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CHOOSING REALITY:  
EMPOWERING COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PURSUE FREEDOM  
FROM PORNOGRAPHY AT BREAKAWAY MINISTRIES  
IN COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

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A Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Educational Ministry

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by  
Timothy Paul Ateek  
May 2021

**APPROVAL SHEET**

CHOOSING REALITY:  
EMPOWERING COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PURSUE FREEDOM  
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To Grace Bible Church, whom God used to spark the beginning of my journey to  
freedom from pornography.

To the students at Texas A & M University who have shared their stories with me  
demonstrating the need for this project.

To Kat, who has celebrated the story of God's victory over pornography in my life.

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## PREFACE

My ability to complete this project is in large part due to the encouragement, support, help, guidance, and wisdom of many. First and foremost, I praise Jesus for the story of victory he has given me over pornography. Because of Jesus' work in my life, I have a passion to see college students experience their own victory.

Second, I cannot thank my wife, Kathryn, and our three boys Noah, Andrew, and Jake, enough for their patience and understanding throughout the entire doctoral process. Over the past two years, Kathryn has shouldered much in our family so that I could pursue a doctorate. Noah, Andrew, and Jake have had to share me at times with my schoolwork. Additionally, I am so appreciative for how Kathryn has been nothing but supportive of me sharing my story of victory over pornography.

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College Station, Texas

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Pornography has never been more accessible and acceptable than it is today. Smartphones currently provide countless individuals with the internet, and thus pornography, in their pockets and at their fingertips. It is not surprising that in a culture which prioritizes sexual freedom, pornography is not just a men's issue, it is a people issue. Additionally, pornography is not just a vice for those who do not know God. Pornography has found its way into the lives of both men and women, young and old, believers and unbelievers, laity as well as pastors, and is calling them to choose fantasy over reality. As one who personally struggled with porn for a season of life, I am well aware of how destructive it can be. At the same time, I have firsthand experience with the freedom available through the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of his Spirit. May the curriculum produced through this project help many know this freedom by choosing reality.

#### **Context**

This project took place within the context of Breakaway Ministries in College Station, Texas. Breakaway exists to help any and every college student take either their first or next step with Jesus Christ. A major area in which many students need help taking a next step with Jesus Christ is in their personal struggle with pornography.

Students attending Texas A & M University and Breakaway belong to the generation known as "Generation Z." Generation Z is made up of individuals born between

approximately 1995 and 2010.<sup>1</sup> David Bell, a professor of marketing at Wharton, identifies this generation as the “Internet-in-its-pocket” generation.<sup>2</sup> This means students at Texas A & M University, who attend Breakaway Ministries, have more unrestricted access to pornography than any other generation in history. For this reason, James Emery White, a leading Christian voice on Generation Z, indicates that “pornography may be the greatest area of immorality inflicted on and pursued by Generation Z.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to its accessibility among students attending Texas A & M University and Breakaway, pornography use is more acceptable than ever. For years, movies, TV shows, and music have trained young minds to believe that pornography use is normal. In college, the sharing of explicit content in text messages as well as the celebration of pornography in dorms, Greek life, and various friend groups only turns up the volume on the message that pornography use is a typical part of the college experience.

Although it is a state university, Texas A & M University has consistently had a strong Christian presence for the past few decades. Breakaway Ministries has played a major role in God’s movement in College Station, drawing thousands of students every Tuesday night. Even so, pornography continues to be a major issue even for students seeking to passionately follow Jesus. Breakaway has 367 students who volunteer with the ministry. To become a volunteer, students must demonstrate a clear understanding of the gospel and a sincere desire to grow in Christlikeness. When applying to become a volunteer, students are required to complete an application that asks personal questions about their character. Every semester, in response to a question about pornography use, dozens of students indicate a struggle with pornography.

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<sup>1</sup> James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 38.

<sup>2</sup> Wharton University of Pennsylvania, “Millennials on Steroids: Is Your Brand Ready for Generation Z?,” September 28, 2015, <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/millennials-on-steroids-is-your-brand-ready-for-generation-z/>.

<sup>3</sup> White, *Meet Generation Z*, 60.

Additionally, both male and female students who attend Breakaway struggle with pornography. In 2017, I sat with a group of approximately 10 male and female students and asked them what topics they would like to hear teaching on at Breakaway. Out of that small group, 2 girls and 1 guy asked for teaching on pornography. That meeting was the catalyst for a two-part sermon series on pornography at Breakaway. Since delivering that series, I have heard from numerous students just how helpful that series was for them. In fact, in large part because of the two-part sermon series on pornography, in the four and a half years I have served as the Executive Director of Breakaway, the topic I have received the most emails about is by far pornography. Pornography has also been the issue I have addressed most with men and women in counseling situations. These meetings and messages have consistently reminded me that students feel hopeless and paralyzed in their struggle against pornography. Students reach out because they are longing for direction on how to take a next step in their fight for freedom.

Finally, pornography was a significant struggle for me during my time as a student at Texas A & M University. By God's grace, though, my battle with pornography also turned the corner toward freedom during my time in college. Knowing what students are facing, I share my story regularly at Breakaway thus cultivating an environment where students want to seek help and wisdom for their own battles against pornography.

### **Rationale**

Breakaway Ministries has an incredible opportunity to empower students to pursue freedom from pornography. First, because of how acceptable pornography is, students could benefit from learning about the negative effects pornography can have in an individual's life. Just because culture views pornography as acceptable does not mean that it is to be pursued. Second, students also need to know where the porn industry is trying to take them in the future. The porn industry's mission is to convince users that fantasy is better than reality when it comes to sex. The pull to choose fantasy over reality will only intensify as the porn industry innovates. Third, knowing porn is still such a

struggle among Christians attending Breakaway, it seems that clear biblical instruction on the lie at the root of pornography as well as God’s view of pornography, God’s call on the life of a Christian in the area of purity, and the power available through the gospel, could be beneficial. Next, because so many students feel stranded in their struggle, there is a desperate need for practical direction that will help students take steps toward victory. Additionally, knowing pornography is a problem among female students and not just male students, there is an opportunity to help college girls who might otherwise feel isolated in their struggle. Finally, because God has allowed me to experience almost eighteen years of freedom from internet pornography, I am able to use my story to help other students experience a similar victory. If James Emery White is correct, and pornography is quite possibly “the greatest area of immorality inflicted on and pursued by Generation Z,” then this project is a crucial step for Breakaway Ministries as it seeks to empower students at Texas A & M University to pursue freedom from pornography by choosing reality.<sup>4</sup>

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project was to create a discipleship curriculum for students attending Breakaway Ministries in College, Station, that would empower them to pursue freedom from pornography.

### **Goals**

To accomplish this project, a few key goals needed to be established and met. These goals provided a necessary framework for ensuring the success of this project. The goals of this project were as follows:

1. The first goal was to assess the current struggles that exist with pornography among Breakaway volunteers and their friends.
2. The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum to equip struggling students to pursue freedom from pornography.

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<sup>4</sup> White, *Meet Generation Z*, 60.

3. The third goal was to develop a companion guide to the teaching curriculum to allow readers to thoroughly apply the teachings and have a daily touchpoint with truth in their pursuit of freedom.
4. The fourth goal was to implement the curriculum and empower students to pursue freedom from pornography.

Along with these goals were the means of measurement and the benchmarks of success. These goals, means of measurement, and benchmarks of success set the course for the project. Having established these goals, I was able to ensure that this curriculum would be as beneficial as possible to empower students to pursue freedom from pornography.

### **Research Methodology**

The first goal was to assess the current struggles that exist with pornography among Breakaway volunteers and their friends. This goal was measured by administering the Choosing Reality Inventory (CRI) to Breakaway volunteers and their friends who chose to register for a marketed six-week course called “Choosing Reality.”<sup>5</sup> This goal was considered successfully met when 50 percent of those who registered for the course completed the CRI and the responses had been analyzed yielding a clearer picture of the current struggles with pornography that exist among students.

The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum to equip struggling students to pursue freedom from pornography. The curriculum covered the root of students’ struggles with pornography as well as the root of their future freedom, how students’ identity changes their activity with pornography, the necessity of accountability when battling pornography, the need for a strategy when pursuing freedom from pornography, the importance of clarity in the fight against pornography, and the importance of application for the sake of transformation regarding pornography. The goal

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<sup>5</sup> See appendix 1. All of the research instruments used in this project were performed in compliance with and approved by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary Research Ethics Committee prior to use in the ministry project.

was measured by an expert panel<sup>6</sup> who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness and applicability of each teaching lesson in the curriculum.<sup>7</sup> The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level for each teaching lesson. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

The third goal was to develop a companion guide to the teaching curriculum to allow readers to thoroughly apply the teachings and have a daily touchpoint with truth in their pursuit of freedom. The guide included devotionals targeting students head, heart, and hands regarding pornography as well as devotionals prompting students to process key verses in relation to their struggles with pornography. The goal was measured by the expert panel who utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness and applicability of each week of the companion guide.<sup>8</sup> The goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level for each week's portion of the companion guide. If the 90 percent benchmark was not initially met, then the material was revised until it met the standard.

The fourth goal was to implement the curriculum and empower students to pursue freedom from pornography. This goal was measured by administering the same CRI to the participants who completed it before, comparing the results using a *t*-test. This goal was considered successfully met when the *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-CRI.

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<sup>6</sup> The expert panel was comprised of one pastor who is also a Breakaway board member, one pastor who is also a seminary professor, one Licensed Professional Counselor, one Licensed Professional Counselor Intern, an executive director of a parachurch college ministry, a female associate of a college ministry, and a Breakaway staff member.

<sup>7</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>8</sup> See appendix 3.



## **Definitions and Limitations/Delimitations**

The following definitions of key terms are used in the ministry project:

*Pornography.* *Pornography* is “sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings, or the like, whose purpose is to elicit sexual arousal.”<sup>9</sup>

Two limitations applied to this project. First, the accuracy of the CRI was dependent upon the willingness of the respondents to be honest about their struggles with pornography. To mitigate this limitation, respondents were asked to use a six-digit pin number for their answers to remain nameless. Second, the effectiveness of the course was limited by consistency in attendance. If participants did not attend a majority of the sessions, then it would be difficult to get an accurate measurement of how effective the course truly was. To mitigate this limitation, students were encouraged to write, sign, and turn in a commitment statement.

One delimitation applied to this project. The project was confined to an eight-week timeframe. This timeframe gave adequate time to prepare and teach the six-week course sessions and conduct the CRI pre- and post-course surveys.

## **Conclusion**

More than ever, a generation of college students is being enticed by pornography to choose fantasy over reality. In a culture where pornography is more accessible and acceptable than at any point in history, students are faced with a major uphill battle to walk in freedom from pornography. Many students find themselves enslaved and hopeless in the fight. By calling students to experience the freeing power of the gospel, Breakaway Ministries can and will raise up a generation of students who choose reality, testifying to the campus of Texas A & M University just how good Jesus Christ is.

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<sup>9</sup> Dictionary.com, “Pornography,” accessed May 17, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/pornography>.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL BASIS FOR EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO PURSUE FREEDOM FROM PORNOGRAPHY

This chapter examines the biblical and theological basis for empowering students to pursue freedom from pornography. First, Genesis 2:18-3:7 will be explored in order to observe God's good design for sex as well as the serpent's lie, which ultimately led to the creation of pornography. Next, the young fool from Proverbs 7 will be analyzed as an unfortunate but fitting example of what it looks like to live out the lie of the serpent specifically in regard to pornography. Finally, multiple passages from Paul's Epistles will be surveyed to discern how to live in the truth of God's will, thus choosing reality instead of fantasy. In the end, although God's good design for sex has been distorted by the lie of the serpent, and many live out this lie specifically with pornography, God's Word provides the truth necessary to chart a path of purity in a culture where pornography has been normalized.

#### **God's Good Design and the Serpent's Lie**

Of all of the literature on sex that exists in today's world, none is more essential or foundational than Genesis 2:18-25. In this passage of Scripture, sex is introduced to humanity as a gift from God and as a component of human flourishing. No writing on sex should be elevated as the prescription for reality as this passage should. This text's greatest achievement is in demonstrating the goodness of God within the context of a relationship between a man and a woman. Against this backdrop the lie of the serpent, on which pornography derives its power, is exposed in Genesis 3:1-7.

Genesis 1 is the account of God creating the universe. Studying the chapter unearths a clear rhythm utilized by God while creating “the heavens and the earth” (v. 1). God spoke, something came into existence, and then God observed the goodness of his creation. Seven different times God identifies what he has created as good, the culmination being after the creation of the first man and woman: “And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good” (v. 31). Gordon J. Wenham remarks, “This account of creation is a hymn to the creator: creation itself bears witness to the greatness and goodness of God.”<sup>1</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, when discussing the first use of “good” in Genesis 1:4, explains, “‘Good’ as a double entendre indicates that God as Judge of the universe distinguishes between what is morally ‘good’ and morally evil (e.g., the tree of “good and evil,” 2:17; 3:5). There is in the biblical understanding of the universe an inherent moral factor that cannot be divorced from the proper order of things.”<sup>2</sup> Thus, as God created, he established himself as the originator and authority on what is to be considered good throughout human history. Most importantly though, he displayed his own goodness.

## **Intimacy**

God’s goodness is first seen in his creation of intimacy between Adam and Eve. As Genesis 2 provides a focused look specifically at the creation of the first man and woman, God decrees something not good. In Genesis 2:18 God declares, “It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helpful fit for him.” Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks explain, “The phrase *lō, tōb* is highly emphatic. Essentially, it is bad for Adam to be alone.”<sup>3</sup> Victor P. Hamilton comments,

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 18, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth A. Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, The New American Commentary, vol. 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 147, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce K. Waltke and Cathi J. Fredricks, *Genesis: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 88, Accordance electronic ed.

Everything thus far in Genesis that has been scrutinized by God has been given a positive assessment. Every situation has come through as either good or very good. For the first time we encounter something that is *not good*: man's lack of a corresponding companion. The skies without the luminaries and birds are incomplete. The seas without the fish are incomplete. Without mankind and land animals the earth is incomplete. As a matter of fact, every phenomenon in Gen. 1–2, God excepted, is in need of something else to complete it and to enable it to function.<sup>4</sup>

Why would God look at Adam's isolation and consider it bad? Because God had made Adam to image him on the earth. Adam's isolation stood in direct opposition to the relational identity of God who himself is a community of three persons who exist in one essence. Adam's isolation prohibited him from reflecting the intimacy of the Godhead in creation. Matthews writes, "Isolation is not the divine norm for human beings; community is the creation of God."<sup>5</sup> As God himself is a community, individuals can only fulfill the purpose for which they have been created within the context of intimate community.

Pornography is an affront to God's intentions for humanity because it prizes isolation. Porn creates the illusion of connection while an individual is alone in secrecy. God introduces intimacy between a man and a woman to remedy man's isolation. In contrast, pornography offers a counterfeit relationship to ensure men and women's isolation.

## **Value**

God's goodness is next seen in the value he places on Adam and Eve. God shows Adam's value by giving unique attention to his lack of flourishing in the garden. Eve's value is then seen in how God responds to Adam's isolation. God's response in Genesis 2:18 was to make "a helper fit for him." These few words must be seen as testifying to the woman's incredible value and dignity. After all, עֵזְרָא is used nineteen times

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<sup>4</sup> Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 175, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>5</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 213.

in the Old Testament and sixteen of those times it is referring to God.<sup>6</sup> Matthews comments, “Since God is said to exercise the role of ‘helper,’ the term does not diminish the person who holds that role. If anything, the divine nuance of the term ‘helper’ in the Pentateuch gives special dignity.”<sup>7</sup> Therefore, any hint of this phrase being used to justify the superiority of men over women would be a gross mishandling of the text. Regarding  $\text{תַּזְכֵּי}$ , Waltke and Fredricks explain, “The Hebrew means ‘equal and adequate.’ Men and women differ in sexuality but are equals as bearers of God’s image and in their standing before God.”<sup>8</sup> God’s command in Genesis 1:28 to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth” was given equally to Adam and Eve. Thus, as Matthews asserts, “In the case of the biblical model, the ‘helper’ is an indispensable ‘partner’ (REB) required to achieve the divine commission. ‘Helper,’ as we have seen from its Old Testament usage, means the woman will play an integral part, in this case, in human survival and success. What the man lacks, the woman accomplishes.”<sup>9</sup>

The woman’s value is also seen a few verses later in Genesis 2:22: “And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”  $\text{בָּנָה}$  carries the meaning of “built.”<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, all other aspects of creation came into existence by God simply speaking. God’s creation of the woman seems to be unique in that he built her. In one sense, nothing in all of creation received more of God’s time, attention, and creative energy than the woman and thus the relationship between a man and woman.

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<sup>6</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 88.

<sup>7</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 214.

<sup>8</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 88.

<sup>9</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 214.

<sup>10</sup> Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 69.

As God gave great value to Adam and Eve, God’s intention was and is for men and women to relate to one another in a way that upholds each other’s value and dignity. It is not hard to see why pornography deviates drastically from God’s will as it objectifies instead of dignifies women in the eyes of men. Pornography normalizes the mentality that women exist for the pleasure of men. Nowhere is this more magnified than in the stories of women who appear in pornographic images and videos not by choice but by force, as will be explored in the next chapter. Without knowing it at the time, the Puritan pastor Matthew Henry, in sharing what was most likely a common Puritan saying, cast a serious indictment on the porn industry when he famously said, “That the woman was *made of a rib out of the side of Adam*; not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”<sup>11</sup>

### **Commitment**

Next, God’s goodness is displayed in the commitment between the man and the woman. After fashioning Eve from Adam’s rib, God brings Eve to Adam and introduces her to him. Matthews comments, “The Lord presents his special ‘project’ to the man, suggesting by this that she is a gift from the man’s Maker.”<sup>12</sup> Adam receives God’s gift by not only speaking for the first time in the Scriptures but by bursting into poetic verse.<sup>13</sup> In Genesis 2:23, Adam exclaims, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” Allen P. Ross suggests, “The point of this jubilant cry is that the creation of humankind has

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<sup>11</sup> Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible* (Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 2004), para. 135, emphasis original, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>12</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 218.

<sup>13</sup> Matthews, *Genesis 1:1–11:26*, 218.

reached its goal in the complementary partnership of man and woman.”<sup>14</sup> It is also important to note, though, that Adam’s poetic expression could embed within it a pledge of loyalty.<sup>15</sup> Walter Brueggemann finds a double meaning in both עֲצָמָה and בְּשָׂרָה.<sup>16</sup> He has chosen to render the words as “bone-power” and “flesh-weakness.”<sup>17</sup> He believes that these words can be expressing “two extreme possibilities and include everything between them, thus all physical-psychological dimensions of interaction from A to Z,”<sup>18</sup> which has led him to conclude,

The poles of “flesh-frailty” and “bone-power” mean to express the entire range of intermediate possibilities from the extreme of frailty to power. Thus the relationship affirmed is one which is affirmed for every possible contingency in the relationship, as we affirm in the marriage formula, “in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want.” Here the text says, “in every circumstance from the extreme of frailty to the extreme of power.” A relation is affirmed which is unaffected by changing circumstances.<sup>19</sup>

The priority of commitment is further displayed in the verbs of Genesis 2:24.

According to Hamilton,

The verb *forsake* frequently describes Israel’s rejection of her covenant relationship with Yahweh (Jer. 1:16; 2:13, 17, 19; 5:7; 16:11; 17:13; 19:4; 22:9; many other examples from the OT could be cited). By contrast, the verb *cling* often designates the maintenance of the covenant relationship (Deut. 4:4; 10:20; 11:22; 13:5 [Eng. 4]; 30:20). Thus, to leave father and mother and cling to one’s wife means to sever one loyalty and commence another. Already Scripture has sounded the note that marriage is a covenant rather than an ad-hoc, makeshift arrangement.<sup>20</sup>

God, in his infinite goodness, created the man and the woman to experience the joy of a committed relationship where love is not something to fall in and out of. Instead,

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<sup>14</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Creation and Blessing: A Guide to the Study and Exposition of Genesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 127.

<sup>15</sup> Walter Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone (GN 2,23a),” *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (1970): 535.

<sup>16</sup> Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone,” 533.

<sup>17</sup> Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone,” 534.

<sup>18</sup> Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone,” 534.

<sup>19</sup> Brueggemann, “Of the Same Flesh and Bone,” 534-35.

<sup>20</sup> Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis, Chapters 1–17*, 181.

love is a daily choice no matter the circumstances. To know a love that is unwavering provides a relationship with safety and security as well as a greater depth of intimacy. Ultimately, the greatest joy comes from imaging God through marriage. According to Waltke and Fredricks, “A man and woman are never more like God than on their wedding day when they commit themselves unconditionally to one another.”<sup>21</sup>

While God prizes commitment between one man and one woman, pornography insists on countless partners. As will be demonstrated in chapter 3, a key value of the porn industry is variety, meaning a user should never need to revisit the same content twice. For example, in 2019 alone, 6.83 million new videos were uploaded to Pornhub, the largest pornographic website in the world.<sup>22</sup> Porn users need not settle down to one individual when there is an ocean of content offering limitless sexual partners. Nothing more blatantly rejects God’s design of a committed, loyal, and monogamous relationship like pornography’s commitment to variety.

### **Vulnerability**

Finally, God’s goodness is seen in Adam and Eve’s vulnerability with one another. Waltke and Fredricks comment, “In this ideal state, man and woman view their person and sexuality with wholeness and thus feel no shame in their nakedness. Here their nakedness is an image of openness and trust. With the loss of innocence in the Fall, they will feel shame and temptation and so need to protect their vulnerability by the barrier of clothing (3:7).”<sup>23</sup> Ross adds, “They were at ease with one another, without fear of exploitation for evil.”<sup>24</sup> God designed marriage to be an opportunity for two individuals to be completely exposed before one another with no fear of rejection or

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<sup>21</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 89.

<sup>22</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review,” December 11, 2019, <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2019-year-in-review>.

<sup>23</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 90.

<sup>24</sup> Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 127.



exploitation, only love and acceptance. Put simply, God's intention was for marriage to be a place where a man and woman could be fully known and fully loved. There would be no need for hiding, for the relationship would promote security and confidence in each individual. On the other hand, pornography normalizes secrecy and shame. Pornography use requires individuals to seek out isolation, search for a sexual experience with complete anonymity, lie to their friends about their actions, and deal with the feelings of failure on the backside of each use.

### **The Lie**

Immediately following an extravagant display of the goodness of God in the creation of marriage and sex, Genesis provides an account of the fall of mankind. The serpent comes to Adam and Eve and tempts them to rebel against the one recorded rule given to the first humans. Genesis 2:16-17 states, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.'" Waltke and Fredricks provide the proper perspective of the tree as well as sin: "The tree is good, but it belongs exclusively to God. Sin consists of an illicit reach of unbelief, an assertion of human autonomy to know morality apart from God. The creature must live by faith in God's word, not by a professed self-sufficiency of knowledge."<sup>25</sup> In response to God's command, the serpent declares to Adam and Eve, "You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen 3:4-5). Getting to the heart of the serpent's lie, Ross explains, "This knowledge of good and evil was and is intriguing. Adam and Eve lived in a setting that God himself had pronounced 'good.' Yet they were now led to believe that there was greater good held back from them, that somehow they could elevate life for the

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<sup>25</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 87.

better.”<sup>26</sup> After Genesis 1 and 2 overwhelmingly testified to the goodness of God, the serpent’s lie that ultimately was believed by the first human beings was this: God is really not that good. Sinclair Ferguson shines further light on the serpent’s lie: “Thus the lie was an assault on both God’s generosity and his integrity. Neither his character nor his words were to be trusted. This, in fact, is the lie that sinners have believed ever since—the lie of the not-to-be-trusted-because-he-does-not-love-me-false-Father.”<sup>27</sup>

Eve’s response to the serpent’s lie was to assume the position of God and to redefine what is considered good. Genesis 3:6 states, “So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.” The food that was prohibited was now considered good for food. What God said would bring death, was now considered to be the path to becoming wise. Good was redefined by the first humans, and the result was brokenness.

Few things show just how effective the serpent’s lie continues to be like culture’s infatuation with sex. God, the inventor of sex, is now viewed as the killjoy of sex. God’s commands are viewed as restrictive, burdensome, and antiquated; therefore, his character has been dismissed completely. Individuals cannot reconcile God being good and at the same time reserving sex solely for marriage. The result has been the rejection of the creator of sex and the deification of sex itself. Movies, television shows, magazines, and music all revere sex as the ultimate source of satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfillment. Sex is to be craved and enjoyed whenever, wherever, and with whomever an individual is able to have it. Thus, God with his commands is made out to be more of a thief than the giver of joy.

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<sup>26</sup> Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 136.

<sup>27</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, *The Whole Christ: Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance—Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), chap. 3, para. 2, Kindle.

Humanity continues to believe there is more goodness to be found in sex outside of the expressed will of God. Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in pornography. Just like Eve, the porn industry for decades has zealously been redefining what is good. Waltke and Fredricks' comment on Genesis 3:6 serves as a fitting explanation of and indictment on the porn industry: "Good is no longer rooted in what God says enhances life but in what people think is desirable to elevate life. They distort what is good into what is evil."<sup>28</sup> By glorifying group sex, verbal and physical abuse toward women, infidelity, homosexuality, bestiality, and many other deviant sexual desires, pornography ambitiously labels evil as good and stands in direct opposition to God and his commands regarding sexual immorality and impurity. God's standards for sex are not just ignored in pornography, they are wholeheartedly rejected. Unfortunately, the serpent's lie through pornography is disastrously fruitful as even countless Christians regularly view pornography. For this reason, the next section will unpack what living the lie practically looks like by examining the young fool in Proverbs 7.

### **Living the Lie**

Proverbs 7 is an unfortunate but fitting demonstration of what it looks like to live out the serpent's lie, specifically in the area of sex. The book of Proverbs gives much warning against sexual impurity. Bruce K. Waltke explains regarding Proverbs 7, "This is the fourth and climactic lecture to safeguard the son against the unchaste wife (cf. 2:16–19; 5:1–23; 6:20–33) and the last lecture."<sup>29</sup>

### **Rejection of Wisdom**

In Proverbs 7, the author writes as he had a few times previously showing a father imparting wisdom to his son specifically on the issue of sexual purity. In the first

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<sup>28</sup> Waltke and Fredricks, *Genesis*, 92.

<sup>29</sup> Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004), 366, Accordance electronic ed.

five verses, the father calls the son to value and heed his instruction regarding the “forbidden woman” (v. 5). The goal of the father’s instruction is the preservation of the life of his son (v. 2). Waltke comments, “The promise of abundant life by following the father contrasts starkly with the threat of eternal death from following the unfaithful wife.”<sup>30</sup> The first five verses are packed full of commands from the father to his son regarding his instruction. After all, as Derek Kidner asserts, “the best advice is useless against strong temptation unless it is thoroughly taken to heart and translated into habits.”<sup>31</sup> For his son to grasp the value and necessity of his teaching, he compares it to the apple, or “pupil,” of the eye (v. 2).<sup>32</sup> Waltke explains, “This most delicate and yet most precious member of the human anatomy (cf. 3:14-26; 8:11; 31:10) is essential for illumination and guidance without it there is only darkness (cf. Deut. 32:10; cf. ‘apple, daughter, of the eye’ in Ps. 17:8; cf. Zech. 2:12; Matt. 6:22, 23) and so epitomizes what needs the most diligent protection.”<sup>33</sup> The father’s command in 7:3 to “bind them on your fingers” most likely speaks to the value of memorization or having constant exposure to them.<sup>34</sup> The call to “write them on the tablet of your heart” is a call to internalize the commands in such a way that one’s character is changed by them.<sup>35</sup> Finally, the father challenges his son to seek out intimacy with wisdom instead of the forbidden woman. The phrase “You are my sister,” in 7:4, according to Waltke, “expresses at the least an acceptance of wisdom as one’s dear family and probably is the language of love to designate the groom’s commitment to his bride (Song 4:9, 10, 12; 5:1, 2; Sir. 15:2; cf.

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<sup>30</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 368.

<sup>31</sup> Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, vol. 17 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1964), 71, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>32</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 368.

<sup>33</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 368.

<sup>34</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 369.

<sup>35</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 369.

Job 17:14) for whom he left his father and mother.”<sup>36</sup> The hope in each of these commands is to protect his son from the forbidden woman.

The implication is that to engage in sexual activity with the forbidden woman would be to disregard and disobey the father’s care and wisdom. This father’s words to his son now serve as God’s words to believers. Therefore, for believers to engage in sexual activity outside of marriage would be to disregard and disobey God’s instruction to his people. In this sense, pornography is always a rejection of God’s heart, care, and commands regarding sexual intimacy between a man and a woman.

### **Compromising Decisions**

The father proceeds to tell his son of a young man he observed experiencing the devastating consequences that come from walking contrary to sound wisdom. Roland Murphy explains, “The episode in vv 6-23 has the (fictive) character of an eyewitness report, and this suggests that it serves as a typical ‘example story’ (as in Prov 24:30–34; cf. Eccl 4:13–16) to bolster the instruction of the teacher.”<sup>37</sup> In Proverbs 7:7, he refers to this man as “a young man lacking sense.” The Hebrew word *לב* literally means “heart.”<sup>38</sup> Paul E. Koptak comments, “To ‘lack heart’ is to do the opposite of what parents and Wisdom teach; it is no innocent ignorance.”<sup>39</sup> The following verses expose the compromising decisions that led the father to classify him this way. First, his rhythms of life moved him toward temptation instead of away from it. His routes actually led him by the places she spent time and even lived (7:8). To make matters worse, his rhythms had him moving toward temptation in the dark of night (7:9). Kidner rightly concludes,

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<sup>36</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 370.

<sup>37</sup> Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 22 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998), 42, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>38</sup> F. Stolz, Ernst Jenni, and Claus Westermann, eds., *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1997), s.v. “*לב*,” 2:638, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>39</sup> Paul E. Koptak, *Proverbs*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2003), 207, Accordance electronic ed.

“Young, inexperienced, featherbrained, he is the very sort to need arming with borrowed wisdom. He wanders into temptation, where place (8) and time (9) can join forces against him; and if *he* is aimless, his temptress is not.”<sup>40</sup>

The compromising decisions of the young man bear strong resemblance to the compromising decisions of college students with pornography. Having constant and unrestricted access to the internet sitting in one’s pocket, sleeping with a phone by one’s bed, and consistently scrolling through social media throughout the day are all rhythms that exacerbate porn use. What appears to be normal habits are actually fuel to the fire of temptation. Additionally, the combination of having complete privacy in one’s room along with staying up late finds many college students on a clear path to porn use “at the time of night and darkness” (7:9).

### **The Woman**

The father goes on to describe the woman’s intentions and behavior as she seeks to seduce the young man. Her outward appearance is that of a prostitute while her inward disposition is “wily of heart” meaning, in this case according to Waltke, “crafty” or “cunning”<sup>41</sup> (7:10). Regarding the woman being “wayward,” Waltke comments, “she chafes at restraint and revolts against the rules of proper society”<sup>42</sup> (7:11). She also strategically positions herself in the most frequently visited locations, implying that she is everywhere (7:12). She is not passive but instead is very aggressive in the way she approaches the young man (7:13). Waltke explains, “Her direct and bold acts reveal her tyrannical resolve to conquer her victim.”<sup>43</sup> Additionally, her speech is seductive. She makes the young man feel special and significant as the one she has sought out eagerly

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<sup>40</sup> Kidner, *Proverbs*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 374.

<sup>42</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 375.

<sup>43</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 376.

(7:15). She also gives a vision for pleasure by appealing to his senses (7:16-18). Koptak rightly asserts, “She is able to appeal to all his senses and make it sound as if her home is a place of paradise. What the young man does not know is that these words are the bait of a trap.”<sup>44</sup> The coverings of her couch draw on sight and touch. The perfume she has used solicits his smell. The invitation to “come, let us take our fill of love” appeals to his taste (7:18). Finally, and most importantly, she promises forbidden pleasure with no consequences (7:19-20). Murphy comments, “This all-night stand need not bother the youth since the threat of her husband can be dismissed; cf. Prov 6:32–35. And that is provided; her husband is away, safely and securely. Although he will eventually return, the date is known, so there is nothing to fear.”<sup>45</sup> Waltke further comments,

Significantly, she plainly announces that her proposition involves a purely sexual indulgence, not a commitment that would entail divorce and remarriage. Instead, she freely acknowledges that her husband will be back in two weeks, entailing that she intends to remain married though unfaithful, leaving the dullard without moral excuse for his dimwitted adultery.<sup>46</sup>

The woman in this passage thoroughly displays the seductive nature of pornography. Pornography despises restraint and feeds upon instant gratification. And just as the woman strategically positions herself in the most frequently visited locations, pornography has made its way into movies, TV shows, magazines at the grocery store, and on every smartphone. Pornography has never been more accessible than it is today. Pornography also flatters the viewer. In a fantasy world, the viewer is able to feel significant and attractive. Furthermore, the porn industry has worked diligently to appeal to the senses of sight, sound, and touch. Finally, the greatest draw of pornography is the offer of pleasure with no commitment and no consequences. Viewers can experience sexual gratification with complete anonymity and secrecy.

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<sup>44</sup> Koptak, *Proverbs*, 209.

<sup>45</sup> Murphy, *Proverbs*, 44.

<sup>46</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 381.

## The Consequences

The woman's tactics achieve their intended result. The young man follows her (7:22). As he does, he believes that life and pleasure await him. Instead, the father uses three similes to illustrate the reality of the young man's decision (7:22-23). In 7:23, the father shares with his son the ultimate result of the young man's decision: "It will cost him his life." This ties directly back to 7:2 where the father urged his son to "keep my commandments and live." Waltke provides the right conclusion to the three similes: "Stupid animals see no connection between traps and death, and morally stupid people see no connection between their sin and death."<sup>47</sup> The young man's story is a sobering example of the truth of Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Pornography is one of the most notorious offenders when it comes to promising pleasure with no consequences. For decades, college students have given themselves over to pornography looking for instant gratification. Unfortunately, as will be explored in chapter 3, instant gratification is often followed by long term consequences.

## Final Words

The father concludes his message to his son by once again urging his son to take his words seriously (7:24). He then reminds his son of just how effective and destructive the forbidden woman has been (7:26-27). According to Duane A. Garrett, "The language of v. 26 is military in tone. The lady who was so desirable has slain whole armies."<sup>48</sup> Finally, the father gives one more warning of the final destination of indulging the forbidden woman (7:27). Koptak concludes, "It was the house and its awaiting pleasures that seemed so alluring, yet it became a home of the dead."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs, Chapters 1–15*, 384.

<sup>48</sup> Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, The New American Commentary, vol. 14 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1993), 105, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>49</sup> Koptak, *Proverbs*, 212.



Many have believed and lived the seductive lie of the forbidden woman that is ultimately the lie of the serpent from back in the garden. The serpent had promised Adam and Eve the pleasure of life outside of God's will with no consequences. By rejecting God's goodness, Adam and Eve believed they would experience even greater goodness.<sup>50</sup> The same is true for the young fool in Proverbs 7. By rejecting God's good design for sex, he believed he would experience even greater goodness. He was convinced that awaiting him was pleasure outside of God's will with no consequences. The consequence for the young fool was ultimately death, which was the same consequence God warned Adam and Eve of all the way back in Genesis 2:17. Proverbs 7 is a sobering story that many have lived. Believers are wise to view this chapter as a cautionary tale and to seek to live in the truth as will be explored in the next section.

### **Living the Truth**

Essential to developing a biblical and theological basis for breaking free from pornography is a thorough understanding of Paul's writings on sexual purity. No New Testament author speaks more frequently about the topic than Paul. Having understood the truth of God's will regarding sex from Genesis 2 as well as the lie of the enemy in Genesis 3, and having also observed how one lives according to the lie of the serpent from Proverbs 7, Paul's writings give clear instruction on living out the truth regarding sexual purity and pornography. By surveying multiple passages instead of just one, believers can develop a comprehensive framework for living out the truth of God's will.

Central to Paul's writings is the contrast between what he calls the "old self" and "new self." When a believer experiences conversion, according to Paul, he is made new. For example, Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold the new has come." When Paul speaks of someone being made new, he is most of all speaking of the change in relationship

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<sup>50</sup> Ross, *Creation and Blessing*, 136.

that has taken place in the life of a convert.<sup>51</sup> Bruce Demarest explains, “The old nature is the capacity to serve Satan, sin, and self acquired through Adam, whereas the new nature is the capacity to serve God and righteousness acquired through the new birth.”<sup>52</sup> When an individual places faith in Christ, his or her relationships with God and sin are forever changed. Those who were children of wrath are now considered children of God. The power of sin has been broken and Jesus now reigns in its place. Instead of gratifying the desires of the flesh, a believer is indwelt with the Spirit of God and now has the capacity to bear the fruit of the Spirit. At the same time, Demarest asserts, “Paul affirmed that Christian growth involves struggle—sometimes intense—against the remnants of indwelling sin. Thus within true believers the ‘sinful nature’ (*sarx*) and the ‘Spirit’ (*pneuma*) do battle, hindering the other’s operations.”<sup>53</sup> Sexual sin is a major area where believers must do battle in the process of sanctification.

Throughout his epistles, Paul makes it abundantly clear that sexual impurity belongs to the old self and has no place in the life of a Christian. Paul puts it this way in his letter to the Colossians:

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. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away. . . . Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. (Col 3:5-8a, 9-10).

Therefore, in regard to sexual impurity in general, and pornography specifically, college students must continuously take decisive action to live and look new and thus live out God’s truth in regard to sex.

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<sup>51</sup> David S. Dockery, “New Nature and Old Nature,” in *Dictionary of Paul and his Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 628, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>52</sup> Bruce Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation: The Doctrine of Salvation*, Foundations of Evangelical Theology, ed. John S. Feinberg (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1997), 410.

<sup>53</sup> Demarest, *The Cross and Salvation*, 410.

## Know God's Will

Paul most clearly articulates God's will concerning sexual purity in 1 Thessalonians 4:3: "For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality." During the first century, believers had great need of instruction on sexual purity to know the calling on their new identity in a culture given over to immorality.<sup>54</sup> For example, regarding Paul's teaching to the believers in Thessalonica, F. F. Bruce notes,

This was a strange notion in the pagan society to which the gospel was first brought; there various forms of extramarital sexual union were tolerated and some were even encouraged. A man might have a mistress (ἑταίρα) who could provide him also with intellectual companionship; the institution of slavery made it easy for him to have a concubine (παλλακί), while casual gratification was readily available from a harlot (πόρνη). The function of his wife was to manage his household and be the mother of his legitimate children and heirs.<sup>55</sup>

By contrast, God's will for his people is sanctification. Charles A. Wanamaker explains, "Paul understood God to be the holy God of the OT who was set apart from every form of sin and impurity and who demanded similar holiness from the people of Israel through separation (Lv. 11:44f.; 19:2; 21:8). God had not changed, so the same requirement was laid on the new people of God, the Christians."<sup>56</sup> Millard Erickson's definition of sanctification seems appropriate and helpful when understanding what Paul is saying: "By sanctification is meant the continued transformation of moral and spiritual character so that the believer's life actually comes to mirror the standing he or she already has in God's sight."<sup>57</sup> Jesus' work on the cross was so effective that he has successfully made believers positionally holy or pure in the sight of God. God's desire is that the purity of believers' position before him be reflected in their everyday practice.

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<sup>54</sup> F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 45 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 82, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>55</sup> Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians*, 82.

<sup>56</sup> Charles A. Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 150, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>57</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 797.

The tangible result of God's will is a life that reflects the thoughts, words, and practices of Jesus more than those of the culture.

Paul then zeros in specifically on God's will regarding sexual immorality. The word translated as "sexual immorality" is the Greek word *πορνεία*. Walter Bauer defines it as "unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication."<sup>58</sup> Paul's command is for believers to be wholly set apart from this sin. Wanamaker identifies two reasons for this instruction: "First, for the Jew, participation in any form of sexual immorality was tantamount to forsaking the holy God, who demanded separation from all forms of sexual immorality and impurity."<sup>59</sup> Second, was the "persistent belief that non-Jews were guilty of sexual immorality and that this was the direct result of their idolatry."<sup>60</sup> Clearly, God's will is that his people would demonstrate their faithfulness and devotion to him by looking different than unbelievers in regard to sexual immorality.

Pornography would certainly fall within the extent of the meaning of *πορνεία*. Paul's words to those in Thessalonica seem fitting to today when pornography has become normalized in culture. Therefore, God's will concerning pornography is that his people would abstain from it and look different than those who do not know God. Believers must take God's will seriously and thus must take holiness seriously. Too many Christians settle for a compromised character regarding pornography because they are disregarding God's explicit will in this area.

### **Know God's Standard**

Essential to living the truth when it comes to pornography is knowing God's standard for the new self. God, through Paul, spelled out his standard for purity most

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<sup>58</sup> Walter Bauer, "πορνεία," in *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>59</sup> Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 151.

<sup>60</sup> Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 151.

clearly in Ephesians 5:3: “But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people.” Understanding the words Paul uses here illuminates God’s standard for those who are to be holy like him. Regarding πορνεία, Francis Foulkes indicates, “Fornication and sexual perversion of almost any kind might be included under the word.”<sup>61</sup> The Greek word ἀκαθαρσία, which has been translated as impurity, is defined by Joseph H. Thayer as “the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living.”<sup>62</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln explains, “Because of the context, πλεονεξία, ‘covetousness,’ should also be taken as the sort of unrestrained sexual greed whereby a person assumes that others exist for his or her own gratification.”<sup>63</sup> Paul has chosen his wording carefully so as to speak to believers’ actions as well as their thoughts, motivations, and desires. One cannot help but consider the most overt forms of sexual misconduct as well as the most subtle lustful thoughts. Regarding these and everything in between, Paul declares God’s standard to be “not even a hint.” John R. W. Stott explains, “We are not only to avoid their indulgence, but also to avoid thinking and talking about them, so completely are they to be banished from the Christian community.”<sup>64</sup> When applied to pornography, God’s standard leaves no room for thinking about, talking about, joking about, or engaging with any form of pornography at any time.<sup>65</sup> This socially acceptable sin, even among many Christians, is entirely unacceptable to God.

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<sup>61</sup> Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 10 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1989), 146, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Henry Thayer, “ἀκαθαρσία,” in *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Altamonte Springs, FL: OakTree Software, 2004), paragraph 884, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>63</sup> Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 42 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), 322, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>64</sup> John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, The Bible Speaks Today (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1984), 192, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>65</sup> Stott, *The Message of Ephesians*, 192-93.

## Obey God's Commands

Paul's writings include multiple commands regarding sexual purity. Three of the most important commands in his writings on purity include: "flee," "put to death," and "abstain." Obeying these commands is essential if a believer is to live out the truth in regard to pornography.

**Flee.** In 1 Corinthians 6:18, Paul instructs his readers to "flee from sexual immorality." Again, Paul is addressing how believers should response to πορνεία. His command is φευγω, which Thayer defines as "to shun or avoid by flight."<sup>66</sup> Leon Morris comments, "The present imperative indicates the habitual action, 'Make it your habit to flee'. It cannot be satisfactorily dealt with by any less drastic measures."<sup>67</sup> One cannot read Paul's words without thinking of Joseph's response to Potiphar's wife (Gen 39). Joseph took to flight from the presence of temptation. Interestingly, Paul's direction is not to fight but to flee. His command involves knowing where temptation lies and avoiding it altogether. This is a much different response than the young man from Proverbs 7 seen "passing along the street near her corner, taking the road to her house" (v. 8). This command is essential to freedom from pornography but is very difficult for a generation that has been raised carrying around the internet in their pockets. Now more than ever, obeying this command requires countercultural choices concerning screen usage.

**Put to death.** In Colossians 3:5, Paul commands his friends to "put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." The Greek word νεκρόω, which has been translated "put the death," is defined by Thayer as "to deprive of power" or to "destroy the strength

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<sup>66</sup> Thayer, "φεύγω."

<sup>67</sup> Leon Morris, *1 Corinthians*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1985), 101, Accordance electronic ed.

of.”<sup>68</sup> This decisive action is required against the same sins Paul mentioned in Ephesians 5:3: πορνεία, ἀκαθαρσία, and πλεονεξία. Here, however, he also includes passion and evil desire. In this context, according to Bruce, the Greek word πάθος speaks to “dishonorable passions.”<sup>69</sup> The Greek words ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν speak of a forbidden desire.<sup>70</sup>

Important to fully grasping Paul’s command is understanding how the gospel informs it. Douglas J. Moo explains, “Union with Christ, because it puts us in a new relationship to sin and brings us into the sphere of the Spirit’s power, *will* impact the way we live. Ultimately, then, the imperative ‘put to death’ in this verse must be viewed as a call to respond to, and cooperate with, the transformative power that is already operative within us.”<sup>71</sup> Obeying this command, therefore, must never be accomplished by a sheer act of the will. Living in the truth requires an awareness of and a dependence upon the resources God has already supplied through Christ for victory.

At the same time, putting sexual sin to death requires extreme and decisive action. N. T. Wright brings clarity by writing,

To put something to death you must cut off its lines of supply: it is futile and self-deceiving to bemoan one’s inability to resist the last stage of a temptation when earlier stages have gone by unnoticed, or even eagerly welcomed. . . . Rather, every Christian has the responsibility, before God, to [Vol 12: Col, Phlm, p. 140] investigate the lifelines of whatever sins are defeating him personally, and to cut them off without pity. Better that than have them eventually destroy him.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Thayer, “νεκρόω.”

<sup>69</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 143, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>70</sup> James D. G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 215, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>71</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 255, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>72</sup> N. T. Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, vol. 12 (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1986), 139-40, Accordance electronic ed.

According to Wright, believers have the responsibility of evaluating their own personal struggle with sexual sin. The appetites and desires of the old self look different for each person. Therefore, to live in the truth, every believer must discern what sources, subtle and obvious, awaken attitudes and appetites that belong to the old self. Any source identified, small or large, must be deprived of its power and cut out of the believer's life.

As students pursue freedom from pornography, their hardest decision will be putting to death convenience and comfort. With the educational, social, and recreational aspects of students' lives revolving around screens more than ever, many students are simply not willing to cut off this lifeline for pornography. Unfortunately, when dealing with pornography, it is not possible to simply take baby steps toward purity. If sexual sin's aim is to destroy the life of a believer, then only decisive and extreme action is appropriate in the daily battle to live out the truth.

It is important to note that immediately following his discussion of what a believer must "put to death" in Colossians 3:5-11, Paul shifts his focus to what a Christian must "put on" in Colossians 3:12-17. While these verses do not have sexual conduct as a primary focus as in the preceding section, these verses are critical in helping a believer pursue healthy relationships with other believers. Paul addresses both how a believer should view others as well as him or herself. For example, Wright describes "compassion" as "an understanding sympathy with others that affects one's innermost being."<sup>73</sup> He then explains "humility" as "the Christlike attitude toward oneself, supremely exemplified in that readiness to forgo his own rights which led the Son of God to the incarnation and cross (Phil 2:5-11)."<sup>74</sup> When a believer actively seeks to walk with a right view of others and oneself, he or she will inevitably seek the wellbeing of others over oneself. Porn struggles flourish when users strip porn performers of their humanity and become convinced that gratification of their needs is ultimate. Thus, in addition to obeying Paul's

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<sup>73</sup> Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 146.

<sup>74</sup> Wright, *Colossians and Philemon*, 146.



command to “put to death,” believers would benefit greatly in their struggle against porn to obey his command to “put on.”

**Abstain.** First Thessalonians 4:3 declares, “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality.” Wanamaker shares that “the infinitive ἀπέχεσθαι in the middle voice means ‘to keep away’ or ‘abstain.’”<sup>75</sup> Gene L. Green comments, “Paul does not call the church to partial moderation of their sexual impulses but to [Thess., p. 191] abstain completely from all forms of *sexual immorality* (Eph. 5.3). This was God’s will for them and what distinguished them from the people around them as those whom God had separated for himself.”<sup>76</sup> In regard to pornography, this command only further emphasizes the necessity of decisive and extreme action in a culture in which pornography has been normalized.

It is worth observing that Paul goes on in 1 Thessalonians 4 to call believers to grow in brotherly love for one another (vv. 9-10). In other writings, this brotherly love was normally a reference to love between brothers and sisters within a biological family.<sup>77</sup> In the New Testament, Paul expands the application of this love to spiritual siblings within the family of God.<sup>78</sup> If believers began to see others within the church as family, it would impact the way they treated one another. Not only would they abstain from certain activities with one another, such as sexual immorality, but they would also be compelled to show familial affection toward each other. Instead of walking in lust, believers would walk in love.

While it would be a misuse of the text for the application to view all of humanity as brothers and sisters, the general principle emerges that how one views another affects

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<sup>75</sup> Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 151.

<sup>76</sup> Gene L. Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 190-91, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>77</sup> Wanamaker, *The Epistles to the Thessalonians*, 160.

<sup>78</sup> Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 204.

his actions toward that individual.<sup>79</sup> As believers pursue freedom from pornography, a helpful tactic is to change one's view of performers within the porn industry. To see them as individuals created in the image of God, as well as victims, can fill a user with love instead of lust. Seeing porn performers' need for rescue and the healing power of the gospel can prompt believers to war against the porn industry instead of give it business.

### **Understand God's Reasons**

Essential to walking in the truth is grasping why sexual sin, including pornography, is so offensive to God. In his writings, Paul unpacks a few reasons God cares so much about sexual purity. The reasons explored in this section include identity, idolatry, and the fact that the body is for the Lord.

**Identity.** A foundational aspect of new life in Christ is a new identity for every believer. In one of Paul's key passages on sexual purity, Ephesians 5:3-10, Paul clarifies the believer's identity as that of a "saint" (v. 3) as well as being "light" (v. 8). According to Bauer, ἅγιος can carry the meaning of "holy."<sup>80</sup> God has purified believers by the blood of his Son and has thus made them holy like he is. To be light also carries the idea of being holy. Lincoln explains, "In Ephesians, darkness already represents ignorance (cf. 4:18), and now in this context it represents the immorality that has just been described, while light represents truth and knowledge (cf 1:18) and now holiness."<sup>81</sup> Believers' identity should impact their activity. Those who have been made holy should then live holy lives. God has transformed believers' minds in such a way that they can know, understand, and appreciate the truth. He has given them new hearts with new desires to want to live out the truth. To engage in sexual immorality, such as pornography, is to act out of character. It is to operate according to the wrong identity.

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<sup>79</sup> Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 204.

<sup>80</sup> Walter Bauer, "ἅγιος," in Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*.

<sup>81</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 327.

**Idolatry.** Ephesians 5:5 says, “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.” As previously stated, Lincoln shares, “Because of the context, *πλεονεξία*, ‘covetousness,’ should also be taken as the sort of unrestrained sexual greed whereby a person assumes that others exist for his or her own gratification.”<sup>82</sup> God cares about sexual purity because, as Paul specifies, sinful sexual desire can actually be a form of idolatry. This is the case because, as Lincoln explains, “Sexual lust elevates the desired object, whether a person’s own gratification or another person, to the center of life and is antithetical to the thanksgiving which recognizes God at the center.”<sup>83</sup> Humanity’s tendency is to turn God’s gifts into idols. Sex is most certainly one of if not the most pervasive examples of this. God cares about sexual purity because he will not share his praise with idols (Isa 42:8).

**The body is for the Lord.** In his instruction to the church in Corinth, Paul writes, “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” (1 Cor 6:13-14). Paul was combating a gross misunderstanding that had cropped up in the church concerning the physical body. Gordon D. Fee comments, “A part of the Corinthians’ current program was to argue that all bodily functions are generally equal, and basically irrelevant for the life of the future.”<sup>84</sup> Specifically in regard to the use of the body in sexual relations, the misguided belief was that both the body and sex would be destroyed by God.<sup>85</sup> Fee further explains, though, that “the work of redemption includes the whole person, which in the Jewish view of things includes the body. If the stomach is irrelevant

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<sup>82</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 322.

<sup>83</sup> Lincoln, *Ephesians*, 324.

<sup>84</sup> Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, New International Commentary on the New Testament, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 280, Accordance electronic ed.

<sup>85</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 280.

for future existence, the body itself is not. Through Christ's own resurrection it has been stamped as belonging to eternity; it is destined for resurrection."<sup>86</sup> Therefore, how the body is used is of great importance. Christ has significant plans for believers' bodies now and for all of eternity. Speaking of the present, Paul informed the Corinthians the "body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19). The Greek word *ναός* means, according to Morris, "the sacred shrine, the sanctuary, the place where deity dwells."<sup>87</sup> The application in the life of a believer regarding sexual impurity, then, must be, as Morris asserts, "Nothing that would be amiss in God's temple is seemly in the child of God."<sup>88</sup>

Having a correct theology of the body has massive implications on pornography usage. The eyes used to view pornographic images and the hands used to navigate to various sights have eternal purposes in God's plans. Additionally, the act of masturbation is often combined with viewing pornography.<sup>89</sup> This is a gross misuse of the home of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, students would be wise to heed Paul's words to "glorify God in your body" (1 Cor 6:20).

### **Beware of God's Judgement**

A repeated theme in Paul's writings is that God will execute judgement on those who unapologetically practice sexual immorality. Paul's words in Ephesians 5:6 concerning sexual sin are sobering: "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience." God cares deeply about the activity of those who have refused to allow their identity to be

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<sup>86</sup> Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 283.

<sup>87</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 102.

<sup>88</sup> Morris, *1 Corinthians*, 102.

<sup>89</sup> While the Bible does not explicitly identify masturbation as a sin, it is my conviction that masturbation most often, if not always, is either the result of sin or the precursor to sin. Masturbation is the result of sin when it flows out of lust. Masturbation is the precursor to sin when it feeds the lie that sex is ultimately about the masturbating individual's instant gratification and pleasure. In this case, masturbation becomes the cause of selfishness in sex even within marriage. For these reasons, individuals are wise to avoid masturbation so as not to use the body in a way that can so easily facilitate sin.

shaped by Jesus Christ. Instead of becoming children of God, they insist on walking as “sons of disobedience.” God will not tolerate their idolatry in the form of sexual sin.

Additionally, Paul warns the believers in Thessalonica of the action God will take against sexual immorality. Paul is writing to specifically address adultery taking place within the church in Thessalonica.<sup>90</sup> In light of this impurity, Paul refers to God as an “avenger” (1 Thess 4:6). Green explains “avenger” as referring to “one who chastises those who do evil, executing the judicial decision. The title is distinctly legal.”<sup>91</sup> God will not turn a blind eye to blatant immorality within his church. Therefore, to live out the truth is to take sexual sin very seriously knowing that Christ will judge those who carelessly and unapologetically reject his will, his standard, and his commands.

### **Conclusion**

God’s Word clearly provides the biblical and theological basis necessary to empower college students to pursue freedom from pornography. This was plainly seen by first exploring God’s good design for sex unveiled in Genesis 2:18-25, as well as the serpent’s lie in Genesis 3:1-7. Second, examining Proverbs 7 provided a fitting example of what it looks like to live out the lie of the serpent specifically regarding pornography. Finally, surveying multiple passages from Paul’s epistles unveiled the practical direction needed to live in the truth of God’s will concerning sexual purity. Thankfully, God has not left believers on their own to chart a path of purity in a culture where pornography has been normalized. By reading, studying, and treasuring God’s Word, college students will equip and position themselves to know the joy and freedom of choosing reality.

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<sup>90</sup> Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 195.

<sup>91</sup> Green, *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, 197.

CHAPTER 3  
PRACTICAL ISSUES RELATED TO EMPOWERING  
STUDENTS TO PURSUE FREEDOM  
FROM PORNOGRAPHY

This chapter explores the practical issues related to empowering students to pursue freedom from pornography. First, to fully grasp what college students are facing when battling pornography, a thorough understanding of Generation Z and pornography’s accessibility and acceptability to this generation are needed. Next, an understanding of the porn industry’s mission will expose exactly how the porn industry is influencing students. Additionally, understanding the negative effects of porn use on college students will create an urgency to help students begin to move toward freedom. Finally, unpacking the church’s role in the fight will convey the necessity of an informed and equipped church. In the end, although many Christians have had to seek freedom from pornography over the past several decades, college students today face a battle with pornography like no other generation. Therefore, the church must develop a thorough understanding of Generation Z, the mission of the porn industry, the negative effects of pornography, and the role it must play to help students effectively pursue freedom from pornography.

**Understanding Generation Z**

As mentioned in chapter 1, Generation Z is made up of individuals born between approximately 1995 and 2010.<sup>1</sup> College students today belong to this particular generation. If James Emery White is correct, then “pornography may be the greatest area

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<sup>1</sup> James Emery White, *Meet Generation Z: Understanding and Reaching the New Post-Christian World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2017), 38.

of immorality inflicted on and pursued by Generation Z.”<sup>2</sup> Crucial to White’s claim is understanding that pornography has never been more accessible and acceptable at any point in history than it is today. In light of this, Generation Z’s porn use will be more rampant and intense than any other prior generation.

### **Accessibility**

The ease with which college students are able to access the internet has put pornography within an arm’s reach at any given moment. David Bell, professor of marketing at Wharton, identifies Generation Z as the “Internet-in-its-pocket” generation.<sup>3</sup> An article published by Wharton explains, “While the millennials don’t remember a world without computers, Gen Z does not know a world without constant, immediate and convenient access to the web.”<sup>4</sup> This accessibility to the internet is possible because of the widespread ownership of smartphones. According to Monica Anderson and Jingjing Jiang, in 2018, a Pew Research Center survey indicated that “smartphone ownership has become a nearly ubiquitous element of teen life: 95% of teens now report they have a smartphone or access to one. These mobile connections are in turn fueling more-persistent online activities: 45% of teens now say they are online on a near-constant basis.”<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Heather Watson at The Center for Generational Kinetics found that “55% of Gen Z is on their phone five hours or more a day” while “there’s a group Gen Z

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<sup>2</sup> White, *Meet Generation Z*, 60.

<sup>3</sup> Wharton University of Pennsylvania, “‘Millennials on Steroids’: Is Your Brand Ready for Generation Z?,” September 28, 2015, <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/millennials-on-steroids-is-your-brand-ready-for-generation-z/>.

<sup>4</sup> Wharton University of Pennsylvania, “‘Millennials on Steroids.’”

<sup>5</sup> Monica Anderson and Jingjing Jiang, “Teens, Social Media & Technology,” Pew Research Center, May 31, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/05/31/teens-social-media-technology-2018/>.

(12%) that are on their phone 15 or more hours a day!”<sup>6</sup> The reality is that smartphones and the internet are considered essential aspects of daily living for Gen Z. Thus, pornography is always just a click or quick search away. It is not surprising then that a survey conducted by the Barna Group found that “57% of young adults seek porn at least once a month.”<sup>7</sup>

Crucial to understanding the accessibility of porn to Gen Z is the availability of porn through platforms other than pornographic websites. Two major sources of porn for college students are social media platforms and messages from friends. For example, Gail Dines, president and CEO of Culture Reframed, shares,

On Instagram, porn is often hidden behind hashtags and emojis that appear innocuous but are used as secret code to tag and search for particular types of porn. If teens type a specific fruit or vegetable emoji into the search bar, a list of links pops up to images ranging from women barely clothed to women in sexual bondage restraints. Those images lead directly to pornographic accounts, which are used by many porn performers to build their fan bases.<sup>8</sup>

This strategy makes it more unsettling that, according to Global Web Index, Gen Z in North America spends an average of almost three hours each day on social media.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, text messages containing graphic content are often shared among peers. According to the Barna Group’s *The Porn Phenomenon*, “The majority of teens and young adults (62%) report receiving a nude image from someone else via text, email,

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<sup>6</sup> Heather Watson, “How Obsessed Is Gen Z with Mobile Technology?,” The Center for Generational Kinetics, accessed October 25, 2020, <https://genhq.com/how-obsessed-is-gen-z-with-mobile-technology/>.

<sup>7</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon: The Impact of Pornography in the Digital Age* (Plano, TX: Josh McDowell Ministry, 2016), 41.

<sup>8</sup> Gail Dines, “What Kids Aren’t Telling Parents about Porn on Social Media,” *The Boston Globe Magazine*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/magazine/2019/01/29/what-kids-aren-telling-parents-about-porn-instagram-and-snapchat/z12WPJFUGYt0vm1fDOND/story.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Global Web Index, “Social Media by Generation,” accessed September 25, 2020, [https://www.globalwebindex.com/hubfs/Downloads/Social-media-by-generation-2020.pdf?utm\\_campaign=Generic%20nurture%202019&utm\\_medium=email&\\_hsmi=85230672&\\_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9jzzmXLeO2HA0bS7meUG0IKC-qmM\\_s5nINNDgEzmKsqPs4MpRIoyf6ddXUBSQsC5qQL21YbmpVxfhuW4I-0\\_-JAjxU-iKV11NavZ1qiqRmQKPEw&utm\\_content=85230672&utm\\_source=hs\\_automation](https://www.globalwebindex.com/hubfs/Downloads/Social-media-by-generation-2020.pdf?utm_campaign=Generic%20nurture%202019&utm_medium=email&_hsmi=85230672&_hsenc=p2ANqtz-9jzzmXLeO2HA0bS7meUG0IKC-qmM_s5nINNDgEzmKsqPs4MpRIoyf6ddXUBSQsC5qQL21YbmpVxfhuW4I-0_-JAjxU-iKV11NavZ1qiqRmQKPEw&utm_content=85230672&utm_source=hs_automation).



social media or app.”<sup>10</sup> Thus, students are not even required to seek porn out because it seems that, for many, some form of porn seeks them out. It is worth noting that Generation Z is able to view porn completely free whereas previous generations had to incur a cost.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the accessibility of pornography affords colleges students the opportunity to view pornography with complete anonymity. Previous generations had to go to greater lengths and risk exposure to view porn. The Barna Group’s *The Porn Phenomenon* explains, “The level of privacy the Internet affords—particularly when the intention is to masturbate—significantly reduces the psychological barriers to entry. Where once you had to walk into a store and show your face in order to access pornography, anyone can find porn today from the privacy of their bedroom with just a few clicks.”<sup>12</sup> Clearly, the accessibility of pornography has contributed greatly to college students use of and struggle with pornography. For students to be empowered to pursue freedom from pornography, the accessibility of pornography to a student must be taken into consideration and modified, where possible, with healthy boundaries.

### **Acceptability**

The widespread acceptance of pornography, especially among Generation Z, is a key hinderance to college students living a life free from porn use. According to Andrew Dugan, in 2018, Gallup found that “forty-three percent of Americans now believe pornography is ‘morally acceptable.’”<sup>13</sup> More specifically regarding Generation Z, the Barna Group found that only “32% of teens and young adults say viewing porn is

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<sup>10</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 28.

<sup>11</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 21.

<sup>12</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Andrew Dugan, “More Americans Say Pornography Is Morally Acceptable,” *Gallup*, June 5, 2018, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/235280/americans-say-pornography-morally-acceptable.aspx>.

wrong.”<sup>14</sup> Surprisingly, as further explained by the Barna Group, “Teens and young adults rank not recycling as more immoral than viewing porn.”<sup>15</sup> Additionally, *The Porn Phenomenon* reported that “Three quarters of young men 13 to 24 talk with their friends about porn at least occasionally. And nine out of 10 of them say that *how* they talk about porn is encouraging, accepting or neutral. It is commonly understood that most of their friends regularly use porn—and as a general rule they are ho-hum about it.”<sup>16</sup> Clearly, porn is so prevalent among Generation Z because it has become a normal and acceptable part of young adulthood. It is worth noting that while pornography has usually been classified as a male struggle, porn use is prevalent among both genders. For example, in a survey of 3,000 women, 31 percent reported weekly porn use while 30 percent indicated viewing porn a few times a month.<sup>17</sup> Clearly pornography has never been more acceptable than it is today and pursuing freedom from it can be extremely challenging when the message from friends and culture is that everyone looks at it.

### **Understanding the Porn Industry’s Mission**

The porn industry has every intention of profiting off of college students today. Dines exposes the porn industry by describing pornography as “a kind of sex that is debased, dehumanized, formulaic, and generic, a kind of sex based not on individual fantasy, play, or imagination, but one that is the result of an industrial product created by those who get excited not by bodily contact but by market penetration and profits.”<sup>18</sup> The porn industry seeks to profit off of college students by providing sexually stimulating

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<sup>14</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 66.

<sup>15</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 86.

<sup>16</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 9.

<sup>17</sup> Serina Sandhu, “One in Three Women Watch Porn at Least Once a Week, Survey Finds,” *Independent*, October 21, 2015, <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/love-sex/one-three-women-watch-porn-least-once-week-survey-finds-a6702476.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Gail Dines, *Pornland: How Porn Has Hijacked Our Sexuality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), x.

media that can rival if not replace real life sex. In fact, the mission of the porn industry is to convince users that fantasy is better than reality when it comes to sex. To accomplish its mission, the industry has consistently valued variety, novelty, and intensity for decades. Examining the past, present, and future of the porn industry in this section will effectively illuminate how the porn industry has been so successful in accomplishing its mission.

## Past

When researching the history of pornography, some trace the origins of pornography back thousands of years.<sup>19</sup> Of most relevance to modern day pornography is the development of the porn industry over the past seventy years. In *Pornland: How Porn has Hijacked our Sexuality*, Dines credits the competition between print magazines *Playboy*, *Penthouse*, and *Hustler* for paving the way for modern day pornography.<sup>20</sup> *Playboy* was the first of these magazines, launching in 1953, and was what brought pornography into mainstream culture.<sup>21</sup> *Playboy* positioned itself as a sophisticated lifestyle magazine for upper class white men, which included softcore pornography.<sup>22</sup> According to *Time*, “Heading into the 1970s, an estimated one-fourth of college men bought *Playboy*.”<sup>23</sup> *Playboy*’s first real competition came from *Penthouse* magazine in 1969.<sup>24</sup> While *Playboy* cultivated its success from showing topless women, *Penthouse* introduced full frontal nudity.<sup>25</sup> Along with full-frontal nudity, *Penthouse* also featured

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<sup>19</sup> David Kushner, “A Brief History of Porn on the Internet,” *Wired*, April 9, 2019, <https://www.wired.com/story/brief-history-porn-internet/>.

<sup>20</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 2.

<sup>21</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 2, 6, 7.

<sup>23</sup> Josh Sanburn, “Brief History: Playboy,” *Time*, January 24, 2011, <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2042352,00.html>.

<sup>24</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 12.

<sup>25</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 13.

more explicit material, such as simulated sex and group sex.<sup>26</sup> In 1974, *Hustler* launched with a commitment to hard-core pornography and according to Dines, became “the most successful hard-core magazine in the history of the pornography industry.”<sup>27</sup> The development of these magazines shows the industry’s values. The introduction of *Playboy* brought novelty, the launch of *Penthouse* brought variety, and the infusion of *Hustler* brought intensity. The result was profit. By the late 1950s, *Playboy* had an annual profit of \$4 million.<sup>28</sup> By the late 1970s, *Hustler* was posting over \$13 million in profit.<sup>29</sup>

## Present

The truest statement that can be made about porn presently is that it has become normalized in society. College students and Americans in general are living and operating within a culture which has been pornified.<sup>30</sup> Pamela Paul explains, “In a pornified world, pornography has become seamlessly woven into the wake-up routine, the workday Internet break, and the bedtime ritual. It’s part of revving up in the morning and relaxing at the end of the day. It’s a prelude to sex or an alternative to sex.”<sup>31</sup> With culture’s acceptance of porn, the porn industry has evolved into a multibillion-dollar industry feeding the impulses of most likely billions of users every year across the world. Understanding the current state of the porn industry shows the appeal of choosing fantasy over reality.

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<sup>26</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 15.

<sup>28</sup> Laura Mansnerus, “Hugh Hefner, Who Built the Playboy Empire and Embodied It, Dies at 91,” *The New York Times*, September 27, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/obituaries/hugh-hefner-dead.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Pamela Paul, *Pornified: How Pornography Is Transforming Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005), 4, Kindle.

<sup>31</sup> Paul, *Pornified*, 24.

**The success of porn.** *Quartz*, a news site for business leaders, estimated in 2018 that the porn industry makes somewhere between \$6 billion and \$15 billion dollars.<sup>32</sup> The porn industry is thus more profitable than the NBA, Hollywood, Netflix, and the NFL.<sup>33</sup> Pornhub, the world’s largest porn site publishes a yearly review through Pornhub Insights. Examining the statistics and trends of the largest porn site gives sobering insight into the industry as a whole. According to Pornhub Insights, Pornhub had over forty-two billion visits in 2019 alone.<sup>34</sup> The Pornhub Insights report indicated that this averages out to 115 million visits per day, which is “the equivalent of the populations of Canada, Australia, Poland, and the Netherlands all visiting in one day!” Additionally, Pornhub Insights reported over 6.83 million new video uploads in 2019, which is a record for the site. To give an idea of just how much new content that is, Pornhub Insights explained, “If you strung all of 2019’s new video content together and started watching them way back in 1850, you’d still be watching them today!” In terms of the people who use Pornhub, the report showed that Pornhub’s influence is truly worldwide with the United States by far having the most traffic on a daily basis. Pornhub also supplies content to both genders with 32 percent of their viewership in 2019 being female. Furthermore, men and women ranging from 18 years old to 65+ look to Pornhub for their pornography fix. Pornhub Insights’ report is a grave reminder of just how accessible and acceptable pornography is worldwide and just how successful the industry is as a whole.

**The rationalization of porn.** Pornography is not just tolerated, it is embraced and even defended by many because it is rationalized as a positive resource for users. Magazines, bloggers, celebrities, and researchers leverage their voices to advocate for the

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<sup>32</sup> Ross Benes, “Porn Could Have a Bigger Economic Influence on the US than Netflix,” *Quartz*, June 20, 2018, <https://qz.com/1309527/porn-could-have-a-bigger-economic-influence-on-the-us-than-netflix/>.

<sup>33</sup> Benes, “Porn Could Have a Bigger Economic Influence.”

<sup>34</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review,” December 11, 2019, <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/2019-year-in-review>. This entire section was informed by this report.

benefits, great and small, of using porn and thus bolster the porn industry's success. For example, Scarlett Wrench, writing for *Men's Health* explains, "Erotic films cause surges in testosterone that can improve your squat strength at the gym, says the UK Sport Council."<sup>35</sup> According to Peter Suderman of *Reason*, "the evidence is strong, and it makes sense that pornography and violent entertainment might serve as exhaust valves for our aggressive impulses—that, in most cases, they would help regulate our instincts rather than amplify them."<sup>36</sup> Pornhub Insights quotes Laurie Betito of the Sexual Wellness Center explaining, "Women are increasingly viewing porn, which hopefully means they are engaging in some self pleasuring. This is good news, as it indicates that women are taking charge of their sexuality, discovering their bodies and identifying what they like. Less shame, less taboo around female sexuality equals more exploration."<sup>37</sup> Amazon best-selling author and relationship coach Jordan Gray shares, "If you're never exposed to something outside of what you have been told is appropriate, you will have a much harder time coming to terms with or normalizing those parts of your sexual self/your fantasies."<sup>38</sup> Gray goes on to share that "Occasionally viewing pornography with your significant other . . . ensures that you're on the same page sexually."<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, Gray suggests porn "can be a good way of introducing new ideas/kinks/sexual fantasies into your bedroom repertoire."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Scarlett Wrench, "Is Watching Porn Really that Bad for You?" *Men's Health*, August 15, 2016, <https://www.menshealth.com/uk/sex/a756539/is-watching-porn-really-that-bad-for-you/>.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Suderman, "Does More Porn Make Society Better?" *Reason*, July 15, 2009, <https://reason.com/2009/07/15/does-more-porn-make-society-be/>.

<sup>37</sup> Pornhub Insights, "The 2019 Year in Review."

<sup>38</sup> Jordan Gray, "3 Major Benefits of Porn That No One Talks About," *Jordan Gray—Relationship Coach Blog*, September 14, 2020, <https://www.jordangrayconsulting.com/3-major-benefits-of-porn-that-no-one-talks-about/>.

<sup>39</sup> Gray, "3 Major Benefits of Porn."

<sup>40</sup> Gray, "3 Major Benefits of Porn."

**The values of porn.** In light of the demand that exists for porn, the porn industry is constantly developing, innovating, and placing a high value on variety, novelty, and intensity. Writing for *Time* magazine, Belinda Luscombe states, “The Internet is like a 24-hour all-you-can-eat buffet restaurant that serves every type of sex snack.”<sup>41</sup> An imaginary rule on the internet commonly known as Rule 34 states, in reference to pornography, that “if it exists, there is porn of it. No exceptions.”<sup>42</sup> Luscombe and Rule 34 are both asserting that the porn industry has gone to great lengths to cater to even the most eccentric and specific fantasies. No user needs to go unfulfilled when searching for a visual depiction of his or her latest fantasy. If an individual can conceive of a sexual scenario, the porn industry aims to have already created content depicting that conceived scenario. In this sense, variety and novelty must be cherished by the porn industry. Pornhub boasts of almost seven million new video uploads in 2019 because their profitability is dependent upon their ability to consistently provide novel material keeping users interested and satisfied.

The porn industry’s push for variety and novelty naturally gives rise to a need for greater intensity. In 2010, when Dines released *Pornland*, she shared, “Images today have now become so extreme that what used to be considered hard-core is now mainstream pornography. Acts that are now commonplace in much of online porn were almost nonexistent a couple of decades ago.”<sup>43</sup> The reason for this increase in intensity really boils down to profit. Dines further explains in regard to pornographers, “They see themselves as caught up in a business that, thanks to the growth of the Internet, is like a runaway train. What they will admit is that porn is becoming more extreme, and their success depends on finding some new, edgy sex act that will draw in users always on the

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<sup>41</sup> Belinda Luscombe, “Porn and the Threat to Virility,” *Time*, March 31, 2016, <https://time.com/magazine/us/4277492/april-11th-2016-vol-187-no-13-u-s/>.

<sup>42</sup> Dictionary.com, “Rule. 34,” accessed August 4, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/e/slang/rule-34/>.

<sup>43</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, xvii.

lookout for that extra bit of sexual charge.”<sup>44</sup> A decade has passed since Dines made these claims about the porn industry. At the rate at which new videos are being thought up, developed, and released, the intensity of pornography today that college students are viewing is sobering and tragic.

**The advancement of porn.** Another important aspect of the current state of the porn industry is the way users are now able to interact with pornography. The porn industry has elevated users’ experiences with the senses of sound and sight by tapping into virtual reality technology. In a *Wall Street Journal* article, David Ewalt shares, “Pornography has provided the first real boom in VR.”<sup>45</sup> Virtual Reality pornography provides viewers with a more realistic experience. Writing about Ela Darling, an entrepreneur, producer, and actress in virtual reality porn, Ewalt explains, “Virtual reality offered the chance to make a viewer feel like he was actually in the room with her, to make a real connection—emotionally, if not physically.”<sup>46</sup> Virtual reality thus moves the porn industry one step closer in creating a virtual experience that rivals a real life experience. Truly, virtual reality porn exposes the industry’s attempt to convince users that fantasy sex is better than real life sex. Pornhub makes this abundantly clear in their 2019 review. In regard to users who took advantage of virtual reality technology in 2019, Pornhub Insights stated, “Users looking for a more realistic porn-viewing experience could tune-in and unzip, getting everything they needed without all the real-world troubles. Who needs an IRL [in real life] partner when you have POV [point of view] Pornhub videos on your side?”<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, xvi.

<sup>45</sup> David M. Ewalt, “The First Real Boom in Virtual Reality? It’s Pornography,” *The Wall Street Journal*, July 11, 2018, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-first-real-boom-in-virtual-reality-its-pornography-1531320180>.

<sup>46</sup> Ewalt, “The First Real Boom in Virtual Reality?”

<sup>47</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”



Another new development in technology is what are known as “deepfakes.” According to Rachel Metz writing for *CNN*, “Deepfakes, which refer to a combination of the terms ‘deep learning’ and ‘fake,’ use artificial intelligence to show people doing and saying something they didn’t do or say. The medium is quite new: The first known videos, posted to Reddit in 2017, featured celebrities’ faces swapped with those of porn stars.”<sup>48</sup> The troubling issue with deepfakes is that anyone is capable of creating a deepfake video provided they have a computer and internet access.<sup>49</sup> Thus, according to Samantha Cole, the technology is being used to not just create videos of celebrities but of “friends, casual acquaintances, exes, and classmates.”<sup>50</sup> The use of deepfakes is especially troubling in two specific ways. First, deepfakes further allow the user to customize their experience with pornography. Porn users’ ability to have virtual sex with literally anyone they want whenever they want perpetuates the belief that fantasy is better than reality. Second, deepfakes take away an individual’s consent.<sup>51</sup> Now, not only are porn users urged to disregard the image of God present in the lives of porn performers, but deepfakes beckon users to ignore the image of God in celebrities, friends, family, classmates, and co-workers.

Finally, when discussing the advancements of the porn industry, the rise in amateur pornography must be mentioned. Amateur pornography is essentially homemade pornography. Individuals can in a sense become porn stars by simply uploading their own

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<sup>48</sup> Rachel Metz, “The Number of Deepfake Videos Online Is Spiking. Most Are Porn,” *CNN Business*, October 7, 2019, <https://www.cnn.com/2019/10/07/tech/deepfake-videos-increase/index.html>.

<sup>49</sup> Grace Shao, “What ‘Deepfakes’ Are and How They May Be Dangerous,” *CNBC*, October 13, 2019, <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/10/14/what-is-deepfake-and-how-it-might-be-dangerous.html>.

<sup>50</sup> Samantha Cole, “People Are Using AI to Create Fake Porn of Their Friends and Classmates,” *Vice*, January 26, 2018, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/ev5eba/ai-fake-porn-of-friends-deepfakes>.

<sup>51</sup> Cole, “People Are Using AI.”

sex videos.<sup>52</sup> Pornhub Insights identified “amateur” as the most defining search of 2019.<sup>53</sup> Laurie Betito was quoted by Pornhub Insights as saying, “It’s interesting that more and more people are putting themselves out there as amateurs. Sex has become so much less taboo that those who get a kick out of exhibitionism can do so with very little experience or equipment. The message is: anyone can be a porn star!”<sup>54</sup> Thus, the porn industry has now made a way for an individual’s reality in the bedroom to become another person’s fantasy.

## **Future**

For decades, pornography has appealed exclusively to the senses of sight and sound. According to the Future of Sex Report, though, “Robotics, virtual reality, and extraordinary scientific innovations are expanding how we can express and experience sexuality through our five senses. Breakthroughs in biological and neurological science are opening manifold erotic possibilities.”<sup>55</sup> Developments by the porn and sex tech industries will have profound impacts on how college students in the near and distant future interact with porn. The Future of Sex Report makes several startling predictions. The Report predicts that “by 2020 people will regularly pair virtual reality and haptic sex toys to fully immerse themselves into adult entertainment.”<sup>56</sup> According to the Future of Sex Report, “Participatory Porn” is where “Smart sex toys . . . can control the action of adult videos, so when a viewer thrusts, the erotic content changes to match the pace. New partnerships between adult content creators and sex toy makers also make it so the action

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<sup>52</sup> Laurel Rinehart, “The Disturbing Reality behind the Scenes of Amateur Porn,” *Daily Nexus*, October 19, 2016, <https://dailynexus.com/2016-10-19/the-disturbing-reality-behind-the-scenes-of-amateur-porn/>.

<sup>53</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>54</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>55</sup> Russ Dawson and Jenna Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” accessed October 8, 2020, [https://futureofsex.net/Future\\_of\\_Sex\\_Report.pdf](https://futureofsex.net/Future_of_Sex_Report.pdf), 1.

<sup>56</sup> Dawson and Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” 18.

in erotic films controls the sensation of male and female sex devices.”<sup>57</sup> The report goes on to predict that “by 2024 people will be able to be anybody, with anybody, enacting impossible fantasies in photo-realistic virtual worlds.”<sup>58</sup> One more prediction is that “adult performers and some B-list celebrities will sell robotic replicas of themselves designed for sex by 2033.”<sup>59</sup> These predictions mentioned barely scratch the surface of what is planned for the future of pornography and sex. Most startling though in the report is the following assertion by Brian Shuster, CEO of Red Light Center: “We’re rapidly approaching a point where man and machine merge, where sex can be better and safer outside of real life.”<sup>60</sup> Thus, the intention of the porn industry to seduce its users into choosing fantasy over reality is further confirmed. Sadly, the predictions of the Future of Sex Report give an indication of how college students’ struggles with pornography will be more intense than at any point in history. During the days of *Playboy*, dealing with pornography meant throwing away magazines. In more recent days, battling pornography well involves an internet filter or removing private access to the internet all together. In the near future, though, overcoming a struggle with pornography will involve college students parting ways with sex devices and even sex robots that have become a normal part of the college experience.

### **Understanding the Negative Effects of Pornography**

Often, college students only see porn for the instant gratification it provides. However, the reality is that pornography has serious side effects. An essential part of college students being empowered to pursue freedom from pornography is understanding the negative effects of porn use. This section will demonstrate how costly free porn truly is.

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<sup>57</sup> Dawson and Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” 4.

<sup>58</sup> Dawson and Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” 10.

<sup>59</sup> Dawson and Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” 14.

<sup>60</sup> Dawson and Owsianik, “The Future of Sex Report,” 10.

## **Pornography Cultivates Unrealistic Expectations**

Unfortunately, with the average age of first exposure to pornography being somewhere between 8 and 13, pornography often becomes a first source of sex education for children.<sup>61</sup> Callie Little, writing for *Teen Vogue*, rightly states, “Because we might run into porn before we’re taught anything about sexuality, it can sometimes be viewed as a stand-in for sex education rather than highly edited entertainment.”<sup>62</sup> In fact, Peggy Orenstein, writing for the *New York Times*, shared that “according to a survey of college students in Britain, 60 percent consult pornography, at least in part, as though it were an instruction manual, even as nearly three-quarters say that they know it is as realistic as pro wrestling.”<sup>63</sup> With pornography serving as sex education for many children, the natural outcome is unrealistic expectations for sex. Children, teens, and young adults develop a distorted understanding of what is normal, comfortable, and pleasurable in sex. As students become sexually active, they expect to experience pornified sex.<sup>64</sup> Dines explains, “The messages that porn disseminates about women can be boiled down to a few essential characteristics: they are always ready for sex and are enthusiastic to do whatever men want, irrespective of how painful, humiliating, or harmful the act is.”<sup>65</sup> Dines’ comment sheds light on why one survey of teenagers found that several boys had experimented with choking or ejaculating on their sex partner’s face.<sup>66</sup> What students fail

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<sup>61</sup> Sam Black, “‘Tis the Season for Peer-to-Peer Porn Exposure,” *Covenant Eyes*, December 9, 2019, <https://www.covenanteyes.com/2019/12/09/peer-exposure-porn/>.

<sup>62</sup> Callie Little, “What We Should Learn from Porn,” *Teen Vogue*, October 10, 2017, <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/lessons-to-learn-from-porn>.

<sup>63</sup> Peggy Orenstein, “When Did Porn Become Sex Ed?,” *The New York Times*, March 19, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/opinion/sunday/when-did-porn-become-sex-ed.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Paul, *Pornified*, 94.

<sup>65</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, xxiii.

<sup>66</sup> Maggie Jones, “What Teenagers Are Learning from Online Porn,” *The New York Times*, February 7, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/07/magazine/teenagers-learning-online-porn-literacy-sex-education.html>.

to realize is that the videos they are watching have often required multiple takes and hard work by producers and actors to deliver maximum satisfaction. The *Huffington Post* quoted adult film performer Kelley Cabbana sharing, “Porn actors spend hours in the same position to get the shot. You are sore after hours of filming. Being on set, it’s hot and your makeup runs and you get sweaty fast. You work long days and long hours filming to create a 15-minute clip of pure perfection.”<sup>67</sup> Unfortunately, unrealistic expectations cultivated by porn are carried into marriage so many men and women seek to pornify their marriages with the sex education they received over years of porn usage.<sup>68</sup>

### **Pornography Normalizes Perverted Desires**

As previously mentioned, the porn industry prizes novelty, variety, and intensity. Because of this, many porn users will eventually expose themselves to material that grossly distorts the beauty of sex with deviant acts. The result is that porn users begin to believe that the perverted desires and tastes that porn is cultivating in them are normal. A clear example is found in Pornhub Insights’ lists of top searches in 2019.<sup>69</sup> Pornhub Insights identified ten searches that defined 2019. Two examples from the list include “alien” and “mature.”<sup>70</sup> In response to a Facebook event in 2019 called “Storm Area 51,” people went to Pornhub to explore alien sexual encounters.<sup>71</sup> The top alien related searches on Pornhub included, “alien impregnation” and “alien sex.”<sup>72</sup> The second defining search term, “mature,” is a reference to pornography that involves older aged individuals.

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<sup>67</sup> Brittany Wong, “All the Ways Porn Lied to You, according to Actual Porn Stars,” *Huffpost*, April 25, 2019, [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/porn-lies-sex\\_1\\_5cc1ffeee4b066119de3a45c](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/porn-lies-sex_1_5cc1ffeee4b066119de3a45c).

<sup>68</sup> Paul, *Pornified*, 133.

<sup>69</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>70</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>71</sup> Pornhub Insights, “Alien Insights,” July 17, 2019, <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/alien-insights>.

<sup>72</sup> Pornhub Insights, “Alien Insights.”

Pornhub Insights identified this porn as “GILF porn”<sup>73</sup> GILF is an acronym which stands for either “Grandmother I’d like to f\*\*\*” or “Grandfather I’d like to f\*\*\*.”<sup>74</sup> In addition to identifying searches that defined 2019, Pornhub Insights shared a list of the most searched for terms in 2019. While many terms are simply too inappropriate to share, terms like stepmom, teen, public, gangbang, and cartoon all made the list.<sup>75</sup> With these terms being some of the most searched in a year, clearly pornography has a pervasive tendency to normalize perverted desires.

Of utmost importance to this discussion is pornography’s influence on sexual aggression. Writing for the *Washington Post*, Dines cites a study which found that 88 percent of the scenes analyzed from popular porn videos contained physical aggression and 49 percent of the scenes contained verbal aggression with women being the recipients of this physical and verbal aggression 94 percent of the time.<sup>76</sup> Sadly, a study of fraternity men found that those who viewed pornography within the past twelve months indicated a greater likelihood of committing rape and sexual assault if they knew that they would not get “caught or punished” for doing so.<sup>77</sup> The same study found that men who viewed “sodomasochistic pornography” in the past twelve months indicated less likelihood to “intervene” when someone is being raped and “greater belief in rape

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<sup>73</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>74</sup> Dictionary.com, “GILF,” accessed October 9, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/e/acronyms/gilf/>. Certain words were redacted for academic propriety.

<sup>75</sup> Pornhub Insights, “The 2019 Year in Review.”

<sup>76</sup> Gail Dines, “Is Porn Immoral? That Doesn’t Matter: It’s a Public Health Crisis,” *The Washington Post*, April 8, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2016/04/08/is-porn-immoral-that-doesnt-matter-its-a-public-health-crisis/>.

<sup>77</sup> John D. Foubert, Matthew W. Brosi, and R. Sean Bannon, “Pornography Viewing among Fraternity Men: Effects on Bystander Intervention, Rape Myth Acceptance and Behavioral Intent to Commit Sexual Assault,” *Sexual Addiction & Compulsivity* 18, no. 4 (2011): 222.

myths.”<sup>78</sup> Dines provides indicting commentary on porn’s tendency to normalize perverted desires:

Porn sex is not about making love, as the feelings and emotions we normally associate with such an act—connection, empathy, tenderness, caring, affection—are replaced by those more often connected with hate—fear, disgust, anger, loathing, and contempt. In porn the man makes hate to the woman, as each sex act is designed to deliver the maximum amount of degradation. . . . The goal of porn sex is to illustrate how much power he has over her. It is what he wants when, where, and how he wants it, because he controls the pace, the timing, and the nature of the acts.<sup>79</sup>

### **Pornography Impacts Relationships**

Pornography often has very detrimental effects on romantic relationships. Samuel Perry and Cyrus Schleifer sought to examine a correlation between pornography and divorce. In their journal article they acknowledged many of the ways pornography can impact relationships. For example, multiple studies observed a correlation between men’s porn usage and greater sexual dissatisfaction with their significant other in the form of sexual boredom or disappointment.<sup>80</sup> According to Luscombe, some young men believe they suffer from what is called “porn-induced erectile dysfunction (PIED).”<sup>81</sup> Ajay Nangia, former president of the Society for Male Reproduction and Urology told *Time*, “There’s a kind of desensitization of these men, and they only reach the point of feeling stimulated when sex is like it is on a movie.”<sup>82</sup> Perry and Schleifer also noted multiple studies demonstrating that a man’s porn use can cause a woman to be “more self-conscious about body image or sexual performance” and thus lead to a decrease in

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<sup>78</sup> Foubert, Brosi, and Bannon, “Pornography Viewing among Fraternity Men,” 222-23

<sup>79</sup> Dines, *Pornland*, xxiv-xxv.

<sup>80</sup> Samuel L. Perry and Cyrus Schleifer, “Till Porn Do Us Part? A Longitudinal Examination of Pornography Use and Divorce,” *The Journal of Sex Research* 55, no. 3 (2018): 285.

<sup>81</sup> Luscombe, “Porn and the Threat to Virility.”

<sup>82</sup> Luscombe, “Porn and the Threat to Virility.”

attraction and desire for intimacy in the woman.<sup>83</sup> Another study found that the more couples considered porn a primary source of sexual information, the less value they placed on sexual communication with one another during and after sex.<sup>84</sup> The point being that pornography use can strain relationships by increasing insecurity and decreasing satisfaction and communication. The most devastating effect that pornography can have on a relationship, though, is divorce. For many students, college is the time when marriage begins to come into view. Unfortunately, some college students buy into the lie that marriage will solve a struggle with pornography. The reality is that many individuals carry a struggle with porn into marriage. Perry and Schleifer drew on three-wave longitudinal data over an eight-year period and found that when porn use began between waves, the probability of divorce doubled.<sup>85</sup> Porn can most certainly end a marriage at worst and strain a marriage at best.

### **Pornography Facilitates Sex Trafficking**

College students consistently demonstrate a passion to fight against human trafficking. Student groups exist on college campuses all over the nation to fight against the atrocious injustice of forced labor and sex. While students show themselves to be advocates and even activists in the fight against human trafficking, many at the exact same time inadvertently show themselves to be supporters of human trafficking by viewing pornography. The “Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2017” states that “the crime of human trafficking involves the exploitation of adults through force, fraud, or coercion, and children for such purposes as forced labor or commercial sex.”<sup>86</sup> With this definition

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<sup>83</sup> Perry and Schleifer, “Till Porn Do Us Part?,” 285.

<sup>84</sup> Paul J. Wright et al., “Associative Pathways between Pornography Consumption and Reduced Sexual Satisfaction,” *Sexual and Relationship Therapy* 34, no. 4 (2019): 433.

<sup>85</sup> Perry and Schleifer, “Till Porn Do Us Part?,” 284, 292.

<sup>86</sup> Govinfo.gov, “One Hundred Fifteenth Congress of the United States of America, Section 2a1,” accessed October 9, 2020, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/BILLS-115s1312enr/pdf/BILLS-115s1312enr.pdf>



in mind, the reality is that many of the individuals appearing in porn films are being trafficked. For example, in 2006, two men began luring young women to come to Florida to audition for a commercial and instead drugged and raped them on camera with the videos being sold on the internet.<sup>87</sup> Other women find themselves in situations where they are pressured and coerced by their agents or the directors to participate in filming even when they have attempted to stop or back out.<sup>88</sup> Additionally, some students will find their way to videos involving minors who are most certainly being filmed against their will. College students have to understand that the actors they often are watching in porn films do not actually want to be there. Therefore, students who use pornography are actually a part of the problem instead of the solution regarding human trafficking.

### **Pornography Hinders Spiritual Intimacy**

Pornography often hinders Christians' intimacy with God. In a study evaluating how porn use impacts religiosity, Samuel Perry found that "adults who reported viewing pornography at all at Wave 1 reported more frequent religious doubt, lower levels of religious salience, and lower frequency of prayer compared to persons who never viewed pornography."<sup>89</sup> In his study, Perry also referenced a study by Mary B. Short, Thomas E. Kasper, and Chad T. Wetterneck which found that porn use among college students had hindered their spiritual life.<sup>90</sup> Short, Kasper, and Wetterneck suggested that this spiritual disconnect could be the result of "'scrupulosity,' which refers to a psychological disorder characterized by pathological guilt, often about violations of deeply held religious

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<sup>87</sup> FBI.gov, "A Sordid Scam," August 6, 2012, <https://www.fbi.gov/news/stories/a-sordid-scam>.

<sup>88</sup> Donna M. Hughes, "Sex Trafficking of Women for the Production of Pornography," *Citizens Against Trafficking* (2010): 1-3.

<sup>89</sup> Samuel L. Perry, "Does Viewing Pornography Diminish Religiosity Over Time? Evidence From Two-Wave Panel Data," *The Journal of Sex Research* 54, no. 2 (2017): 224.

<sup>90</sup> Perry, "Does Viewing Pornography Diminish Religiosity Over Time?," 216.

convictions (Miller & Hedges, 2008).”<sup>91</sup> What researchers have labeled as a disorder is, in many cases, most likely the convicting work of the Holy Spirit seeking to lead students to repentance. Unfortunately, while the Scriptures paint a picture of a God who is always approachable, especially in the midst of failure, feelings of shame associated with porn use often prevent believers from drawing near to God. Some students might even feel that God has let them down because they have prayed to him for freedom, yet they still seem to be struggling.

### **Understanding the Church’s Role**

The church has a crucial role to play in empowering college students to pursue freedom from pornography. Students should never have to struggle on their own. If an individual wants to pursue freedom, they should be able to turn to the church to find hope and a clear path toward freedom. This section will explore how the church can play a key role in pushing back the darkness of pornography in the lives of college students.

### **Assume the Worst**

The worst decision church leaders can make is to assume the best-case scenario of students, which is that pornography is a struggle among a few students instead of a majority of students. If James Emery White is correct when he says that “pornography may be the greatest area of immorality inflicted on and pursued by Generation Z,” then leaders must assume the worst case scenario, which is that pornography is affecting the majority of college students in church in some capacity.<sup>92</sup> The reality is many college students are forming habits in regard to porn use that will last for years or even decades if not addressed. Both male and female students battling porn deserve church leaders who will understand the reality of the problem and seek to provide healthy and helpful leadership that will empower students to pursue freedom.

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<sup>91</sup> Perry, “Does Viewing Pornography Diminish Religiosity Over Time?,” 216.

<sup>92</sup> White, *Meet Generation Z*, 60.

## **Create Safe Spaces**

Unfortunately, the church is already in a position of needing to play catch up with secular organizations that have been raising their voices against pornography. While this chapter has spoken of those in culture advocating for the benefits of porn use, many individuals and organizations, outside of Christianity, are warring against pornography. Organizations such as Fight the New Drug, NoFap, and Culture Reframed each reach countless individuals battling pornography. On one hand, the fact that secular organizations exist to combat pornography is encouraging. A widespread understanding among Christian and secular organizations is essential for exposing the devastating effects of pornography to the general public. At the same time, secular organizations combating porn lack the single greatest change agent in the world: the gospel of Jesus Christ. Unfortunately, churches that are equipped with the gospel are dropping the ball when it comes to helping individuals struggling with pornography. According to *The Porn Phenomenon*, “only 7 percent of pastors say their church has a ministry program for those struggling with porn.”<sup>93</sup> No wonder only 21 percent of teens and young adults feel that they have someone to help them pursue freedom from pornography.<sup>94</sup> The church must wake up and create safe spaces for both men and women to be known, loved, and equipped to pursue freedom.

## **Speak to the Heart**

When pastors and churches do address pornography, the tendency is to speak solely to the behavior and to call people to manage their actions. While this is an important aspect of pursuing freedom from pornography, pastors and churches must be willing to speak to the heart. After all, Jesus said in Matthew 15:19, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” In *Daring Greatly*, Brené Brown talks about interviewing men about pornography and she found that one of the reasons men look at pornography is because of a fear of rejection from

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<sup>93</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 115.

<sup>94</sup> The Barna Group and Josh McDowell Ministry, *The Porn Phenomenon*, 112.

women.<sup>95</sup> In *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*, James C. Wilhoit quotes Alan Medinger as saying, “Sexual immorality often develops as a means of finding relief from or avoiding certain pains, especially pains associated with a low opinion of ourselves.”<sup>96</sup> Medinger continues, “We use sex because our needs are fundamentally relational, and sex is a relational experience.”<sup>97</sup> If Brown and Medinger are correct, then people might be turning to porn because of a fear of rejection, an insecurity about their desirability, a desire to feel significant, a longing to feel connected to another person, a desire for control when life feels out of control, a need to feel alive, or an attempt to numb the pain of “self-hatred.”<sup>98</sup> Each of these are ultimately heart issues that must find their satisfaction in the gospel. For this reason, pastors must address the heart and not just the behavior.

### **Call Students to Holiness**

More than ever, college students need the church to plant a stake in the ground for holiness. Students are being indoctrinated into a culture where absolute truth and morality has been all but lost. Regarding sexual impurity, Kevin DeYoung explains, “It doesn’t shock us. It doesn’t upset us. It doesn’t offend our consciences. In fact, unless it’s really bad, sexual impurity seems normal, just a way of life, and often downright entertaining.”<sup>99</sup> Because of this, students need the church to be set apart, zealous for purity. In a culture where pornography has been normalized, may students step into a church and find holiness normalized.

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<sup>95</sup> Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly* (New York: Avery, 2012), 103.

<sup>96</sup> James C. Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 68.

<sup>97</sup> Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 68.

<sup>98</sup> Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered*, 68; Brown, *Daring Greatly*, 103.

<sup>99</sup> Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2012), 108.

## **Preach Hope**

Many individuals struggling with pornography at some point lose hope in the battle. After enough failure, students begin to believe that breaking free from pornography is simply not possible. Pastors must make the power of the gospel available to all through preaching. Because of the gospel, no one is hopeless against pornography. As students look to the church for guidance, may they find hope in the midst of struggle because the gospel has been clearly preached and made available even to those in the darkest fights against pornography.

Churches must also use the power of story to breed hope in those in the midst of the battle with pornography. Students will benefit greatly from regularly hearing stories of men and women who have experienced the healing power of the gospel specifically in the area of pornography. When students can identify with someone else who has navigated a similar journey with pornography, they are reminded that change and victory truly are possible, and hope is reignited. Additionally, when churches choose to highlight stories of victory over pornography they destigmatize the issue, convincing students that they are in a safe place to find healing.

## **Conclusion**

Clearly, great understanding is needed by the church if it is going to empower college students to pursue freedom from pornography. The necessity of understanding was demonstrated by first exploring Generation Z and pornography's accessibility and acceptability among members of this generation. Next, examining the porn industry's mission to persuade college students to choose fantasy over reality exposed how the industry is influencing students. Additionally, observing the negative effects of porn use on students was essential for the church to sense urgency in ministering to students who are struggling. Finally, unpacking the church's role provided clear direction on how the church must begin to better serve those battling porn. While the reality of the porn industry

and the unique struggle the current generation of college students has with pornography can seem overwhelming, hope truly is available and freedom most certainly is possible.

## CHAPTER 4

### IMPLEMENTATION OF CHOOSING REALITY

This chapter will provide a detailed account of the implementation process for the Choosing Reality ministry project at Breakaway Ministries. The first section will discuss the timing of the project and the decision to execute the project earlier than originally planned. The second section will explain how participants were gathered for the project. The third section will provide insight into the Choosing Reality Inventory administered prior to beginning the course. The fourth section will unpack the development of the course's curriculum. The fifth section will provide an overview of how the course was conducted, and the final section will briefly touch on the Choosing Reality Inventory that was administered again after the course was completed.

#### **Timing of the Project**

When writing my proposal for the ministry project, I had planned to implement Choosing Reality starting in late August in tandem with the beginning of the fall 2020 school semester. The course would have run through September and finished up at the beginning of October. However, COVID-19 had a drastic impact on the spring and summer of 2020 for college students at Texas A & M University. During students' spring break in March of 2020, classes were moved from in-person to online due to the pandemic. The result was that many students spent the remainder of their spring in their hometown away from school. Additionally, many summer jobs and internships were canceled. This dramatic change in plans led to intensified battles with pornography due to isolation, boredom, and constant access. With porn usage on the rise, I felt that students would be best served by executing the project during such a unique and critical time as opposed to waiting until school was back in session during the fall of 2020.

## **Gathering Participants**

Since students were not in College Station, the Choosing Reality course was offered specifically to students who volunteer with Breakaway Ministries because I already had their contact information on file. Kylan Perry, the Associate Director of Breakaway Ministries, who oversees Breakaway’s volunteers, sent an email to 367 volunteers on June 10, 2020. The email informed students of the purpose of Choosing Reality, specified the dates of the course, and stated that participation would be anonymous and over Zoom. The email included a link to a Google Form that allowed students to register for the course. The registration form asked participants for their name, gender, email address, phone number, and class year.<sup>1</sup> On June 17, 2020, an email was sent notifying students that the dates of the course had been adjusted. This adjustment was necessary because I was waiting for approval for my survey from Southern Seminary’s Ethics Committee. The updated email also informed volunteers that they could invite their friends to register for and participate in the course. Thus, the course consisted of both Breakaway volunteers as well as students from the general public. Registration for the course was open from June 10, 2020 until June 24, 2020. As of June 24, 2020, 46 individuals had registered for the course. June 24, 2020 served as an unofficial deadline because that was the date the Choosing Reality Inventory was sent to registrants. Two additional registrations came in on June 25, 2020 bringing the total registration to 48.

## **Pre-Course Choosing Reality Inventory**

To assess the struggles with pornography that existed among participants, I created the Choosing Reality Inventory (CRI).<sup>2</sup> The CRI was comprised of 47 questions and submitted to the Ethics Committee at Southern Seminary for approval prior to administering the CRI to students. The CRI included an “Agreement to Participate” and

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<sup>1</sup> The anonymity promised in the course was specifically the opportunity to participate on Zoom without other students knowing who was on the webinar.

<sup>2</sup> See appendix 1.



required that participants be at least 18 years of age. Due to the sensitive nature of the topic, students were asked to use a 6-digit identification number instead of their name to guard against dishonest answers to very personal questions. The inventory was divided into three sections. The first section was multiple choice and gathered demographic information. The second section included both multiple choice and Likert scale items. The questions and items in this section gathered information about participants' pornography use. The Likert scale was a six-point scale that ranged from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The reason I chose to use a six-point scale was to remove the option of a midpoint. As Lesley Andres points out, "If there is no midpoint, individuals are not allowed to sit on the fence."<sup>3</sup> Andres goes on to cite Converse and Presser (1986) as reporting, "When offered as a category, up to 20% of respondents will choose a middle category."<sup>4</sup> My concern was that a midpoint would give students an excuse to avoid identifying their true attitudes concerning a particular statement. I wanted students to be challenged to indicate a leaning one way or another. The third section of the CRI also utilized both multiple choice questions and Likert scale items. This section gathered information about participants' spiritual lives. The CRI was self-administered, which allowed participants to complete the survey at a time that was most convenient for them while providing greater privacy when answering questions on such a sensitive topic.<sup>5</sup>

After I created the CRI in a Microsoft Word document, my Executive Assistant, Shelby Holloway, converted it into a Google Form. A link to the pre-course CRI was sent in an email through MailChimp to 45 registrants on June 24, 2020. Participants were informed that the CRI would only take five minutes to complete and the email asked students to complete the CRI by June 25, 2020. The MailChimp email went

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<sup>3</sup> Lesley Andres, *Designing and Doing Survey Research* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2012), 74, Kindle.

<sup>4</sup> Andres, *Designing and Doing Survey Research*, 74.

<sup>5</sup> Andres, *Designing and Doing Survey Research*, 47.

to 45 of the 46 registrants because one of the email addresses was invalid. On June 26, 2020, Kylen Perry sent an email from his Breakaway email account to the 48 registrants as a reminder to fill out the survey. When sending the email, Kylen added the two late registrants and Gmail flagged the invalid email address, allowing him to correct the address so that all 48 registrants received the survey. The research acquisition goal was successfully met when 50 percent of the registrants had completed the pre-course CRI. Of the 48 registrants for the course, 42 completed the CRI by June 27, 2020 and 1 completed it on July 7, 2020, bringing the total number of Inventory participants to 43.

### **Developing the Curriculum**

For the Choosing Reality course, I wrote six teaching lessons. In addition to the six teaching lessons, I wrote a daily companion guide that correlated to the lesson of each week. Because the timing of the course was moved up from the fall of 2020 to the summer of 2020, I had to write the lessons and companion guide while the course was being executed. I aimed to finish writing each lesson and companion guide one week ahead of the date I was to deliver it.<sup>6</sup>

### **Overview of the Teaching Lessons**

The six teaching lessons walked through several of the most important passages in the Bible on sexual purity. I aimed to show participants that the Word of God truly holds the keys to freedom. Each lesson was rich in truth as well as practical in application. At times, I used statistics from the pre-course survey to demonstrate the applicability of various points. In light of the title of the course, “Choosing Reality,” each lesson unpacked the reality of some aspect of the pursuit of freedom from pornography.

Lesson 1 walked through Genesis 2:18-3:7 and was titled, “The Reality of the Roots.” The talk identified the root of students’ struggles with pornography as well as the root of their future freedom. The thesis of the lesson was, “At the root of your struggle

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<sup>6</sup> While this was always my intention, some weeks this was simply not possible.

with pornography is a moment-by-moment acceptance of the lie that God is really not that good. He is actually trying to rip you off. Therefore, at the root of your freedom will be the daily conviction that God has always been and will always be supremely good. Everything you are longing for is only truly satisfied in the person of Jesus Christ.” I started the lesson by sharing about my own past struggle with pornography as well as the power of the gospel to free me from that struggle. I also briefly explained the title of the course by exposing the mission of the porn industry to convince students to choose fantasy over reality. In the lesson, I demonstrated how the goodness of God is seen through value, delight, commitment, oneness, and vulnerability in the relationship between Adam and Eve. I then showed how the serpent undermined God’s goodness in the minds of Adam and Eve leading them to reject God and redefine goodness on their own terms. Demonstrating how the first humans redefined goodness enabled me to explain how the porn industry has sought to redefine what is good, specifically in regard to sex.

Lesson 2 explored Ephesians 5:1-10 and was titled, “The Reality of Your Identity.” The thesis of the lesson was, “Choosing the reality of your identity changes your activity.” The goal of this message was to show students how living out their true identity in Christ is actually a powerful force in changing their activity with pornography. In the lesson I unpacked four aspects of students’ identity in Christ from Ephesians 5. I then explained how each aspect should change a believer’s activity. Ephesians 5 first informs believers that they are beloved children (5:1). As beloved children, participants’ activity is to be loved. Living as beloved sons and daughters combats the perceived deficiency in love that often leads students to turn to fantasy worlds for love. Second, the passage infers that believers are the bride of Christ (5:2, 25). As the bride of Christ, students’ activity must be to walk in love instead of lust. Next, Ephesians 5:3-4 states that Christians are saints. As saints, participants’ activity must be to let God’s standards become their standards. Finally, Ephesians 5:7-10 shares that believers are light, therefore participants’ activity must be to walk in the light.

Lesson 3 unpacked portions of 2 Samuel 11–12 and was titled, “The Reality of Accountability.” The thesis of the lesson was, “There is no victory without accountability.” This lesson looked at David’s sin with Bathsheba and showed that a key ingredient active in David’s failure was his isolation. I observed from 2 Samuel 12 how Nathan came to David and confronted David on his sin. I drew the application that believers need “Nathans” in their lives with whom they can be fully known and fully loved. The goal was to convince students of their need to have help from God’s people while in the battle against pornography.

Lesson 4 journeyed through Proverbs 7 and was titled, “The Reality of Strategy.” The thesis of the lesson was, “There is no victory without a strategy. You have to identify the things you must do and the things you absolutely cannot do if you want to be free.” The teaching observed the folly of the young fool and unpacked four changes to consider when developing a strategy to pursue victory over pornography: (1) your relationship with the Word of God has to change; (2) your rhythms have to change; (3) your solution has to change; and (4) your vantage point has to change.

Lesson 5 examined 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and was titled, “The Reality of Clarity.” The thesis of the lesson was, “There is no victory without consistent clarity.” The lesson shared four things students need consistent clarity on in order to pursue freedom from pornography: (1) be clear on God’s will for your life; (2) be clear on how to control your own body; (3) be clear on the spiritual consequences; (4) be clear on your calling.

Lesson 6 was a wrap up lesson entitled, “The Reality of Application.” The thesis of the lesson was, “If there is information with no application there will be no transformation.” This lesson reviewed the thesis statements from the previous lessons and then sought to answer five questions that students need to consider when pursuing freedom from pornography: (1) Isn’t looking at pornography better (less of a sin) than having sex in real life? (2) Is masturbation okay as long as I am not looking at porn? (3) What is the

ultimate goal of choosing reality over fantasy? (4) What is the difference between guilt and shame? (5) What do I do if I end up looking at porn?

### **Overview of the Companion Guide**

The primary intention behind creating a companion guide was to give students a daily touchpoint with truth targeting purity. The companion guide challenged students to pursue wholistic change, meaning a change in the head, heart, and hands. The head was a reference to the mind. Jesus says in John 8:32, “And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Thus, one devotional each week focused on helping students think rightly about themselves and pornography. One devotional each week also focused on the heart because Jesus says in Matthew 15:19, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” Devotionals on the heart were meant to address a student’s insecurities as well as prompt the student to live out their true identity in Christ. One devotional each week also targeted the hands. The hands were a reference to students’ behavior concerning pornography. These devotionals were inspired by Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:27-30:

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.

Devotionals addressing student behavior with porn were meant to give students the practical actions necessary when pursuing freedom. In addition to the three devotionals each week that covered the head, heart, and hands, three devotionals each week shared a Bible passage and asked students to write down their reflections from the passage in relation to their own struggle with pornography.

The companion guide as a whole contained thirty different daily devotionals. A devotional was not sent out on the days when the teaching lesson was delivered. There were no daily devotionals after the sixth and final teaching lesson because that lesson

signified the end of the course. Kylen Perry, the Associate Director of Breakaway, scheduled an email through MailChimp to go out every morning with that day's devotional except on the days of the teaching lesson.<sup>7</sup>

### **Evaluation of the Curriculum**

To evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching lessons as well as the companion guide, I submitted each lesson and companion guide to an expert panel. The expert panel was comprised of a Licensed Professional Counselor, a Licensed Professional Counselor Intern, a pastor who is also a Breakaway board member, a pastor who is also a seminary professor, the Executive Director of a college ministry very similar to Breakaway, the Associate Director of Breakaway, and finally, the female associate of a college ministry in College Station. Each person was strategically chosen in order to have a mixture of both men (5) and women (2) who could assess the biblical, theological, and psychological quality of the material as well as evaluate the relevance of the curriculum to college students. Because the course was conducted during the summer, I chose to have seven individuals on the panel in case some panel members were not able to review a particular lesson and give feedback prior to delivering the lesson due to being on vacation. This strategy allowed me to still have adequate feedback on every lesson.

When enlisting panel members, I informed them that my goal was to send each lesson and companion guide one week prior to delivering the lesson. With each lesson, I included links to the Curriculum Evaluation Rubric<sup>8</sup> and the Companion Guide Evaluation Rubric<sup>9</sup> in the form of Google Forms which had been converted from Microsoft Word by my Executive Assistant. The rubrics were submitted to the Ethics Committee at Southern Seminary for approval prior to distributing them to the expert panel for use.

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<sup>7</sup> See appendix 4 for a sample of the companion guide. I have included both the introduction and the companion guide for teaching lesson 1.

<sup>8</sup> See appendix 2.

<sup>9</sup> See appendix 3.

Each week, I asked the expert panel to complete the rubrics by the morning before the day I was to deliver the lesson. This step allowed me to make any changes necessary before teaching the material. The goals for creating a teaching curriculum and a companion guide were considered successful when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion for each lesson and companion guide met or exceeded the sufficient level. Every lesson and companion guide met or exceeded the sufficient level in all areas on the first round of evaluation.

### **Conducting the Course**

Choosing Reality began on Tuesday June 30, 2020, and concluded on August 4, 2020. The course was hosted at 6:30 a.m. every Tuesday morning so that those who had work would be able to attend. Due to the pandemic and students being away from College Station for the summer, the course was offered solely over Zoom. I hosted the course as a webinar on Zoom for the sake of students' anonymity. Neither participants' names nor pictures could be seen by anyone. When students joined the webinar, my Executive Assistant immediately changed participants' names to "anonymous" so that students could type questions to me in the comments without me knowing who was asking the questions.

Regarding the format of the teaching lessons, I began each morning reminding students of their enemy who hates that they have made the choice to get up early to take a step toward freedom. I also reminded participants that the course was anonymous so they could feel the freedom to write questions to me. I then prayed and began the lesson. The teaching normally lasted approximately 45 minutes. My Executive Assistant created a Keynote presentation each week with my content and I shared my screen on Zoom for the sake of students who decided to take notes. After I finished the teaching time, I prayed and informed students that they were free to leave the webinar, but they could also stay on to ask questions. For most of the sessions, I stayed on to do Q & A and finished by 8 a.m.

Over the course of the six weeks, the attendance slowly declined. While I did not ask students to sign a formal commitment card to participate in the course, I did encourage students to write their own commitment and to send it to me as a form of accountability. Only a few students followed through with this request. We did record each teaching time for participants who were not able to attend but wanted to benefit from the lesson. To encourage students to make the effort to be present, I informed students that Breakaway would only email them one recording during the six-week course. After the first lesson, I decided that Breakaway would email a recording of the lesson to everyone who had taken the CRI since several were not in attendance. The hope was that the recorded lesson might prompt students who missed the first week to attend the following week. Table 1 shows the attendance at each session over the six weeks and Table 2 shows how many times a recording was viewed on the private YouTube link.

Table 1. Weekly attendance during the Choosing Reality teaching lessons

Date	Attendance
6/30/2020	31 participants
7/7/2020	24 participants
7/14/2020	24 participants
7/21/2020	23 participants
7/28/2020	14 participants
8/4/2020	15 participants

Table 2. Views of recordings of the Choosing Reality teaching lessons

Recording	Views
Lesson 1	52
Lesson 2	4
Lesson 3	9
Lesson 4	7
Lesson 5	1
Lesson 6	2



## **Post-Course Choosing Reality Inventory**

After the course ended, participants were asked to complete the same Choosing Reality Inventory a second time so that I could evaluate the effectiveness of the course. At the end of the final teaching session, I informed students that they would receive an email with a link to the CRI Google Form and I asked them to take the time to fill it out. A link to the CRI was emailed to participants on August 4, 2020. A follow up email was then sent on August 7, 2020 reminding students to fill the CRI out. In the follow up email, I specifically said, “Even if you missed a session or two, I would still appreciate your response.” This language was used to (1) discourage those who only attended once or twice from filling out the survey and (2) to encourage those who might be hesitant since they missed a time or two. Because students had used a six-digit identification number to fill out the CRI, I had no way of knowing which participants failed to complete the survey. Therefore, I was unable to contact students to personally ask them to fill it out. By August 11, 2020, 21 participants filled out the post-course CRI.

To determine if the course had made a significant difference in the lives of participants, I ran a *t*-test for dependent samples. When preparing the data for the *t*-test, I exported the data from the Google Forms into a Microsoft Excel Workbook. Of the 21 participants who had filled out the post-course CRI, seven did not have matching identifications numbers with the pre-course CRI. Additionally, two people did not fill out at least one of the surveys completely, so I was only able to compare the pre-course and -post-course results of 12 participants. Finally, it is worth noting that question 26 was thrown out because the wording of one item on the Likert scale was mistyped in the Google Form opening up the possibility for confusion.

## **Conclusion**

The Choosing Reality course was implemented because of the great need for help that exists among students wanting to pursue freedom from pornography. With the increase in porn usage that accompanied COVID-19, Choosing Reality seemed more

necessary than ever. Implementing the course provided students hope in the midst of a uniquely trying time. Now that the course has been implemented, the goal is not only that Breakaway Ministries would offer the course again, but that Choosing Reality would be reproducible in other ministries seeking to help students pursue freedom from pornography.

## CHAPTER 5

### EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT

This chapter will provide a thorough evaluation of the Choosing Reality ministry project. As someone who has personally experienced the destructive nature of pornography, I see great value in Choosing Reality because of the pervasive use of pornography among college students. My intention with creating Choosing Reality was to provide a unique and thorough resource for Breakaway Ministries that could benefit struggling students this year and in the years to come. For Choosing Reality to be as effective as possible in the future, evaluation of the project is critical in the present. Although the project had many strengths and overall was a success, there are many areas for improvement so that the course's effectiveness can be maximized.

#### **Evaluation of the Project's Purpose**

The purpose of the Choosing Reality ministry project was to create a discipleship curriculum for students attending Breakaway Ministries in College Station, that would empower them to pursue freedom from pornography. Having now completed the project, I am convinced more than ever of the need that exists among college students for help in pursuing freedom from pornography. Porn use on Texas A & M University's campus is rampant even among Christians and those serving on Breakaway's volunteer team. Unfortunately, the accessibility and acceptability of pornography has created a culture on Texas A & M's campus where porn use has been normalized among students. When students are finally ready to break free from pornography, certain habits and addictions have been formed making freedom very difficult to attain. Students are thus drowning in the guilt and shame that naturally comes from looking at pornography when

seeking to follow Jesus. Female students in particular are left to struggle alone due to the shame that accompanies a sin that many still view as a predominantly male struggle. Sadly, countless students are struggling and yet, I fear, too many pastors are either hesitant to address the topic of pornography or believe that simply mentioning pornography from time to time when discussing sexual sin is sufficient. Choosing Reality offered a safe place for both male and female students to receive six weeks of biblically driven and highly practical teaching specifically on the topic of pornography. Not only did students receive teaching, but they had the opportunity to interact with truth targeting their porn struggle on a daily basis for five weeks through the Choosing Reality Companion Guide. Lastly, the course affirmed for students that they were not alone in their struggle. Being able to share about my own previous addiction to pornography allowed me to drive home the fact that even the Executive Director of Breakaway battled pornography, yet I am a living example that freedom is possible.

### **Evaluation of the Project's Goals**

This project had four goals. The first goal was to assess the current struggles that exist with pornography among students attending Breakaway. The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum to equip struggling students to pursue freedom from pornography. The third goal was to develop a companion guide to the teaching curriculum to allow readers to thoroughly apply the teachings and have a daily touchpoint with truth in their pursuit of freedom. The fourth goal was to implement the curriculum and empower students to pursue freedom from pornography. The success of these goals will be addressed in this section.

#### **Goal 1**

The first goal was to assess the current struggles that exist with pornography among students attending Breakaway. This goal was accomplished by administering the Choosing Reality Inventory to Breakaway volunteers and their friends who registered for

the six-week Choosing Reality course. This goal was considered successfully met when 50 percent of those who registered for the course completed the CRI. In the end, 89.5 percent of the registrants completed the CRI.

Taking the time to assess the struggles students were facing helped me gain a greater understanding of students’ needs as I prepared the teaching lessons. When examining the results of the pre-course CRI, I found that 7 individuals who completed the CRI were female and 36 were male. All participants considered themselves Christians with the majority, 24 students, having been Christians for more than 13 years.

When answering questions about pornography, 40 students indicated that their first exposure to pornography was by the age of 15, with the majority, 33 students, being between the ages of 11 and 15. Thirty-nine students indicated they currently struggled with pornography with the word “struggle” being defined for students as “looking at pornography while dealing with an internal conviction to not look at it.” Thirty-two of the participants answered that they have an addiction to pornography with the word “addiction” being defined as “an inability to stop looking at pornography.” Tables 3, 4, 5, and 6 show students’ responses to specific questions and items about their porn usage.

Table 3. Frequency of viewing pornographic material

Question 12: How often do you view pornographic material?	More than once per day	Once per day	Several times per week	Once per week	Several times per month	Once per month	Several times per year
	—	4	15	5	8	4	6

Table 4. Last time pornography was viewed

Question 13: When was the last time you viewed pornography?	Today	Within the past week	Within the past 2 weeks	Within the past month	Within the past three months	Within the past six months	Within the past year
	9	16	6	3	5	2	1

Table 5. Devices used to access pornography

Question 14: What devices do you use to access pornography?	Smartphone	Tablet	Laptop/ Desktop	TV	Gaming Console
	42	4	14	0	2

Table 6. Perception of porn usage

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
18: My pornography use is a problem.	0	0	0	2	6	34
26: I need God's help to experience freedom from pornography.	0	0	0	1	4	37
31: Pornography negatively impacts my relationship with God.	0	0	1	5	10	26

The CRI also asked specific questions about each participant's spiritual life.

Thirty-seven participants indicated that they attend church most weeks in a semester and 30 shared that they attend a small group Bible study. Table 7 shows participants' perception of their spiritual lives.

Table 7. Perception of spiritual life

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Agree	Strongly Agree
39: I feel close to God.	0	2	7	12	19	3
40: I enjoy reading the Bible.	0	0	2	9	21	11
41: I enjoy praying.	0	0	3	7	23	10
43. Repentance is an important part of the Christian life.	0	0	0	0	3	40
46: I consider personal accountability with another believer important for my spiritual growth.	0	0	1	4	12	26
47: I am currently growing spiritually.	0	3	2	15	11	12

The first goal was essential to having a clear idea of how to best help students through the teaching lessons. The CRI showed me I did not need to spend time trying to convince students that their porn use was a problem. They were in the course because they already knew that their porn use was a problem. The CRI also helped me target students' smartphones as I gave practical tips on how to take steps toward freedom. Finally, with the CRI showing a need among students for greater intimacy with God, I was able to encourage students to express a daily dependence on him.

## **Goal 2**

The second goal was to develop a six-week teaching curriculum to equip struggling students to pursue freedom from pornography. To maximize the effectiveness of the curriculum, I enlisted an expert panel to evaluate each lesson individually. The expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness and applicability of each lesson. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level on every lesson.<sup>1</sup>

## **Goal 3**

The third goal was to develop a companion guide to the teaching curriculum to allow readers to thoroughly apply the teachings and have a daily touchpoint with truth in their pursuit of freedom. As with the teaching lessons, I enlisted the same expert panel to evaluate each week's section of the companion guide. The expert panel utilized a rubric to evaluate the biblical faithfulness and applicability of each week's section of the companion guide. This goal was considered successfully met when a minimum of 90 percent of the evaluation criterion met or exceeded the sufficient level on every lesson.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See appendix 5 for the expert panel's feedback on each teaching lesson.

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 6 for the expert panel's feedback on each section of the companion guide.

#### Goal 4

The fourth goal was to implement the curriculum and empower students to pursue freedom from pornography. This goal was measured by administering a pre-course and post-course CRI to course participants. Of the 21 participants who filled out the post-course CRI, I was only able to compare the pre- and post-course responses of 12 participants. Goal 4 was considered successfully met when a *t*-test for dependent samples demonstrated a positive, statistically significant difference between pre- and post-course survey scores:  $t_{(11)} = -2.138, p < .05$ . Table 8 shows the two most significant changes in participants' feelings about their struggles with pornography. Table 9 then shows the most significant change in participants' perceptions of their spiritual lives.

Table 8. Change in feelings about struggling with pornography

Question	Pre-Course CRI Mean (Scale reversed expecting negative response)	Post-Course CRI Mean (Scale reversed expecting negative response)
23: I feel alone in my struggle.	4	5
30: I feel hopeless in my struggle.	3.08	4.42

Table 9. Change in perception of spiritual life

Question	Pre-Course CRI Mean	Post-Course CRI Mean
47: I am currently growing spiritually.	4.58	5.08

According to these results, after the course was complete, participants felt less alone and more hopeful in their struggles with pornography. Additionally, participants believed they were growing spiritually. While the changes are not extremely drastic, battling porn is a long process. The course clearly increased students' value of accountability and gave them a vision for victory. Question 47 also gives evidence that the course contributed to students' spiritual growth. This is important because the course is ultimately a discipleship curriculum that aims to not just reduce porn usage but to encourage greater intimacy with God.



## **Strengths of the Project**

The Choosing Reality ministry project had many strengths. First, Choosing Reality met a huge need during a very critical time. When COVID-19 forced Texas A & M University to move all classes online after spring break in March of 2020, students suddenly found themselves online all day and isolated from in-person interaction with friends as well as from spiritual activities. COVID-19 proved to be fuel for the fire of students' struggles as porn usage was up worldwide on Pornhub by almost 25 percent at one point.<sup>3</sup> The decision to move the start date of Choosing Reality from the fall of 2020 to the summer of 2020 was a strategic move that provided help and hope in the midst of a trying time for so many.

Second, Choosing Reality had a low barrier for entry. Due to the course being offered over Zoom, students could stream the course from anywhere in the world. Minimal effort was required to actually get online and participate. Since the course was delivered as a webinar on Zoom, both male and female students were able to watch anonymously with no fear of being seen by others. The course was also offered at no cost so that money would not prevent anyone interested from joining.

Third, the six lessons were biblically driven. When brainstorming for the course, I had to decide if the lessons would be formed around a topic or around a passage of Scripture. I decided to teach through the most significant passages in the Bible on sexual purity. I allowed these passages to form the overall topic of each lesson as well as the teaching points and application. My sense in working with college students is that biblical illiteracy is very high. By teaching through passages of Scripture, Choosing Reality was truly a six-week Bible study. Students were able to see that the Scriptures not only diagnose the root problem of pornography, but also provide all of the necessary truth needed to pursue freedom from pornography.

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<sup>3</sup> Pornhub Insights, "Coronavirus Update–April 14," April 14, 2020, <https://www.pornhub.com/insights/coronavirus-update-april-14>.

Fourth, the teaching lessons were filled with personal experience. Having battled pornography for seven years during high school and college, I could identify greatly with the struggles students are facing. At the same time, having been freed from pornography during college, I was also able to speak with authority to what action steps were necessary for students to truly break free. My personal stories and experiences gave the teaching lessons more credibility simply because I was able to speak from a place of personal victory.

Fifth, the Choosing Reality Companion Guide strengthened the project in two specific ways. First, because the guide provided students with five weeks of daily content, students were able to have a touchpoint with truth targeting their struggle with pornography every single day. Critical to freedom is the continual replacement of the lies that pornography feeds on with the truth of God's Word. The companion guide was strategically created to not only emphasize the truths unpacked in the weekly teaching lesson but also to expose students to the vast amount of Scripture dealing with sexual purity. Second, as was explained in chapter 4, the companion guide faithfully addressed the head, heart, and hands. Believers' natural impulse is to focus on fixing the behavior of looking at pornography. The result is that students seek to break free from pornography by sheer will power. By also addressing the head and the heart, students were able to identify the lies about God, themselves, and pornography, as well as the heart issues that ultimately lead to the behavior of looking at pornography. Therefore, a strength of the project was that it emphasized wholistic change.

Finally, a great strength of the project is its reproducibility. The hope in creating Choosing Reality was that it could be utilized by other college ministries desiring to empower students to pursue freedom from pornography. The Choosing Reality Inventory, the six teaching lessons, and the companion guide are all easily transferable and customizable by any ministry. As more ministers grasp the depth and breadth of the

problem among college students, I hope many will find Choosing Reality to be a helpful resource.

### **Weaknesses of the Project**

While the Choosing Reality ministry project had many strengths, the course also had its weaknesses. First, offering the course solely over Zoom was unavoidable during COVID-19. As mentioned in the discussion about strengths, hosting the course over Zoom provided students with a low barrier for entry. At the same time, delivering Choosing Reality online seemed counterproductive to the mission of the course. To effectively pursue freedom from pornography, students really need to move offline for a season. By meeting online for the course, we were in a sense asking students to stay online at a time when they really needed to move offline. Additionally, the course was offered at a time when students were already worn out on Zoom having been required to finish all of the spring 2020 semester classes on Zoom.

Second, the time of the course was not ideal for maximizing participation. The teaching lessons began each Tuesday morning at 6:30 a.m. This time was chosen so that students who had to go to work would be able to join. While I do believe the time allowed some students to participate who otherwise would not have been able, holding a course on a very sensitive subject at this time, during the summer, is simply not ideal. I would imagine the time of the course contributed to the attrition in attendance as the weeks progressed.

Third, because the course only met once a week, content crucial to students' freedom was not taught until weeks into the course. For example, accountability is a vital part of being empowered to pursue freedom from pornography. Unfortunately, students did not receive teaching on accountability until week 3 of the course. Thus, the tension with the course is that students need as much practical strategy upfront as possible, but they also need several weeks of teaching so that their minds are challenged with truth long enough for habits to be broken.

Finally, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, students were able to fill out the Choosing Reality Inventory with a pin number instead of using their names. While this afforded students anonymity, it made gathering results more difficult. Inevitably, some students used a different pin on their post-course survey than they used on the pre-course survey. These results had to be thrown out. Additionally, I had no way of following up individually with those who did not take the post-course survey. In the end, I was only able to use the data of 12 individuals when many more students had participated in the course.

### **What I Would Do Differently**

As I consider how to maximize Choosing Reality's effectiveness in the future, I can identify several changes that would make the course more helpful. First, I would offer the course in person instead of online. I do not want Choosing Reality to give students an excuse to be online with access to pornography. While students might be more reluctant to attend an in-person gathering about pornography, those courageous enough to attend would benefit greatly. Gathering in-person instantly raises students' investment in the course. Also, by simply seeing others in attendance, students will be reminded that they are not alone in their struggle. Female students could benefit most from an in-person course.<sup>4</sup> Pornography is still so often categorized as a predominantly male struggle, leaving female students to struggle alone. Knowing that other women battle porn could breathe hope into individuals who feel isolated in their struggle. Gathering with others might even open the door to new accountable friendships.

Second, I would frontload the course with practical steps that need to be taken immediately to begin to reduce accessibility and increase accountability. In the Choosing Reality ministry project, my intention was to help students understand porn from a theological perspective before asking them to take action. While my intention was good, I

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<sup>4</sup> Male and female students would gather separately while benefiting from the same teaching.

do not believe this strategy was the most helpful path for students in need of help. My sense is that students who sign up for the course need immediate help dealing with the behavior of looking at porn. Therefore, the course should start with triage and then move toward long-term healing.<sup>5</sup> This could potentially take the form of a half-day intensive training at the beginning of the course with the weeks following being teachings that expound upon truth initially addressed at the beginning of the course.

Third, I would ask people to sign a commitment after the first week of teaching. By signing, students would be committing to attend the course every week, complete the companion guide, have daily contact with an accountability partner, and forgo private access to the internet as well as internet on their phones for the entirety of the course. In my personal experience, there is no easy and convenient path to freedom from pornography. Freedom requires decisive and extreme action. While these commitments might prompt people to drop the course after the first week, those who choose to stay will have a much better chance at breaking free from pornography.

Fourth, I would require students to sign up for the course with a friend. With the isolating nature of pornography, students need to be pushed toward accountability. By two people signing up together, I can guarantee that both individuals will get the same vision for what a healthy accountable relationship should look like. Also, signing up with a friend can ensure better attendance if students know that another individual is counting on them to be present. Because of this requirement, I would build in discussion time to each session so that participants have the chance to process what they have just learned.

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<sup>5</sup> Several practices are necessary and helpful to initially triage a battle with pornography. First, an individual would benefit greatly from identifying the days, times, physical locations, devices, websites, and applications that have been a regular part of their struggle with porn. Once these have been identified, an individual should establish action items that will break routines, rhythms, and access. Actions such as getting rid of a smart phone, installing an internet filter, deactivating social media accounts, canceling streaming subscriptions, and working out at home instead of the gym might all be necessary steps. Additionally, establishing a daily touchpoint with an accountability partner for the sake of talking through any temptation from that day while receiving encouragement from the Scriptures is essential. These practices are necessary to help an individual remove the sources of temptation. While these actions will help manage the behavior of looking at pornography, long-term reading, teaching, and counseling will be necessary to cultivate the right mind and heart for lasting change.

Finally, I would include testimonies of both men and women who have and are experiencing freedom from pornography. Story is very powerful. Students need to see that freedom from porn is not just for a few special individuals. By sharing a variety of stories, students would inevitably be filled with hope as they hear from individuals who share similar stories to their own.

### **Theological Reflections**

Having spent considerable time studying the most important passages in the Bible on sexual purity and having done a deep dive into the porn industry and the effects of porn use, in this section I will offer several theological reflections. First, I am burdened with an even greater awareness of the depravity of man. Romans 1:24 says, “Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.”

Pornography is one of the best examples in the world today of what man is capable of when God gives him over to his lusts. Humanity has taken God’s incredible gift of sex and has chosen to worship the gift instead of the Giver of the gift. The result has been a decades long pursuit of trying to squeeze more pleasure and life out of the gross, distorted, manmade god of pornography. The need for more pleasure has consistently birthed the need for more variety, novelty, and intensity in porn. And no matter how perverted or deviant the material becomes, when humanity is left to its own lusts, men and women without fail see porn as good and to be desired just as Eve did with the forbidden fruit (Gen 3:6). It is worth noting, the most incriminating evidence against pornography is its failure to do what a god should do perfectly: satisfy. The insatiable need that pornography creates in an individual for more pleasure stands in stark contrast to Psalm 16:11, which states, “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

Second, I am deeply saddened by how pornography diminishes the image of God, especially in women. I am not sure if anything else serves as a greater assault on the image of God in women than pornography. The porn industry has successfully convinced actors, actresses, producers, cameramen, and users that women are simply tools for user's pleasure and director's prosperity. The porn industry strips women of their souls, reducing them to their bodies. Some women comply and others submit by force to the demands of the director.<sup>6</sup> All the while, men watch women in porn on their phones or computers and then pornify their real-life relationships with women.<sup>7</sup> Meaning, men strip women of their worth in real-life by lusting after them or using them for their own gratification.

Third, while man must be responsible for all the ways he has rebelled against God in regard to cultivating, producing, and using pornography, it is important to remember that pornography is ultimately demonic. Ephesians 6:12 states, "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places." Satan will be held most accountable for the creation of pornography and its destructive nature. Those who work for the porn industry are not the enemy as much as they are captives of the one true Enemy.<sup>8</sup> Believers must learn to see pornography as truly a spiritual battle against demonic forces instead of just a battle of will power.

Fourth, the Scriptures offer so much more than behavior management. When dealing with issues of sexual purity, many know the Bible only for its prohibitions. Thus, many try and break free from pornography by an act of will power to observe God's prohibitions. Unfortunately, this way of fighting against pornography is often exhausting and demoralizing. When struggling individuals fail once again to obey God's commands

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<sup>6</sup> Donna M. Hughes, "Sex Trafficking of Women for the Production of Pornography" *Citizens Against Trafficking* (2010): 1-3.

<sup>7</sup> Pamela Paul, *Pornified: How Pornography Is Transforming Our Lives, Our Relationships, and Our Families* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005), 94, Kindle.

<sup>8</sup> I am indebted to Russell Moore for this language.

regarding sexual purity, they are left to question the strength of their faith, question the goodness of God, or just give up all together believing that victory is possible but not probable. I was truly refreshed in my studies for this project to realize that in most of the passages that God calls his people to purity, there is a discussion about the believer's changed identity because of the gospel. For example, in Ephesians 5:3, Paul says, "But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints." This command is surrounded by reminders that we are "beloved children" (5:1), saints (5:3), and light (5:8). When believers own their new identity in Christ and believe all that is true about their identity, their activity can begin to change. Often, believers operate with the mentality that they are normal hormonal human beings who have to suppress natural desires in order to honor God. The reality is that believers are not normal hormonal human beings; Christians are beloved children, saints, and light and God has "given us everything we need for a godly life" (2 Pet 1:3). Understanding this reality in our minds, can help us deal with the insecurities in our hearts that often lead to looking at pornography. This reality demonstrates the power of the gospel. The gospel has transformed our identities, making Christ honoring activity possible.

### **Personal Reflections**

The research required for this project was very weighty and oftentimes very dark. At the same time, I genuinely loved diving deep into the subject of pornography for what it did for me personally. First, this project exposed how my seven-year struggle with pornography that ended almost two decades ago still affects me today. I felt that it was a massive revelation for me to realize my ability to pornify my relationships with others, including my wife.<sup>9</sup> Anytime lust of the eyes or mind creeps into my life with women in real life, I am reverting back to an operating system formed during my years of looking at porn. Instead of seeing women as made in the image of God, I am seeing them as objects.

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<sup>9</sup> Paul, *Pornified*, 133.



By looking at another woman with lust who is not my wife, I am buying into the lie that variety is my right and is normal. Even with my own wife, I have had to war against a tendency to place expectations upon my marriage that were cultivated by pornography. This project has led me to more victory over lust and has made my marriage even healthier. At the same time, my eyes were opened to the fact that I will be in recovery from pornography for a lifetime.

Second, I fear for what lies ahead for my boys and their friends. Knowing that my oldest and middle sons are getting closer and closer to the average age of first exposure to pornography terrifies me as their father. The sex tech industry as well as the porn industry have long-term plans for my sons. With the way the sex tech and porn industries are seeking to replace real sex with virtual sex, I truly believe that addictions to pornography will have tighter grips on the next generation. Breaking free from pornography will only get harder. Because of this project, I feel a great sense of urgency to help my sons understand the reality of pornography and the consequences of it even at a young age. My sons are going to learn about pornography from someone, I chose for them to hear about it from me first.

Finally, I am overwhelmed by God's grace in my own life regarding pornography. This project often reminded me of the seven-year struggle I endured. More importantly though, this project called to mind God's goodness in setting me free from pornography for almost two decades. In all of the searching I had to do on the internet while researching porn, not once did I find my way onto a pornographic site. While I am keenly aware of the fact that I am only one weak moment away from relapsing, I praise God for how he has empowered me over all these years. I am also thankful that I do not have a story to hide, I have a story to tell. My battle with pornography has become a testimony of God's grace in my life and he is using my story to shape other peoples' stories. This project reminded me of the need that exists among college students and I am more aware than ever of the great ministry opportunity I have. It is my joy and privilege

to share my story in hopes that others might be empowered to pursue freedom from pornography.

### **Conclusion**

After evaluating the Choosing Reality ministry project, I am convinced that the course was helpful to several students, but the course has much room for improvement in order to be as effective as possible. I have every intention of taking the evaluation and reflections from this chapter and refining the course so that it can be more helpful to students in the future. I close this project sobered by the accessibility and acceptability of pornography among college students today. The porn industry has masterfully convinced students that fantasy is better than reality. At the same time, I am hopeful that God will use this project along with other ministries committed to helping students pursue freedom from pornography. Freedom truly is possible for anyone who wants it because of the gospel's ability to transform. May there be a generation of college students who rises up, trusts God's goodness, and chooses reality instead of fantasy.

## APPENDIX 1

### CHOOSING REALITY INVENTORY (CRI)

#### **Agreement to Participate**

The research in which you are about to participate is designed to assess the struggles with pornography as well as the spiritual life of the participant. The research is being conducted by Timothy Ateek for the purpose of collecting data for a ministry project. In this research, you will answer questions before the project and you will answer the same questions at the conclusion of the project. Any information you provide will be held *strictly confidential*, and at no time will your name be reported or identified with your responses. *Participation in this study is totally voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Please also note that you must be at least 18 years of age or older to participate in this study.*

By your completion of this survey, and checking the appropriate box below, you are giving informed consent for the use of your responses in this research.

I agree to participate

I do not agree to participate

Please choose a 6-digit number that will be used on both the pre- and post-CRI (Ex: month, date, and year of your birthday).

6 digit #: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section I<sup>1</sup>**

The first section of the CRI will obtain some demographic information about the individuals taking this survey.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

1. What is your current age?  
 A. 18  
 B. 19  
 C. 20  
 D. 21  
 E. 22  
 F. 23  
 G. Over 23
2. What is your current classification in school?  
 A. Freshman  
 B. Sophomore  
 C. Junior  
 D. Senior  
 E. Senior (second year)
3. What is your gender?  
 A. Female  
 B. Male  
 C. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your romantic relationship status?  
 A. Single  
 B. In a dating relationship  
 C. Engaged  
 D. Married  
 E. Divorced
5. Do you consider yourself a Christian?  
 A. Yes  
 B. No
6. How many years have you been a Christian?  
 A. less than 1 year  
 B. 1-3 years  
 C. 4-6 years  
 D. 7-9 years  
 E. 10-12 years  
 F. more than 13 years

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<sup>1</sup> William Edward Ashpern Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program at White House First Baptist Church in White House, Tennessee" (DMin project, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2018), 97. The wording of the section instructions and direction instructions for all parts of the CRI were taken from Mofield's survey.

## **Section II**

The second section of the CRI will gather information about the participant's use of pornography.

**Directions:** Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

7. Have you ever viewed pornographic material? (Pornography definition: Sexually explicit videos, photographs, writings, or the like, whose purpose is to elicit sexual arousal.<sup>2</sup>)
- A. Yes  
 B. No
8. At what age was your first exposure to pornography?
- A. 0-5 years old  
 B. 6-10 years old  
 C. 11-15 years old  
 D. 16-20 years old  
 E. 20-25 years old  
 F. Never been exposed
9. Do you currently struggle with pornography use? (Struggle definition: Looking at pornography while dealing with an internal conviction to not look at it.)
- A. Yes I struggle with pornography use  
 B. I view pornography but don't think it is a problem  
 C. I do not view pornography
- Note: If you have never been exposed to pornography or have not viewed pornographic material in over a year, please skip to Section III.
10. Do you believe you have an addiction to pornography? (Addiction definition: An inability to stop looking at pornography.)
- A. Yes  
 B. No
11. How many years have you struggled with pornography use?
- A. less than 1 year  
 B. 1-3 years  
 C. 4-6 years  
 D. 7-9 years  
 E. 10-12 years  
 F. more than 13 years

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<sup>2</sup> Dictionary.com, "Pornography," accessed May 17, 2020, <https://www.dictionary.com/browse/pornography>.

12. How often do you view pornographic material? (Check only one)
- A. more than once per day
  - B. once per day
  - C. several times per week
  - D. once per week
  - E. several times per month
  - F. once per month
  - G. several times per year
13. When was the last time you viewed pornography? (Check the one that best applies)
- A. today
  - B. within the past week
  - C. within the past 2 weeks
  - D. within the past month
  - E. within the past three months
  - F. within the past six months
  - H. within the past year
14. What devices do you use to access pornography? (Check all that apply)
- A. smartphone
  - B. tablet
  - C. laptop/desktop
  - D. TV
  - E. gaming console
  - F. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
15. What applications do you use to access pornography? (Check all that apply)
- A. social media apps
  - B. streaming apps
  - C. pornographic websites
  - D. video games
  - E. Other: \_\_\_\_\_
16. How many people know about your struggle with pornography?
- A. none
  - B. 1 person
  - C. 2 people
  - D. 3 people
  - E. 4 or more people
17. How often do you masturbate while viewing pornography? (Check the one that best applies)
- A. never
  - B. occasionally
  - C. most of the time
  - D. always

Directions: Based on the following scale, circle the option that best represents your agreement with the statement:

SD = Strongly Disagree,

D = Disagree,

DS = Disagree Somewhat,

AS = Agree Somewhat,

A = Agree,

SA = Strongly Agree.

- |   |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|---|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 18. My pornography use is a problem.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 19. It is ok to look at pornography occasionally.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 20. I am ready to do whatever it takes to get pornography out of my life.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 21. Pornography has affected the way I view people of the opposite sex.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 22. I need increasingly more explicit material for arousal.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 23. I feel alone in my struggle.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 24. I have a good support system (At least 2-3 people who are regularly challenging and encouraging me in my struggle). | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 25. I am confident that I know God's expectations regarding sexual purity.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 26. I can stop looking at pornography at any time.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 27. I need God's help to experience freedom from pornography.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 28. Pornography is negatively impacting other areas of my life.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 29. Marriage will cure my struggle with pornography.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 30. I feel hopeless in my struggle.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 31. Pornography negatively impacts my relationship with God.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

### **Section III**

The third section of the CRI will gather information about the participant's spiritual life.

Directions: Answer the following multiple-choice questions by placing a check next to the appropriate answer.

32. How often do you attend church? (Check only one)
- A. never
  - B. 1-5 times in a semester
  - C. 6-10 times in a semester
  - D. most weeks in a semester
33. How often do you attend Breakaway? (Check only one)
- A. never
  - B. 1-5 times in a semester
  - C. 6-10 times in a semester
  - D. most weeks in a semester
34. Do you attend a small group Bible study?
- A. yes
  - B. no
35. How often do you read your Bible? (Check only one)
- A. never
  - B. a few days each week
  - C. most days of the week
  - D. a few times a month
  - E. a few times each semester
36. Do you have an accountability partner? (Accountability partner definition: a person of the same gender who asks you honest and specific questions about your spiritual life and struggles with sin.)
- A. yes
  - B. no
37. How often do you memorize Scripture? (Check only one)
- A. never
  - B. occasionally
  - C. regularly
38. How often do you pray? (Check only one)
- A. more than once per day
  - B. once per day
  - C. several times per week
  - D. once per week
  - E. several times per month
  - F. once per month
  - G. several times per year
  - H. never



Directions: Based on the following scale, circle the option that best represents your agreement with the statement:

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, DS = Disagree Somewhat,  
AS = Agree Somewhat, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree.

- |  |    |   |    |    |   |    |
|--|----|---|----|----|---|----|
| 39. I feel close to God.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 40. I enjoy reading the Bible. <sup>3</sup>  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 41. I enjoy praying.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 42. I am aware of God's presence in my life. <sup>4</sup>  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 43. Repentance is an important part of the Christian life.   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 44. I know God loves me deeply.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 45. My relationship with Jesus is my number one priority in life.  | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 46. I consider personal accountability with another believer important for my spiritual growth. <sup>5</sup> | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |
| 47. I am currently growing spiritually. <sup>6</sup>   | SD | D | DS | AS | A | SA |

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<sup>3</sup> Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program," 99. Item 40 on the CRI was adapted from item 34 on William Mofield's survey.

<sup>4</sup> Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program," 100. Item 43 on Mofield's survey was used as item 42 on the CRI.

<sup>5</sup> Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program," 100. Item 47 on Mofield's survey was used as item 46 on the CRI.

<sup>6</sup> Mofield, "Developing a Disciple Making Program," 100. Item 50 on Mofield's survey was used as item 47 on the CRI.

APPENDIX 2  
CURRICULUM EVALUATION RUBRIC

<b>Choosing Reality Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Lesson 1 Evaluation</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.					
The material is faithful to the Bible’s teaching on sexual purity.					
The material is theologically sound.					
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.					
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.					
The lesson contains points of practical application.					
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.					
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.					

APPENDIX 3

COMPANION GUIDE EVALUATION RUBRIC

<b>Choosing Reality Companion Guide Evaluation Tool</b>					
<b>Lesson 1 Evaluation</b>					
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>					
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>Comments</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.					
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.					
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.					
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.					
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.					
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.					

## APPENDIX 4

### CHOOSING REALITY COMPANION GUIDE SAMPLE

#### **Choosing Reality Companion Guide**

##### **A Word About This Companion Guide**

When it comes to pornography, lasting change comes from wholistic change. There has to be a change in our heads, our hearts, and our hands.

There has to be a change in our heads or our minds because Jesus says in John 8:32:

**John 8:32 – “and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”**

There has to be a change in our hearts because Jesus says in Matthew 15:19:

**Matthew 15:19 – “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.”**

And there has to be a change in our hands because Jesus says in Matthew 5:27-30:

**Matthew 5:27-30 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup> 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.**

Paul puts it this way in Romans 6:13:

**Romans 6:13 - Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness.**

Therefore, each week of the course, this companion guide will give you the opportunity to address your head, your heart, and your hands. You will also be given key verses to interact with so that the Word of God can be a change agent in your journey. Take the time to interact with this guide. Don't rush through it. Don't settle for the bare minimum. No one can be a 2%er on the journey to freedom. Fight for your freedom and your joy. It will be worth it.

## **Choosing Reality**

### **Lesson 1 Companion Guide**

#### **Wednesday July 1 – Head**

In the lesson, I addressed the following six ways that pornography rips people off:

- It cultivates unrealistic expectations about sex
- It normalizes perverted desires
- It strains and even ruins relationships
- It makes you part of the problem instead of part of the solution regarding sex trafficking
- It hinders impact
- It hinders intimacy with God

In my own journey to freedom from pornography, I found it incredibly helpful to begin looking at the backside of pornography. Meaning, I began thinking about what would be waiting for me on the other side of a moment looking at pornography. While the six items listed above are not a comprehensive list, it's a good start. Continually reminding myself of how porn was ripping me off was a helpful tool in growing my desire to be free.

Take a moment and review the six ways that porn rips us off. Spend some time writing down specific ways you see these six consequences at play in your own life. Include any other ways you feel porn is ripping you off.

#### **Thursday July 2 – Ephesians 5:3**

Ephesians 5:3 (NIV) - But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart through this verse. Write down any reflections you have from it in regard to your battle with pornography.

#### **Friday July 3 - Heart**

It's important to understand that we don't look at porn just because we have hormones and a strong sex drive. Pornography is often a way that we try and satisfy legitimate desires or insecurities in an illegitimate way. People often turn to porn because of a fear of rejection, an insecurity about their desirability, a desire to feel significant, a longing to feel connected to another person, a desire for control when life feels out of control, a need to feel alive, or an attempt to numb the pain of self-hatred.

Take some time and ask God to reveal the legitimate desires or insecurities in your heart that you are seeking to satisfy in an illegitimate way. As God brings things to mind, write them down and identify the different ways that desire or insecurity manifests itself in your life.

As I discussed in the lesson, the lie our enemy wants us to believe is that God is really not that good. One of the ways we believe this lie without realizing it is by looking to pornography to satisfy our desires and insecurities instead of Jesus. Believing that God has always been and will always be supremely good means believing that Jesus is capable of satisfying our deepest longings.

Spend some time talking to Jesus about your desires or insecurities and invite him in to deal with them.

### **Saturday July 4 – 1 Corinthians 10:12-13**

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (ESV) - Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. <sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart through these verses. Write down any reflections you have from them in regard to your battle with pornography.

### **Sunday July 5 – Hands**

Things began to change for me when I realized I was willing to do whatever it takes to get porn out of my life. Nothing would be too inconvenient or extreme if it meant that I would be free.

Our hands are what we use to access pornography. When we talk about changing our hands, we are talking about changing our behavior.

1. Analyze your behavior
  - a. Identify the times when you are most likely to look at pornography (ex: when I get into bed at night, on Thursdays when my roommates are at class, after I have watched a certain show on Netflix, when I have a lot of tests, etc.).
  - b. Identify the physical locations where you are most likely to look at pornography.
  - c. Identify all devices you have used to look at pornography.
  - d. Identify any reoccurring events that lead up to you look at pornography (ex: going to the rec, going to a party, having too much to drink, being bored and having nothing to do, staying up way too late, etc.)
  - e. Identify the applications/websites you normally use to access pornography.
  
2. Change the behavior – for each point above, write down one specific and decisive change you can make to reduce the chances of turning to pornography.

**Monday July 6 – Colossians 3:5-6**

Colossians 3:5-6 - Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup>On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

Pray and ask God to speak to your heart through these verses. Write down any reflections you have from them in regard to your battle with pornography.

APPENDIX 5

EXPERT PANEL FEEDBACK FOR  
TEACHING LESSONS

Table A1. Teaching lesson 1 expert panel results

<b>Lesson One Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				7
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				7
The material is theologically sound.				7
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.			2	5
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.			1	6
The lesson contains points of practical application.			2	5
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.			1	6
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				7

Table A2. Teaching lesson 2 expert panel results

<b>Lesson Two Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				6
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				6
The material is theologically sound.				6
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.			1	5
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.				6
The lesson contains points of practical application.			1	5
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.			1	5
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				6



Table A3. Teaching lesson 3 expert panel results

<b>Lesson Three Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				5
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				5
The material is theologically sound.				5
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.				5
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.				5
The lesson contains points of practical application.				5
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.				5
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				5

Table A4. Teaching lesson 4 expert panel results

<b>Lesson Four Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				7
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				7
The material is theologically sound.				7
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.				7
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.				7
The lesson contains points of practical application.			1	6
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.				7
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				7

Table A5. Teaching lesson 5 expert panel results

<b>Lesson Five Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				4
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				4
The material is theologically sound.				4
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.				4
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.				4
The lesson contains points of practical application.				4
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.				4
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				4

Table A6. Teaching lesson 6 expert panel results

<b>Lesson Six Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				5
The material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				5
The material is theologically sound.			1	4
The thesis of the lesson is clearly stated.				5
The points of the lesson clearly support the thesis.			1	4
The lesson contains points of practical application.				5
The lesson is sufficiently thorough in its coverage of the material.				5
Overall, the lesson is clearly presented.				5

APPENDIX 6

EXPERT PANEL FEEDBACK FOR EACH SECTION  
OF COMPANION GUIDE

Table A7. Lesson 1 companion guide expert panel results

<b>Lesson One Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				6
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				6
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.				6
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.				6
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.				6
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.				6

Table A8. Lesson 2 companion guide expert panel results

<b>Lesson Two Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				5
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				5
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.				5
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.			1	4
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.			1	4
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.			1	4

Table A9. Lesson 3 companion guide expert panel results

<b>Lesson Three Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				5
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				5
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.			2	3
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.				5
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.			1	4
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.				5

Table A10. Lesson 4 companion guide expert panel results

<b>Lesson Four Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				6
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.			1	5
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.				6
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.				6
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.			2	4
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.				6

Table A11. Lesson 5 companion guide expert panel results

<b>Lesson Five Evaluation</b>				
<b>1= insufficient 2=requires attention 3= sufficient 4=exemplary</b>				
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>
The lesson's companion material is clearly relevant to college students and their struggles with pornography.				4
The lesson's companion material is faithful to the Bible's teaching on sexual purity.				4
The lesson's companion material is theologically sound.				4
The lesson's companion material contains points of practical application.				4
The lesson's companion material is sufficiently thorough in its support of the lesson.				4
Overall, the lesson's companion material is clearly presented.				4

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## ABSTRACT

### CHOOSING REALITY: EMPOWERING COLLEGE STUDENTS TO PURSUE FREEDOM FROM PORNOGRAPHY AT BREAKAWAY MINISTRIES IN COLLEGE STATION, TEXAS

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This project sought to empower college students to pursue freedom from pornography at Breakaway Ministries in College Station, Texas. Chapter 1 introduces the ministry context of Breakaway Ministries along with the rationale, purpose, goals, research methodologies, definitions, limitations, and delimitations of the project. Chapter 2 examines God's good design and the serpent's lie regarding sex (Gen 2:18–3:7), what living the serpent's lie looks like (Prov 7), and how to live out God's truth regarding sexual purity (various passages from Paul's epistles). Chapter 3 provides an understanding of Generation Z, the mission of the porn industry, the negative effects of pornography, and the role the church must play in helping students effectively pursue freedom from pornography. Chapter 4 describes the implementation of the Choosing Reality ministry project. Chapter 5 provides a thorough evaluation of the project and identifies opportunities for improvement.

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