, with the good also comes some bad. There are many things that can be accessed that shouldn't be if we seek to serve the Lord. One such category is pornography.

According to dictionary.com, **pornography** is defined as "*sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings, or the like, whose purpose is to elicit sexual arousal*". Please note, the definition does not explicitly say "naked photos". There is such a thing as "soft porn" in which men and women are depicted in their underwear (or swimsuits) or wearing provocative clothing and seen in provocative poses that are designed with the same intent...but it is seen by society as more acceptable since no private parts are shown. These can be found everywhere: from ads that pop up innocently on webpages, to Carls Jr. commercials for burgers. Society is embracing the freedom to depict nakedness and sexuality, and we as Christians not only must be prepared to deal with the temptations that come from it, but also prepare our children for what they are going to face at school, Walmart, and what they see on TV and the Internet.

It is important to understand that, not only is being personally involved in pornographic material sinful, but being involved in any activity that is designed to draw attention to our bodies in a sexual way is sinful as well, when done outside of a husband/wife relationship. (As in dancing, immodest clothing, sinful sexual activity, etc). The issue goes specifically to the thoughts and the heart of the one seeing (or hearing) such stimuli. Jesus makes it clear in **Matt. 5:27-30**, that one does not have to engage in physical sexual activity to commit sin; all one has to do is lust over another person. And while Jesus specifically mentions men lusting after women in this context, it is vital to note that this does not exclude women. While lust

certainly affects men more due to the nature of how men are sexually aroused, women are not immune to lust. Whether a woman begins to lust after a man sporting a six pack, or she is lusting over a man who is emotionally involved with her, the condemnation of lust still applies. And this is to say nothing of those who are attracted to the same sex – the condemnation of lust still applies!

It is important to understand what lust really is. Vines defines lust as "strong desire of any kind". There are only three times in the New Testament where lust is a good thing, and it is always in reference to a spiritual matter. All other times, it refers to sinful lust of the flesh. The idea being, when a man or a woman allows themselves to become sexually aroused by some stimuli (external OR internal), we embark down the road of lust. Within the relationship of a husband and wife, this is perfectly natural and holy, but outside of that relationship, it is sin.

A couple of years ago, Pamela Anderson, of all people, published an op-ed in the Wall Street Journal urging people to give up porn. She says that porn has a "*corrosive effect on a man's soul and on his ability to function as a husband, and, by extension, as [a] father. This is a public hazard of unprecedented seriousness given how freely available, anonymously accessible and easily disseminated pornography is nowadays.*" While we cannot approve of her past lifestyle (or current one), we can absolutely approve of her statement; the Scriptures back it up. Peter says in **1 Pet. 2:11**, "*Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul...*" Among "fleshly lusts" would certainly be pornography. And worryingly, this is not just an issue among non-Christians; it has become an epidemic among Christian men and women also!

This issue is important to discuss and address head-on. And it should be addressed with our children, particularly with our young men and boys. I was 10 years old when my best friend first exposed me to a porn magazine. I had no idea what I was looking at but I knew it wasn't right...and that was before the Internet age. We must be careful to acknowledge pornography for what it is – sin. But the deeper issue here, lust, is one that must be pulled up at the roots...and that only happens in the heart.