

# Immorality Kills Love

Long Beach Alliance Church • April 26, 2015 • Pastor Chris Lankford

***Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming.***

***~Colossians 3:5-6 (ESV)***

## **1) From Self-Sacrifice To Self-Indulgence**

- A) Jesus Christ ‘walked’ (conducted His life) in self-sacrificing love (Ephesians 5:2). We imitate this example of self-sacrificial love for others; lives which intentionally sacrifice our personal rights and desires for the sake of the great Gospel purposes of God (cf. 1:5-23). Christ loves each of us in this manner, therefore, we are to also live our lives (walking in love) in precisely the same self-sacrificial manner (2:10, 4:32-5:2).
- B) Self-sacrifice reveals the Gospel, it gives without requesting and provides all that is needed; it is the highest picture of purity and true love in the Bible (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a). Lives which submit personal rights and desires for the sake of others are foundational for our spiritual-family, the church (5:1); and likewise form the foundation for husbands and wives (and children) in our blood-family Gospel purposes (5:22, 25, 6:1-2).
- C) All sin is rooted in selfishness, choosing self-direction over submission to a loving God. Like a child who screams “Mine!” or “I do it!,” self-direction rejects willful dependence on God. Most insidious among self-indulgent sins are those which are sexual, because of the physical/spiritual/emotional sexual connection, which when sinful, destroys spiritual union with Christ and rejects self-sacrifice (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:12-20).

## **2) The Greatest Modern Threat To The Gospel Of Jesus Christ**

- A) Contrasting the self-sacrificial life of Christ, self-indulgent sins of “sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness” (Ephesians 5:3) have no place in the life of a follower of Jesus. The warning is so strong that any reputation of self-indulgent sexual sin “must not even be named” among Christ-followers. Christlike self-sacrifice is the only “proper” (fitting, correct/right) reputation of “saints” (holy ones), those walking in love.
- B) In the original language of Ephesians, “sexual immorality” is from the helpful word “porneia,” from which modern English derives “pornography.” In this context, “sexual immorality” includes consensual: sexual conduct outside of marriage, romantic/sexual extramarital relationships, prostitution, homosexuality, incest, fantasizing sexually/masturbation, and any exposure to pornography (including within marriage).
- C) To assure there is complete understanding that sexual immorality is completely incompatible with ‘walking in love,’ “all impurity” is also emphasized (5:3). Every possible form of impurity which pours out from sexual immorality is in view. Because healthy sexuality is inseparably bonded to our souls, and our souls are now submitted and loyal to Jesus Christ, immorality and impurity must have no place in our Christian lives.
- D) It is notable that “covetousness” (NIV, “greed”) is mentioned next, seemingly out-of-place with sexual immorality and impurity (5:3). However, “covetousness” is later explained as idolatry (5:5), bringing shocking clarity to the problem of sexual immorality and impurity. These sins are so insidious, so ferocious in their physical/spiritual/emotional effects; they actually replace the proper worship of God, Christ, and Spirit!
- E) In truth, there is no such thing as “casual sex,” or a “one-night stand.” Even sex with a prostitute is described as ‘becoming one’ (1 Corinthians 6:16). Sexual immorality and impurity are not ‘dirty little secrets,’ ‘harmless,’ or ‘victimless.’ Porneia is the voice of a seductive sermon, a human gospel disguising death and slavery as freedom in sexual ecstasy. Do not be deceived (5:6). Repent, and walk in the love of Christ (5:2).



# Growth Group Guide

**“immorality kills love”**  
**ephesians 5:3-6 • april 26 – may 1**

## **Ice Breaker!**

What is the best imitation you have ever experienced?  
What is the difference between a good imitation and a counterfeit?

## **Looking Up!**

Let’s read a couple of different paragraphs from the Bible which will help us with our Growth Group discussion.

First, read our main text from Ephesians 4:32-5:7. Is there a primary or main thought?

Next, read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a. How does this inform the call to “walk in love?”

Finally, read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. How can physical actions (sexual immorality) produce spiritual problems?

Why are “sexual immorality and all impurity” associated with covetousness/idolatry?

## **Leaning In!**

If something is associated with idolatry, it implies something/someone is being worshipped.

What is worshipped ‘behind the idol’ of sexual immorality and impurity?

Does “secret” sexual impurity or immorality impact our church? How could this impact your Growth Group?

## **Stepping Out!**

Sexual immorality and impurity were problems for the earliest church as much as they are problems in our church.

However, there are dramatic cultural differences which make these “idols” much more potent modernly.

Immorality, impurity, and covetousness are associated with the reputation of “saints” (holy ones, 5:3).

How should we respond to sexual immorality and impurity when it is revealed in our church or Growth Group?

## **Respond!**

In many significant ways, our sexuality is connected with our identity. When our identity has been damaged by pain or trauma, especially from when we were young, it is easy to “sexualize” our pain; using sex to numb pain.

Are you using sexual immorality and/or impurity in your life? There is hope.

Healing and restoration are possible through the Gospel in Christ Jesus.

Follow James 5:13-20. Freedom and healing await.

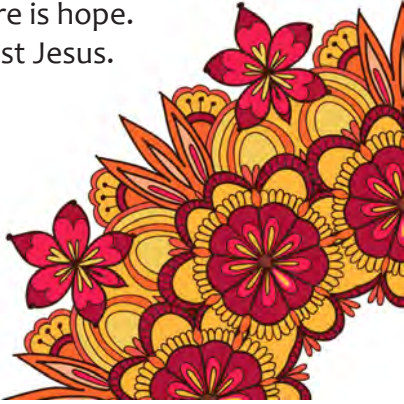


## **This Week In Action & In Prayer!**

Make Jeremiah 2:12-13 your prayer this week.

Repent from immorality, impurity, and idolatry.

Enjoy anew the love of Christ, walk in His love,  
and drink from the spring of Living Water He provides.





# HOW IS PORN ADDICTIVE?

You hear about "pornography addiction" all the time, but people never tell you what makes it so addictive, or why it even matters. You rarely hear the fact that viewing pornography messes with your brain in the same way drugs do.

WHETHER YOU'RE TAKING DRUGS OR VIEWING PORNOGRAPHY, THE ADDICTION PROCESS IS THE SAME:

## CHEMICALS

You over-expose the brain with pleasure chemicals like dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, and epinephrine.

## FRONTAL LOBES:

The area of your brain responsible for making decisions and logically thinking through situations and scenarios is the part of your brain most affected by addiction.

## REWIRING

Your brain rewires itself to accommodate the extra chemicals.

## DEPENDENCY

You build up a tolerance and a dependency to the chemicals. You go from "wanting" the pleasure chemicals in order to feel good, to "needing" them.



# HOW PORNOGRAPHY ADDICTION AFFECTS THE TEENAGE BRAIN

There is a rising problem of pornography addiction in teens. The negative effects of pornography addiction are even greater in teens as their brains are more susceptible to the chemical overload effects that come with continued viewing.

## THE SCIENCE: WHAT HAPPENS TO THE TEEN'S BRAIN

The circuitry in the brain undergoes an explosion of growth followed by a rapid pruning of neuron pathways between ages 10 and 13.

Brain scans have also found the teenage brain is dominated by areas associated with pleasure and reward, and emotional response, perhaps explaining the emotional roller-coaster years associated with puberty.

## Dopamine

is a neurotransmitter that is central in our drive for personal reward. When teens take part in stimulating or potentially addictive habits, such as pornography, there is a flood of dopamine in the brain. With repetitive increases of dopamine released into the teen brain it is rewired to crave the same effect.

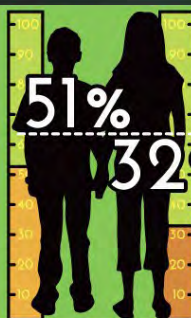


Teen brains are the most sensitive to dopamine at around age 15 and react up to four times more strongly to images perceived as exciting.

A teen's brain is at its peak of dopamine production and neuroplasticity, making it highly vulnerable to addiction and rewiring as their brain is not yet finished developing.

Sexuality specifically increases DeltaFosB a protein that serves a role as a mediator in natural reward memory. This study also found that overexpression of DeltaFosB induced a hypersexual syndrome.

## CHILDREN



51%  
32%

51% OF BOYS AND 32% OF GIRLS FIRST VIEW PORNOGRAPHY AT AGE 12 OR YOUNGER\*

Children directly exposed to pornography often suffer lasting negative or traumatic emotional responses, and are at an increased risk for developing sexual compulsions and addictive behavior.\*

## TEENS

55.4% OF TEENS HAVE VISITED A SEXUALLY EXPLICIT WEBSITE\*

Adolescents exposed to these sites are more likely to have multiple lifetime sexual partners, and are more likely to have had more than one sexual partner in the last three months.\*

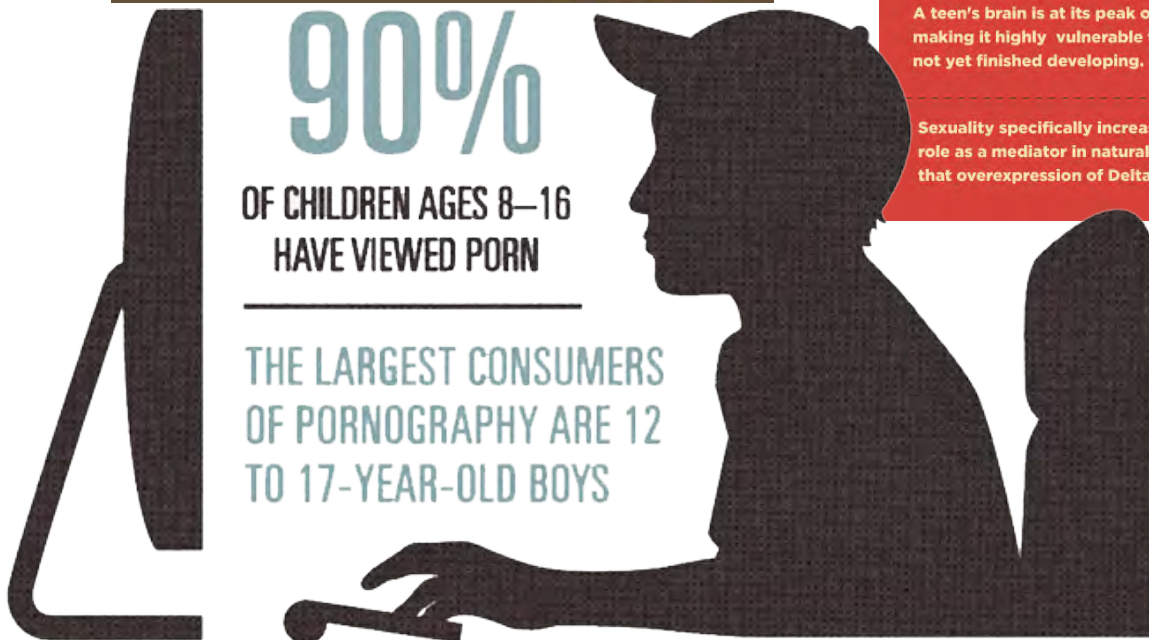


55.4%

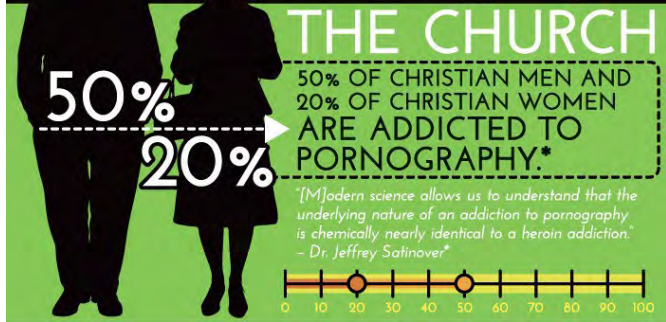
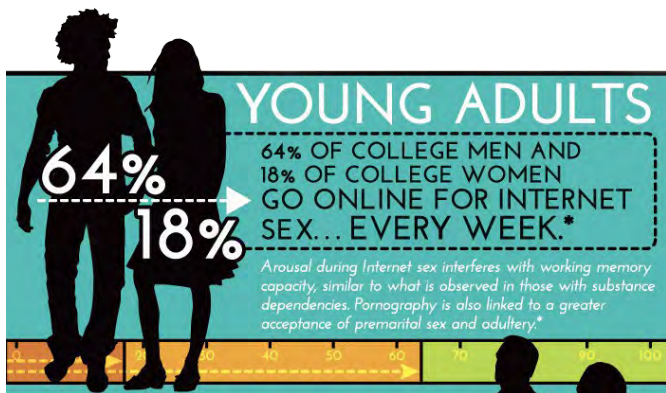
90%

OF CHILDREN AGES 8-16 HAVE VIEWED PORN

THE LARGEST CONSUMERS OF PORNOGRAPHY ARE 12 TO 17-YEAR-OLD BOYS







# PORN vs COCAINE

## The Battle for Which is Worse

### Brain

Studies have proven that excessive viewing of pornography reduces gray matter in the motivation part of the brain, causing addicts to be less motivated.

### Brain

Studies have proven that excessive use of cocaine reduces gray matter in the decision-making part of the brain, leading addicts to make poor decisions.

### Addiction

Viewing pornography increases dopamine levels. As the brain adjusts to higher levels of dopamine, it becomes desensitized to what it has already seen. So a person viewing pornography must seek porn more frequently and he/she must view more extreme types of porn to obtain the same physical sensations, causing a cycle of addiction.

### Addiction

Cocaine alters the brain to increase levels of dopamine while consuming the drug. The brain then seeks more frequent hits and larger dosages to obtain a high, causing a cycle of addiction.

### Violence

Recent studies have shown that people who regularly view pornography are statistically more likely to commit **sexual assault**, more likely to commit a **rape**, and more likely to express attitudes that support **violence against women**. Pornography users are less likely to intervene when witnessing a rape and they are less likely to show compassion for **rape victims**.

### Violence

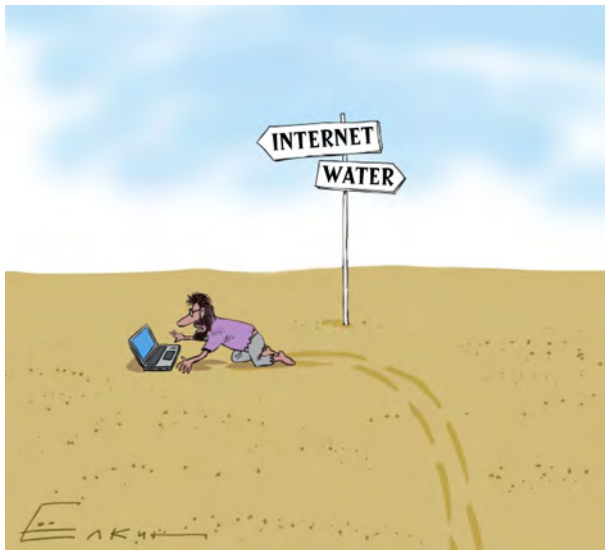
Large doses of cocaine lead users to have **bizarre, erratic, and violent** behavior. Nearly fifty percent of cocaine users have been shown to have increased levels of **anger** and **suspiciousness**.

### Depression

Research has shown that viewing pornography significantly increases feelings of loneliness in viewers.

### Depression

Research has shown that the use of cocaine frequently causes depression and cocaine use has been attributed to roughly 20% of suicides in some cities.



## WALKING IN LOVE IDEAS

- Be a good example of responsible Internet usage!
- Keep the computer in a public location!
- Install filters, especially for children!
- Turn off the Internet at night!
- Set-up "dry" Internet-free times!

**Some Easy Internet Tips  
Anyone Can Put To Use!**