Pornography and the Search for Intimacy

by Philip M. Bickel
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Pornography Is Alive and Well

Until recently, to get the “skinny” on sexuality all we had was:

• magazines like Playboy, Penthouse, and Hustler.

• “adults only” stores showing grainy 8mm films.

But enter the marvels of technology and entrepreneurship:

• VCRs and video stores remove the social stigma of porn use. We now have more video stores (25,000) renting and selling hard-core films than McDonald’s has restaurants. And don’t worry about getting bored, because U.S. filmmakers produce 150 new porn titles every week.

• Is getting to the video store a hassle? No problem. Just tune in a pay-per-view skin flick from your adult cable company.

• Many hotel chains don’t want to miss out on this cash cow. So they offer their guests the service of X-rated pay-per-view films.

• If we prefer audio sex to visual, we just dial 900 for a sensuous chat.

• Want live titillation? We’ve got it! The number of major U.S. strip clubs doubled between 1987 and 1992.
• If that weren’t enough, we have the Internet and CD-ROMs. Everything we ever dreamed of and more is available with a couple clicks of a mouse. Dozens of new saucy sites (or is it sights?) are added every week.

And porn isn’t strictly a guy thing any more. In the late ‘80s a Redbook magazine survey reported almost half its readers (primarily women ages 25 to 44) regularly watched pornographic movies at home. How’s that for equality?

**Hurray or Dismay**

What is your reaction to the spread of pornography? Some cheer. Some moan. Others aren’t sure how to respond.

This booklet is written for a variety of audiences:

• Persons attracted to pornography.

• Persons whose “significant other” uses pornography.

• People who are not sure whether pornography is a blessing or a bummer.

• Individuals who feel scarred by pornography and by those who use it.
Who Invented Sex?

Let’s begin with a basic question: Who invented sex, God or the devil?

Many people believe God must hate sex, because He set down prohibitions about its use. The corollary of this belief is that sex must be Satan’s idea, and that he incited Adam and Eve to commit the sin of having sexual relations. But no matter how many people might think this, the Bible contends that:

1. God invented sex, because He designed human beings as male and female.

2. The Creator gladly approves of sex within marriage. In fact, one book of the Bible, Song of Songs, is a sensuously intimate, romantic love poem.

3. And (here’s the big surprise) the one who hates sex with a passion is the devil.

The 17th century poet John Milton graphically portrayed Satan’s opinion of sex in his masterpiece “Paradise Lost.” If you can tolerate some old-fashioned English, here is a scene in which the devil peeps at Adam and Eve while they are making out.
Our general Mother...half-embracing leaned
On our first Father, half her swelling Breast
Naked met his under the flowing Gold
Of her loose tresses hid.

He in delight
Both of her Beauty and submissive Charms
Smiled with superior Love... and pressed
her Matron lip
With kisses pure.

Aside the Devil turned
For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
Eyed them askance, and to himself complained,
“Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two
Imparadised in one another’s arms
The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust.”
Do you hear the devil’s sniveling jealousy? He can’t stand to see a husband and wife imparadised (what a fabulous word!) in one another’s arms, enjoying a healthy, profound, fulfilling sexual relationship.

**Why Did God Invent Sex?**

As we grow into puberty and adulthood, we all are asking at the core of our being:

- Will anyone ever love me?
- Will anyone ever long for intimacy with me?
- Will anyone ever be passionate about knowing me?

When God created human sexuality, His intention was to give us the gift of intimacy. What is intimacy? It is to authentically and deeply know another person.

Building on that, we can also define passion. Passion is to be excited about and committed to authentically and deeply knowing another person.

Such intimacy and passion is implied in the way the Bible describes sexual intercourse. Genesis 4:1 says: “Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain.” Note the use of the word “knew.” The Hebrew verb used in the original text of this verse, means both “to know” and “to have sexual intercourse.”
In God’s plan, there is no deeper knowing than for a husband and wife to expose themselves both emotionally and physically in order to share the pleasure of sexual relations.

**Substitutes for God’s Plan**

Sexual intimacy was God’s good plan for married couples. But far too often people trade His plan for their own self-centered ideas. Here are three examples.

1. Promiscuous sex. Some men live by the creed “So many women. So little time.” And some women agree: “So many men. So little time.” This common phrase assumes the key to really knowing men or women is to know as many as possible in a sexual relationship. But remember, intimacy means to authentically and deeply know someone. Can this be accomplished by playing the game of musical bed partners? No.

   God’s plan is this: The way for a man to understand and appreciate women in general is to deeply and authentically know his wife. She is the Eve God gives him to know women. And a husband is the Adam whom God gives to a woman in order for her to understand and appreciate men.
2. Premarital and extramarital sex. In today’s open discussion of sexuality, we don’t hear enough of two important F-words.

- Fornication. This old term for premarital sex points to the relational error of leaping into sexual intimacy without establishing solid emotional intimacy.

- Faithfulness refers to the fact that intercourse initiates such a profound emotional bond between a couple that before they copulate they should pledge themselves to be devoted solely to the other. It’s called marriage vows.

These concepts may sound namby-pamby and over-cautious to some readers. Why can’t we be more daring with sex? Psychological therapist Rollo May answers:

“A common practice in our day is to avoid working up the courage required for authentic intimacy by shifting the issue to the body... It is easier in our society to be naked physically than to be naked psychologically or spiritually--easier to share our body than to share our fantasies, hopes, fears, and aspirations, which are felt to be more personal and the sharing of which makes us more vulnerable. Hence people short-circuit the more “dangerous” building of a relationship by leaping immediately into bed.... But intimacy that begins and remains on the physical level
tends to become inauthentic, and we later find ourselves fleeing from the emptiness.”

Although extramarital sex claims to be daring, it is actually a form of cowardice, because establishing honest emotional intimacy requires more courage.

3. Pornography. Pornography—combined with mental fantasizing and masturbation—is completely impersonal and non-relational. Porn promises to relieve our emptiness. But it’s a lie. The emptiness remains and increases. Rather than building intimacy, as God intended sex to do, pornography robs people of God’s gift of intimacy.

Porn looks so easy, because it never requires any kind of relational demand. But that’s why it is so empty, more empty than cotton candy. Cotton candy, which is 100% sugar, fails to nourish the body. Pornography, which is 100% selfishness, fails to nourish your longing for intimacy. And like cotton candy, the more porn you consume, the sicker you get.

Every way you look at it, pornography is a counterfeit intimacy which fails to provide the relational riches God intended for us.
Defense of Pornography

“Now hold on a second,” some may object. “You’re painting pornography too negatively. There’s a lot that can be said for it.”

Okay, let’s look at the common arguments for pornography.

“You can’t define obscenity.” Then how come the U.S. Supreme Court was able to define obscenity in the 1973 case of Miller v. California. The Court declared that “obscenity” is not protected by the Constitution and may be made illegal by the states or federal government if it meets three tests:

1. The average person, applying contemporary community standards finds the material as a whole is directed toward an unhealthy, abnormal, obsessive, morbid or shameful interest in sex; and

2. The material depicts sexual conduct (ultimate sex acts, masturbation, torture, bondage, sex with animals, excretory functions or lewd exhibition of the genitals) in a patently offensive manner substantially throughout the material. (“Patently” means plainly or obviously.)

3. The material, as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value.
When average persons see graphic materials obsessed with explicit portrayal of sexual conduct and deviant behaviors, they know it is obscene.

“Pornography doesn’t hurt anyone.” It doesn’t? Consider these troubling facts.

- Depictions of hard-core pornography include bestiality, group sex, anal and oral sex, rape, defecation and urination, incest, bondage, child pornography, pseudo child pornography (adults posing as children), and sadomasochism.

- 70% of all pornography ends up in the hands of children.

- Adolescents 12-17 are among the age groups most frequently exposed to pornography.

- 86% of rapists admit to regular use of pornography. 56% admit they actually imitated porn scenes in the commission of their crimes. (A woman is raped in the U.S. every 46 seconds.)

- Child molesters and pedophiles use pornography as a teaching tool to lower children's inhibitions.

- 87% of molesters of girls and 77% of molesters of boys admit to regular use of pornography. (1 in 3 girls and 1 in 7 boys will be sexually molested before age 18.)
• In many cases, pornographic photos and films are recorded evidence of prostitution, rape, and child molestation.

• Since pornography promotes promiscuous sex, it increases the transmission of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

People who think porn is simply a private form of entertainment would laugh at this booklet and the “prude dude” who wrote it. But not everyone affected by pornography is laughing.

• Tony bet he could go a week without porn, and lost the bet. (Could you?)

• Homeless Patty, was repeatedly abused by her porn-using father between ages 7 and 14, until she ran away.

• Ken struggled for years to free himself from porn addiction, and now he worries what his grade school children might uncover while surfing the web.

• Brian got into porn to satisfy his lust (there’s a word you don’t hear much any more), but every sexual encounter with paper or celluloid images, leaves him feeling unsatisfied, dirty, and ashamed.
• Attractive Jennifer learned that her Playboy-reading husband, Mitch, can reach an orgasm with her only when he imagines she is one of his computer-enhanced, buxom porn dolls.

Pornography is not harmless fun. Its victims are many.

“Soft-core porn is not so bad.” Yes, soft-core porn is often less explicit than hard-core. But studies of soft-porn magazines reveal that, despite the veneer of classy photography and literary articles, themes like sadism, bestiality, incest, and sexual molesting of children are often portrayed in soft porn. In other words, soft-core magazines are not as soft and harmless as they pretend to be.

In The Centerfold Syndrome, clinical psychologist Dr. Gary Brooks identified five principal symptoms of a “pervasive disorder” linked to consumption of even soft-core pornography like Playboy or Penthouse:

• Voyeurism: An obsession with visual stimulation that trivializes all other mature features of a healthy sexual relationship.

• Objectification: An attitude where women are seen as mere objects to be rated by size, shape and harmony of their body parts.
• Lack of validation: When real intercourse never comes close to the impossibly idealized sex of a man’s porn-fueled fantasies, he feels cheated or lacking in macho prowess.

• Trophyism: Women become the property of a man as a symbol of accomplishment and worthiness.

• Fear of true intimacy: Preoccupation with sexuality handicaps the capacity for emotional or non-sexual intimacy.

The difference between soft-core porn and hard-core porn is like the difference between the pulsating blade of an electric saber saw and the raging teeth of a chain saw. Would you be willing to put either one in your pocket?

“Although inappropriate for children, porn has no ill effects on adults.” The assumption here is that adults can distinguish between fact and fantasy and are able to control their sexual desires.

Yes, with self-control some adults can avoid a depraved lifestyle. But pornography isn’t concerned about self-control. It urges self-gratification at any cost. It lures users into ever-deepening rebellion against sexual taboos.
Dr. Victor Cline, a clinical psychologist with extensive experience counseling people hooked on pornography, warns about four stages of pornography following initial exposure.

- **Addiction:** The desire and need to keep coming back for pornographic images. Like gambling, it starts as entertainment and becomes an obsession.

- **Escalation:** Users become bored and need more explicit, brutal, and decadent images to produce sexual pleasure.

- **Desensitization:** Practices once viewed as shocking or taboo are seen as acceptable or commonplace. Indifferent to the women and children victimized in pornography, users fantasize about molesting children or raping women.

- **Acting out:** The tendency to perform the behaviors one has viewed, including exhibitionism, sadistic/masochistic sex, group sex, rape, or sex with minor children.

No wonder Dr. Cline calls pornography “the gateway drug to sexual addiction.”

“**Porn teaches people about sex.**” Not all teaching is beneficial for those who learn. The Ku Klux Klan teaches about race relations. The mafia teaches business administration. What matters is the content of what is taught. Is it truth or is it lies?
Dr. Judith Reisman of American University headed a 1985 investigation of Playboy, Penthouse, and Hustler: These magazines which sell over 25 million copies per month teach that:

- Children as young as 3 are legitimate sexual objects.
- Children desire sexual advances from adults.
- Children are unharmed or benefit from sexual activity with adults.
- Women must like the photographed activities or they wouldn’t have posed for them.
- Despite initial protests, women enjoy rape.
- Marriage is boring and unsatisfying; unfaithfulness is where the fun is.

These findings are troubling when we consider that 29% of teenage boys rated pornography superior to parents, teachers, books, and peers, as the most useful source of information about sex. When the teaching is flawed, behavior is flawed.

Parker Elliott Dietz, M.D., concludes, “Pornography is a medical and public health problem because so much of it teaches false, misleading, and even dangerous information about human sexuality. A person who learned about human sexuality in the ‘adults only’
pornography outlets of America would be a person who had never conceived of a man and woman marrying or even falling in love before having intercourse,… Instead, such a person would be one who had learned that sex at home meant sex with one’s children, step-children, parents, stepparents,… and pets…; and who had learned that people take off their clothes and have sex within the first five minutes of meeting one another,…” (Final Report of the Attorney General’s Commission of Pornography, 489.)

Is Doctor Dietz overstating the case? Not when internet porn king Robert Thomas boasts his computer bulletin board system is “the nastiest place on earth.” Do we allow drunk drivers to teach drivers education? Do we want terrorists to teach fire arms safety courses? No. So why legitimize pornographers as teachers of human sexuality?

“Pornography helps couples jump-start their intimate encounters.” In most cases, pornography is not shared by a couple. Instead, one of them peeps on the sly and masturbates to diminish his or her own libido.

Even when couples share the viewing of porn, they are running a risk. Often pornography plants mental images of the perfect, computer-enhanced, sensuous
body. Or it portrays unrealistic, hyper-ecstatic orgasms. No one can match up to the Perfect 10 standards.

Porn also presents sex in the context of sadistic violence or kinky fetishes. When a partner gives in to demands that “we gotta do it like they did it in the video,” he or she is left feeling abused and manipulated.

Perhaps the most insidious effect of sharing pornography is that a couple becomes dependent on other people—rather than themselves—to produce sexual pleasure. You don’t jump-start a car from a 10,000-volt transformer. A standard 12-volt battery is best for the job. In the same way, actual intimacy inspired by a couple’s own caring and caresses is far superior to porn.

**Bogus Intimacy**

Up until now, I have been addressing a wide audience of readers, including porn users and other concerned individuals. I feel compelled from this point on to address the users of porn. I hope the rest of you don’t feel left out; you will find many helpful comments in the pages ahead. But it is time to speak directly and intimately to those who are wrapped up in pornography.

Are you a defender and user of porn? Beneath your swagger and boasting of
sexual freedom and fulfillment, the emptiness in your soul is shouting the truth about porn. Are you listening?

Try this little test. Here is a list of what God delivers through sexuality and what pornography gives. Place a $f$ beside the fruits you have harvested by sowing your wild oats.

God delivers:

- __ intimacy
- __ being known
- __ pleasing another
- __ the freedom of sharing
- __ real love
- __ long-term satisfaction
- __ being wholly human
- __ joy

Pornography delivers:

- __ loneliness
- __ anonymity
- __ pleasing oneself
- __ the slavery of taking
- __ mere fantasy
No matter how you look at it, pornography fails to provide the relational riches God intended for you. For too long you have filled your natural desire for intimacy with a bogus counterfeit. Aren’t you starved for the real thing?

To break free from the grip of pornography, you could try to use sheer will power. It might work. But maybe you’ve already tried and your will wilted. That’s understandable. Pornography can be as addictive as a drug. The possibility of ever experiencing real intimacy with a living person may seem unattainable.

How will you ever kick your porn habit and begin to rebuild authentic intimacy?

Here is an idea: Learn to be intimate with God.

**Intimacy with God**

God has never been lonely, because He is sufficient company for Himself. But in His wisdom He designed us to enjoy an intimate relationship with Him. Listen to how the Bible describes the Creator as intimately aware of us.
“O LORD, You have searched me and You know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down;
You are familiar with all my ways.
Before a word is on my tongue
You know it completely, O LORD.
You hem me in—behind and before;
You have laid your hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
Too lofty for me to attain.”
(Ps. 139:1-6)

The writer of these words thinks it is wonderful that God knows him so intimately. Perhaps you think it is terrible. If God knows you this well, then He is watching when you secretly ogle nude pictures. He knows every detail of your masturbation fantasies. Even the bitter aftertaste of shame and guilt that assails you doesn’t escape His awareness.

With a record like yours, how can you ever dare to get close to God? Please realize this is a problem for everyone, whether or not they are into pornography. All of us in one way or another rebel against God
and try to run our own lives without Him. This fractures our relationship with God. Whether it’s pornography or some other sin we cling to, the results are the same: “Your iniquities have separated you from God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear you” (Isaiah 59:2).

After we die, God will judge us according to all our evil thoughts, words, and actions. What sentence do we deserve for our rebellion? Eternal punishment in hell. To be condemned to hell means to be eternally cut off from the presence of God, to never enjoy His intimacy and kindness. The Bible could not be clearer about this.

- “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8).
- “Nothing impure will ever enter it [heaven], nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful,…” (Revelation 21:27).

If you live for pornography, could you describe yourself as “pure in heart”? No. “Impure,” “shameful,” and “deceitful” are the names that apply to you. As long as you cling to your sinful lifestyle you can’t ever live in heaven with the God who created you for intimacy with Him.

Your case would be nothing but hopeless except for one thing—God has never stopped loving you!
Unparalleled Passion

In spite of our unfaithfulness toward God, He is still passionately in love with us. Remember, passion means to be excited about and committed to authentically and deeply knowing another person. Unwilling to give you up without a fight, God’s passionate love caused Him to take drastic measures to win you back.

Hang on, you are about to hear the greatest love story ever.

It’s a true story.

And it’s all for you.

Scene One: A Pure Life. God bridged the distance between Himself and us by sending His only Son Jesus Christ to earth. Because Jesus is both human and God, His life had the potential to restore us to intimacy with God.

The Bible reports that Jesus “has been tempted in every way [even pornography], just as we are—yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Although tempted, He didn’t give in. He lived His entire life free of moral failures. Therefore, Jesus Christ is the only person in all history who, being pure in heart, actually deserves to see God.
Scene Two: A Passionate Sacrifice. Most people in North America have heard how Jesus died on a cross, executed by His enemies, and then later rose from the dead. But few understand its meaning. Listen closely, and don’t prevent this message from breaking your heart.

The Bible teaches that as Jesus died He was enduring the eternal punishment of separation from God’s love, a separation that we all deserve.

- “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28).

- “God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting men’s sins against them… God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5: 19, 21).

- “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

Most dictionaries give two definitions for the word “passion”: (1) intense feeling or conviction; and (2) intense suffering, such as the agonies of Christ. Some people refuse to love others, because they might get hurt. Well, even though Jesus knew loving us would hurt, He did not fear the suffering. He sought it out. He endured the passion (intense suffering), because He was
driven by passion (intense feeling) to have you know God authentically and deeply.

**Scene Three: Coming Clean.** The last scene of this love story has not been written yet. Each person on earth is writing their part of it as they respond to what Christ did for them.

How will you write Scene Three? Either you can cling to your sins and reject His love. Or you can reject your impure past and cling to His love for you.

“But,” you might protest, “I’ve tried to turn away from pornography, and I can’t do it.” That’s right, you can’t, but trust God to liberate you from it. He can do it! Look at what Paul said to people in Corinth, a city infamous as the most immoral metropolis in the Roman Empire:

“**Do not be deceived:** Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders… will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of your were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Notice the Corinthians used to be immoral, but not any more. When they trusted God to forgive them and transform them, that is just what God did. The Lord cleansed them of their impurity, set them
apart to serve Him, and declared them not guilty.

If you long for the same deliverance, tell God so in your own words. Or use the thoughts of this prayer:

Dear Father God, all along You have desired to bless me with intimacy toward You and toward others. But I have run from Your presence. I have distanced myself from others by filling my mind and heart with shameful images. I thought pornography was love, but it was a selfish lie.

Now, in Your Son Jesus I see real love. Love so passionate, so excited about and committed to knowing me, that He died on the cross to pay for all my sins. Thank You, Jesus!

Therefore, God, I now reject all my impure actions, words, and thoughts. I claim the cleansing which only Jesus provides. Although I can’t free myself from pornography, I call on Your Holy Spirit to liberate me from its lure. Whenever my guilty conscience attacks me, quiet its accusations with Your sure promise that, trusting in Christ as my Savior, God now declares me to be His forgiven and pure child.

Thank You, Lord, for this new life You have given me. Help me to live it in intimate closeness to you. Amen.

Having this kind of faith is not a
counterfeit hope. It brings real and enduring results, for Jesus promises, “I tell you the truth, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life” (John 5:24).

All your life you’ve wondered: Will anyone ever love me? Ever long for intimacy with me? Ever be passionate about knowing me?

The answer is, “Yes, God has loved you like that all along!” So love Him back.

Rebuilding Intimacy with Others

For those entrapped by pornography, restoring intimacy with God is the first essential step toward healing. I hope you have taken this step by trusting in Christ.

Building on the intimacy you now have with God, He will help you refrain from use of pornography and rebuild intimacy with others.

Here is some advice on how to become whole again.

1. Daily recall that God loves you and forgives you. Let your eyes feast on verses like this: “He [Christ] Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree [the cross], so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His
wounds you have been healed” (1 Peter 2:24).

2. You have given your sexual urges free rein for so long that at times you may fall back into your old ways. If and when that occurs, don’t doubt God’s intention to forgive you once again. He promises, “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

3. By God’s power you will eventually quench the flames of lust. Lean on promises like this one. “For the grace [undeserved kindness] of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions… Christ gave Himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for Himself a people that are His very own, eager to do what is good” (Titus 2:11, 12, 14).

4. Destroy all your pornographic materials. On your computer delete all the Internet porn links and install software which blocks on-line pornographic materials. Avoid the places and people that lead you astray.

5. Don’t try to fight your problem alone. Seek out a pastor or other Christian counselor. While keeping your problem confidential, your counselor will provide you wisdom and guidance, so that eventually you will be able to know true intimacy in a fulfilling relationship – and, for those who are married, sexual intimacy
the way God intended it to be.

6. Become accountable to another person. It could be your counselor or someone else. Allow this person to assist you by: listening without judging; speaking honestly about his or her own problems; praying with you; and supporting you as you walk toward wholeness.

7. Replace your old obsession with a new one, a healthy one. Jesus promised, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8). The Savior has removed your sins and made you pure in heart, so that you can see God. Therefore, be excited about and committed to authentically and deeply knowing Him.

Your search for intimacy with God will be fully satisfied.

Appendix: Ways to Protect Kids from On-line Porn

• Install an Internet blocking product.

• Place the computer in a public area, such as the family room.

• Computers aren't like television sets, don't use them as a last minute
“baby sitter”.

• Set time limits on Internet usage, preferably during study hours. Use their time on-line for studies, not killing time.

• Discourage late-night use by anyone in the household. Most pornography sites are accessed late at night or very early in the morning.

• Don’t let your children talk unsupervised to anyone on-line. Chat rooms promote the anonymity of users. You have no way of knowing who is on the other end of the line. Pedophiles frequently use chat rooms as a vehicle to meet children.

• Have them set up their own bookmarks. This provides easy access to positive sites.

• Spend time with your kids online. Teach them how to use search engines.

• Set up ground rules and then stick to them. Let your children know the consequences that will follow misuse.

• Show your kids what to do if they accidentally stumble onto a bad site.
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Some people think soft-core pornography is harmless, or is even beneficial for couples. Few people realize that even soft-core pornography can lead to sexual addiction, much like marijuana can lead to much stronger drug use and addiction.

This booklet discusses how the relationship that God planned for man and woman, as well as the intimacy God desires to have with us, is compromised by the use of pornography. It also outlines the four stages of sexual addiction and shares steps to restoring and rebuilding our relationships with God and others.