

SEX, PORNOGRAPHY AND RELATIONSHIP HEALTH

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Sexuality as designed by God—within the context of marriage—is joyful, pleasurable and relationship strengthening. It is a gift from God to be enjoyed. It causes deep and profound changes within us—our beings, souls, psyches are all affected. We are not the same after such contact, with our relationships and emotional connections greatly enhanced.

Pornography is the opposite: Its use in relationships lowers romantic commitment in both men and women. When used by a partner it increases the probability of a breakup by 400%, and 25% of divorced respondents said Internet pornography/chat contributed to their split. That is why the New Testament warns us to run from sexual sin, as it wages war against our very souls (1 Cor. 6:18, 1 Pet. 2:11). You say, 'I am allowed to do anything'- But not everything is good for you. And even though 'I am allowed to do anything,' I must not become a slave to anything." (1 Cor. 6:12).

SEX IN MARRIAGE IS...

- Designed by God and considered sacred
- Enriches the human experience
- Beautiful and natural
- Consensual and celebrated
- Intimate and loving
- Produces life and strengthens relationships

PORNOGRAPHY IS...

- Man-made, making \$ billions in profit
- Dehumanizes people
- Dominating and abusive
- Hidden and shameful
- Exploitative and distant
- Destructive to mental health, kills relationships

WHEN TO BE CONCERNED

Level 1: Little or no viewing of sexually explicit websites, videos, apps. Such content is ignored or not paid attention to. While total avoidance is nearly impossible, a person at this level shuns exposure. No impact on relationships. **No Concerns.**

Level 2: Mostly unplanned, incidental moments (less than 3 times a year) of viewing sexually explicit websites, videos, movies. Briefly exploring content with some interest. Minimal impact on relationships. Must stay vigilant. **Minimal Concerns.**

Level 3: Viewing sexually explicit content every other month. May begin to feel deliberate, that something is off, with guilt and shame emerging. Increased risk to relationship health. Install web blockers, find accountability partner. **Beginning Concerns.**

Level 4: Once a month pattern of deliberate viewing of sexually explicit content, going to chat rooms for sexual conversations (virtual sex), etc. Greater likelihood of

relationship unhealth. Install web blockers, find accountability partner/group, consider professional help if the pattern cannot be broken. **Growing Concerns.**

Level 5: Pattern is every week, plus thinking of sexual activity with someone other than your married partner. Little effort is made to avoid future episodes, start of a “double life”. Emerging compulsive and addictive-like behaviors. Unhealthy sexuality patterns require accountability group and professional individual or group therapy. **Strong Concerns.**

Level 6: Everyday behavior seeking out sexually explicit content, plus making plans to engage in sexual activity with someone other than married partner. Compulsions grow stronger—leading a double life, feels addictive-like, future episodes eagerly anticipated and planned for. Professional counseling, accountability groups required. **Serious Concerns.**

***Level 7:** Daily viewing and behaviors, plus engaging in sexual activity with someone other than married partner. Involves bingeing, deliberate preoccupation, plans to engage in illicit behavior, and rationalizations to make actions morally defensible. Professional therapy is required to stop addictive-like behavior. **Major Concerns.**

Level 8: Regular, ritualized patterns of illicit sexual fulfillment. Planning now part of the ritual, with well-rehearsed rationalizations, guilt mostly blocked, and deep shame. Sexuality and spirituality are divided and individual leads a double life. Counseling/professional therapy required, and possibly in-patient treatment. **Major Addictive Concerns.**

Level 9: Controlled by ritualized, addictive sexual behavior. Powerlessness and panic set in, futile attempts to break the pattern, feelings of despair, self-pity, self-hatred, and shame. Significant emotional resources needed to conceal secret life. Life feels unmanageable. In-patient treatment, out-patient counseling/therapy required. **Out of Control Addiction.**

Level 10: The sexual activity violates criminal statutes, and therefore requires immediate intervention. Violates of physical, mental, or emotional well-being of another individual lead to incarceration. Loss of control over compulsion, great harm to others. Treatment occurs in the context of the criminal justice system. **Compulsive, Illegal Sexual Activity.**

***Levels 7-10 adapted from “The Purity Report”**

RESOURCES TO HELP
cmr.biola.edu/addiction-scale



Biola University
**CENTER for MARRIAGE
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