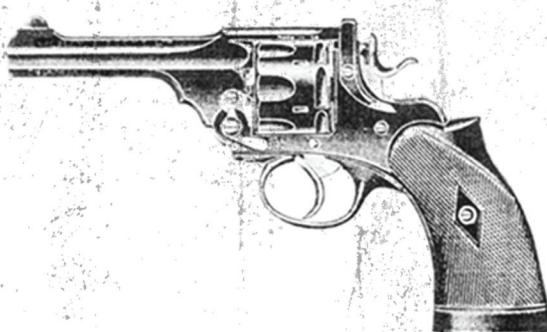


PORN-AGAIN CHRISTIAN

a frank discussion on
pornography & masturbation

WRITTEN BY

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introduction

“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” – Job 31:1 (NIV)

You are part of a culture that spends more money each year on pornography than country music, rock music, jazz music, classical music, Broadway plays, and ballet combined. In Paul’s day, he accused some people of worshiping their stomachs as their god, and in our day it appears that our god has simply moved a short distance south.

As the pastor of a large and growing church filled with strong men, many of them young, I have seen the secret sins of pornography and masturbation paralyze many men with shame, guilt, and embarrassment. I have written this booklet to discuss these matters in a manner that is both theological and practical, in hopes of contributing to each of you experiencing the power of the gospel to forgive, renew, and empower you by grace. Because I am speaking to fellow men, my tone may not be well suited for some women and, therefore, I would request that they not read this booklet, unless they are a wife whose husband has read it first and he can discuss its contents with her in love. For men wanting to encourage other men to lives of purity, I pray this booklet would be a useful and readable piece of literature that you could pass on to as many dudes as possible as a pedagogical tool for cranial-rectal extraction.

We will begin by learning what God intends for our sexuality, and then proceed to examine how we sin against him. In the opening pages of Genesis, we see that our Trinitarian God made everything “good.” The only thing that is not called “good” is that our first father, Adam, was alone. He had creation below him, and God above him, but no one alongside of him to walk as an equal. In this way, Adam was not able to show forth the Trinitarian community of God; Adam was alone on the earth and not in community. For this reason, among others, God said it was “not good” for the man to be alone. So, God made a woman, our first mother, Eve, to be Adam’s helper and bride. God then essentially walked her down the aisle and officiated the first wedding between the first man and first woman. Thus, God set the precedent that, though different, men and women are equal as his image-bearers, that marriage is a gift for one man and one woman to enjoy, and as a result called all of this “very good.”

Furthermore, God created their bodies for sexual pleasure to be enjoyed in marriage without shame, saying, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Gen. 2:24–25). Therefore, God’s intent is that men and women would marry and enjoy sexual pleasure without shame.

Simply, according to God, marriage and sex are related, connected, and exclusive. Sex as God intends it is for one man and one woman in marriage with the overarching purpose of oneness. Subsequently, by definition anything that contradicts God’s intent is sinful. Thus, sinful acts include homosexuality, bestiality, bisexuality, fornication, friends with benefits, adultery, prostitution, rape, polygamy, sinful lust including pornography, prostitution, rape, polygamy, pedophilia, incest, and anything else invented next to try and escape the clear teachings of Scripture.

Tragically, when sin entered the world, human beings were separated from God and from one another. For example, in Genesis 3 we see our first parents hiding from God and one another in shame that includes confusion over their nakedness and sexuality. In the rest of Genesis sexual sin of every sort and kind springs forth because when sin entered the world, everything was marred by sin, including sexuality.



a tall glass of toilet water

God tells us that his people tend to satisfy their thirst not by drinking from his streams of living water, but instead drinking from man-made toilets (Jer. 2:13). This metaphor is particularly adept in a world where men such as Tom Leykis, Dr. Drew, Howard Stern, and a legion of men's magazines and porno providers become wealthy by selling glasses of toilet water to thirsty men across our nation, many of whom claim to be sons of God. Meanwhile, the church alone has access to the living water from God's perfect Word, but largely fails to teach men masculinity in any area, particularly regarding their sexuality.

The causes for this sin of omission are many. First, there is a propensity in many churches to take sexuality out of the hands of theologians and place it in the hands of secular counselors, whose philosophy is dominated by unbiblical evolutionary concepts of humanity and gender. This error prevents the church from speaking about men and women because they're only permitted to see androgynous humanity. Second, the effeminate nature of pastors and churches causes many masculine men to feel unwelcome in what they perceive as an organization solely for women, children, and weaker men. Third, there is a timidity among weak pastors to wade into controversial issues in general, and sexual ones in particular. Lastly, the sad truth is that many pastors are also enslaved to their own sexual sins and/or are languishing in unfulfilling and

infrequent sex with their wives, and therefore are unable to speak of sexual matters out of a sense of disqualification.

To speak of the matters of pornography and masturbation, I must speak frankly, as frankly as the Scriptures do on important issues. In 2 Timothy 3:16 God says through Paul that, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness.” These Scriptures that God breathed for our profit include the very frank discussions of sexuality throughout the Song of Songs and Ezekiel.

In Ezekiel 16:25–27 God says, “At the head of every street you built your lofty place and made your beauty an abomination, offering yourself to any passerby and multiplying your whoring. You also played the whore with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, multiplying your whoring, to provoke me to anger. Behold, therefore, I stretched out my hand against you and diminished your allotted portion and delivered you to the greed of your enemies, the daughters of the Philistines, who were ashamed of your lewd behavior.”

Also, in Ezekiel 23:18–21, God says, “When she carried on her whoring so openly and flaunted her nakedness, I turned in disgust from her, as I had turned in disgust from her sister. Yet she increased her whoring, remembering the days of her youth, when she played the whore in the land of Egypt and lusted after her paramours there, whose members were like those of donkeys, and whose issue was like that of horses. Thus you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when the Egyptians handled your bosom and pressed your young breasts.” God basically called his people tramps for lifting up their shirts like it was Mardi Gras and chasing men with huge penises and semen emissions like fire hoses.

While God spoke frankly to Israel, he is certainly not crass like some meat-headed high school boys killing time in a locker room. God is honest and forthright about the truth and his people must not be so prudish as to try and speak in ways that are holier than their God. In our age of lewdness and perversion we, like our Father, must avoid crassness, while wisely and boldly speaking frankly about the joy and beauty of sexual intimacy when it is confined by the loving directions of the God who created both us and our desires. And, we must refuse to speak in sanitized clinical euphemisms like calling adulteries “affairs,” fornication “dating,” and perverts “partners” because God uses frank words for deplorable sin so we will feel its sickness without anesthesia.



the fear of the Lord

Wisdom is living your life in congruence with the will of God by walking in grace with him. Wisdom begins with fearing God (Prov. 1:7).

The Scriptures continually speak of the One True God as the God of glory. This means that God is to be considered most heavily, or weighty, in the lives of his people, and that the sinful desires in us and cultural norms around us be seen as unnatural, depraved, and light in comparison to him. Simply, until you fear God and weigh him most heavily in your life, you will remain an undisciplined fool. So, I have provided the following verses of Scripture to simply scare you into seeing God in his holiness and power rather than re-envisioning him in your mind as much less holy than he is, and subsequently your sexual sin as much less unholy than it is.

In 1 Peter 4:3 we read, “For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.” God’s men are urged by Peter to not return to their pagan patterns of reckless living and sexual perversion.

In 1 John 2:15–17 we are urged, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions—is

not from the Father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.” John’s dire warning is that the lust of our eyes is continually enticed by the images and perversions of the world in which we live and we must remain vigilant to not love the tempting sins of the world. John’s warning rings even more true in a culture where, because of technology, it is now easier to see someone naked than to get something out of the fridge—to get to the fridge you at least need to stand up and walk.

First John 3:9 teaches that “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God’s seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.” Clearly, while no man of God can become perfect in this life (1 John 1:8), God does promise that Christian men have the ability to walk away from habitual sins of all kinds, including sexual sins, which are commonly accepted as undefeatable foes. Practically, this means that sexual sin should not be managed, but rather put to death because Jesus died for it.

In 1 Corinthians 5:9–11, Paul says, “I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality . . . not even to eat with such a one.” Simply, any man who claims to be a Christian but lives in habitual, unrepentant sexual immorality is not fit for Christian friendship and community unless he repents, because he is defiling his friends and their church with his perversion. The cold hard truth is that most guys’ struggles are only known by their fellow Christian buddies and unless Christian dudes man up and stop arguing about stupid secondary theological issues and spend their energies holding one another accountable to get dominion over their underwear, then Christian friendship is nothing more than Christian fakery.

In 1 Corinthians 10:8, Paul says, “We must not indulge in sexual immorality as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in a single day.” Speaking of God’s people in Exodus, Paul warns us that throughout history God was so sickened by sexual sin that he killed perverted multitudes in the desert, as well as in places like Sodom and Gomorrah. Yes, God does whack some people. Sometimes it’s all at once, and sometimes it’s a bit at a time, say with a sexually transmitted disease. Worse still, some victims of sexual sin also experience sickness, like my buddy who gave his wife herpes, and even death, like dudes who give their wives AIDS. However you go out, do you really wanna be the guy with a computer mouse in one hand scratching his itchy junk with his other hand standing before Jesus and scrambling to explain himself?

In 1 Corinthians 6:9–10, Paul says, “Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters . . . will inherit the kingdom of God.” Clearly, God takes the sexual sins of his men so seriously that men who remain enslaved to sexual sin will die in their sins and

wake up in the eternal torments of hell. Sure, the naked people you like looking at are hot . . . but so is hell.

My single point with all of these warnings from Scripture is to implore you to take any sexual sins you may have as seriously as your God does. Now that we have pointed our discussion of sexual sin in a God-ward direction, we are prepared to speak of the specific issues of pornography and masturbation that enslave so many of God's sons.



a theology of pornographic lust

As a new Christian in college, I remember having a conversation with another young Christian who frequently viewed pornography and told me that it was okay because he had examined the Bible thoroughly and never saw the word “pornography.” But, he conveniently missed the mountain of verses that speak about lust. This is typical among men who, as Paul says, want to suppress the truth so they can keep on sinning sexually (Rom. 1:18–24).

The purpose of pornography is clearly lust. And, lust for anyone but your wife is condemned by God as a grievous evil repeatedly throughout both the Old and New Testament (e.g., Prov. 6:25; Job 31:1; Matt. 5:28; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:5; 1 Pet. 4:3). The act of lust after the unclothed body of a woman is not a sin. The issue is which woman’s unclothed body you are lust after. If she is your bride, then you are simply making the Song of Songs sing again to God’s glory and your joy. If she is not your bride, then you are simply sinning.

It was God who clothed our mother Eve after her sin, and it is Eve’s daughters who undress themselves for the camera in violation of God’s desire that the female bodies he formed be seen only in their full glory by their husbands. Pornography is so enticing for men because there is a biological connection between a man’s eyes and his genitals that

causes men to be easily stimulated visually. Pornography has the sad effect of objectifying people into objects with parts, thereby divorcing a person from their body and consequently diminishing their dignity. One example of this are the frequent references by Tom Leykis, America's most popular talk radio show host for young men, to women as "toilets" where men go to leave their fluid.

Defining pornography is terribly difficult, as evidenced by the inability of our nation's Supreme Court to clearly articulate exactly what it is. For the purposes of our study, I do not necessarily include as pornographic such things as nude works of art or a romantic scene in a movie but acknowledge that a major-league pervert can get turned on by anything, as evidenced by the weirdo I knew who got off on the mating scenes of a nature channel. I do include such things as porno movies, magazines, web sites, online filthy sexual chat, trashy romance novels, phone sex with paid operators, explicit movies, lingerie catalogs, and even the swimsuit issues of sports magazines, anything else I have forgotten that some son of Adam finds titillating, and the increasingly base men's and women's magazines that show more skin than pornographic magazines did just a few generations ago.

The inclusion of these mainstream magazines may seem extreme in light of our crass culture. Still, we must remember that, in the early 1950s, no stores carried soft pornography; in the 1960s, Playboy was made available out of sight behind the counter; in the 1970s, Penthouse made it next to Playboy on the shelf; and today's decline has soft and hard pornography available on the magazine rack for perusing by children and adults who pick it up. In our increasingly brazen and desensitized culture, we have to be careful to not define pornography in terms of only harder forms while neglecting the softer forms. As an example, on an international flight I once took, movies with full nudity and sex scenes played on the headrest televisions around me while bored young children looked on. My point? Our culture is becoming increasingly sexualized and it has taken forty years to go from one dirty magazine under the counter at the local convenience store to today where it is expected that junior high boys have at least one nude shot of their junior high girlfriend on their cell phone.

The Bible is emphatically clear that God's men should abstain from certain sins that war against their souls. First, God's men should not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14). Second, God's men should not covet their neighbor's wife, even if her clothes leave little to the imagination (Ex. 20:17). Third, God's men should not participate with prostitutes who use their bodies as a commodity to be rented for a good time or a good photo (Prov. 23:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:15-16). Fourth, God's men should not be polygamous, because their father Adam and Head Jesus each had one bride (Eve and the Church). Fifth, God's men should not be fornicators who slide their hands, which God made to lift up in prayer (1 Tim. 2:8), up the shirt of their girlfriend, even if she asks (1 Cor. 6:9-13).

However, throughout history men have been prone to obey the letter of the law on these matters, while violating the spirit. The spirit of these Scriptures forbidding

sinful sexual practices includes the sins of the mind where men amass a harem rivaling Solomon's but only in their imaginations.

So, Jesus wisely taught that sexual sins are committed not only in what we do but also in what we think. For example, in Matthew 5:27–28, he taught, “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.” Also, in Mark 7:21–23, Jesus said, “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Thus, sexual sins are not “out there” in the media, strip club, or gal with low-rise jeans and hi-rise thong. Truly, the problem is “in you.” It is from the sinfulness of your heart that lust and sin proceed like sewage from a culvert. This is the painful, unvarnished truth.

The proliferation of modern counseling is ample evidence that there is much wrong with the human condition. There is an ongoing debate in our age regarding what qualifies as “normal” and “abnormal” behavior, diagnosing why some people behave “abnormally,” and prescribing a “cure” for those abnormalities. Speculative causes for “abnormal” behavior include the unconscious mind filled with primal urges (Sigmund Freud), a collective unconsciousness from our racial history (Carl Jung), our environmental (emotional and physical) conditioning, and lack of self-awareness of our inner goodness (Carl Rogers). All of this, however, is simply a more formalized attempt to, like our father Adam, blame someone or something else for our sin rather than owning it and repenting by having a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior.

In Scripture, however, Jesus is normal and the rest of us are abnormal sinners with indwelling sin. Our individual lives and the corresponding collective lives we call culture are simply the outward reflection of the inner condition of our hearts. The heart is the seat and center of our identities, the essence of our total inner selves that expresses itself outwardly in word and deed. This concept is central to the teachings of Scripture and “heart” and its various forms (e.g., “hearts,” “hard-hearted”) occur over nine hundred times. Practically, this all means that only you and God truly know your heart and, rather than trying to obey legalistic rules, you must be honest about the lusts in your heart and reduce those triggers that stimulate you.



a practical theology of pornographic lust

Genesis 2:22 explains the creation of Eve saying, “And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.” God made the earth and called it good, but even before sin entered the world God said it was not good for the man to be alone. So, God made Eve to be with the man as a lover, helper, and friend. Until that point, Adam had never seen a woman because one had not been formed by God’s hands. All that Adam had seen to that point in his life were aardvarks, sea bass, and other animals that would not look good in a wedding photo. Eve may or may not have been beautiful, but to Adam she was glorious because she was all he had ever known. Practically, he had no standard of beauty to compare his bride to—she was his only standard of beauty.

In creation, we see the wise pattern that for every man his standard of beauty is not to be objectified, but rather it should simply be his wife. This means that if a man has a tall, skinny red-headed wife then that is sexy for him, and if his neighbor has a short, curvy brunette wife then that is sexy for him. Pornographic lust exists to elicit coveting and dissatisfaction that no woman can satisfy because she cannot be tall and short, endowed and waifish, black and white, young and old, like the harem laid out in pornography.

The book of wisdom gives some wise counsel on having your wife as your standard of beauty. Proverbs 5:18–19 says, “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.” If a man fills his mind with images of other women’s breasts, he will never be satisfied with his wife’s and thereby diminish her confidence and his marriage.

Proverbs 27:20 says, “Sheol [Death] and Abaddon [Destruction] are never satisfied, and never satisfied are the eyes of man.” If we apply this principle to pornographic lust, it becomes apparent that seeing such smut is not going to satisfy your lust but rather inflame it for more images. Lusting eyes may begin with a magazine, web site, or video and continue to view more magazines, web sites, or videos until they become bored and then descend into strip clubs, prostitutes, and/or easy women, which eventually become boring and lead to orgies, voyeurism, exhibitionism, pedophilia, and wherever else a crooked human heart can venture. Don’t kid yourself. Sin is an onramp to death. If you get on it and don’t repent, turn around, and exit, you will find the landscape getting darker, grosser, filthier, and deadlier. You may even be one of the millions of men who murder their own children in the womb of their mother, as yet another sinful fool proving yet again that sin leads to death.

Proverbs 11:22 says, “Like a gold ring in a pig’s snout is a beautiful woman without discretion.” According to this truism, a woman with a hot body and no discretion regarding to whom she shows it is nothing more than a well-accessorized animal. This explains why the women men lust after are not the kind of women they would marry, because pigs are fun to roll around and get dirty with but you’d never want one sitting next to your mother for holiday dinners.

Proverbs 31:30 says, “Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.” A man who marries will find that eventually his wife’s beauty fades, as after birthing and breastfeeding your quiver-full, gravity and atrophy always win in the end. Consequently, if a man cannot embrace beauty as existing in his aging and changing wife, he will be yet another silly fool in the parade of horny and saggy perverted old men chasing young girls with a fistful of Viagra like Hugh Hefner.

Hebrews 13:4 says, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.” Men who believe they can look at naked women without those images being imbedded in their minds and haunting them in the marriage bed are fools. The worst case I am aware of personally is a guy who had to have magazine pictures of other women on the pillow next to his wife’s head when they had sex because he had so conditioned his body to be aroused by porn that he was no longer aroused by his wife. You do not want to be that guy, and you do not want your wife to be that woman. Further, since the sins of the fathers are often visited on their children, if you are a daddy, the next time you are

tempted, ask yourself if you want your sons to be that guy and your daughters to be that wife and you should experience an erection correction.

First Corinthians 7:4 says, “For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.” A married man does not own his body, but rather he is a steward of his body that belongs to his bride and his God. Every single man, likewise, is merely a steward of his body for his God, and eventually for his bride. Consequently, a man has no right to use his eyes to view pornographic lust because they are not his eyes. And if he plans on touching himself sexually, he should discuss it with his wife first since it is, after all, her body he is looking after.

First Timothy 3:2 says, “Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife [literally a “one-woman man”].” Since Hebrews 13:7 instructs God’s men to follow the life example of their leaders, the normative pattern of the church is men whose eyes and desires are directed solely toward their brides.

Lastly, 1 Timothy 5:1–2 says, “Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.” Men who view pornographic lust invariably see women as objects with parts and are incapable of being friendly and intimate with attractive young women because they cannot view such women in a non-sexual manner. If God’s men did view women as sisters, they would see the naked girls they lust after as beautiful sisters in need of dignity and grieve as if their little sister suddenly became a stripper.

This point hit home for me in a painful and personal way many years ago. While on a radio program a male caller was speaking about his enslavement to pornography and how he did not feel too badly about his sin because the women in his magazines were getting paid and probably had fun being sex objects. During the commercial break, a young woman from my church who was working for the show came in to say hello and ended up telling me her story. She explained that she had been repeatedly sexually abused by her uncle as a young girl and came to see herself as a dirty girl. She embraced her filth and became a very promiscuous young woman who had sex with older men. When she was old enough she began stripping at a seedy club and because of her beautiful body she made piles of money and was soon solicited by men for prostitution, which she obliged to make even greater sums of money. Since an older man had abused her for so many years, it made sense in her mind to at least pay her bills from the act. Eventually, she was offered a job as a porn star and began making adult films. But the entire industry was so sickening, degrading, and animalistic that she would get high and drunk before each movie shoot just to endure the violations. She then explained to me that none of this stopped until she met Jesus. As she spoke I couldn’t help but wonder if there were men from my church out renting her videos to take home and masturbate to without knowing that she would be sitting in church next to them and singing songs to Jesus the following Sunday. Indeed, God’s men should treat every woman in the same way we would treat our sisters



masturbation

At the risk of pointing out the obvious, pornography exists primarily for the purpose of masturbation. After all, if looking at a naked woman gives a man an erection, then using that erection is inevitable because having an erection without using that erection is not satisfying. Likewise, looking at pictures of good food is not enough to make a man's stomach feel full.

Women do watch porn, and women do masturbate. I have been in ministry long enough to know that sin is not confined to any one gender. But the purpose of my writing is for men. Masturbation is more widely practiced among men. In fact, no survey seems to have discovered any culture in which more women masturbate than men. This may, in part, be explained by the more convenient and visible external nature of male genitalia.

For the purposes of this booklet, I am defining masturbation as self-pleasuring oneself to erection and/or orgasm and ejaculation. What I am not counting as masturbation is the manual stimulation between married people whereby a husband and wife enjoy pleasuring one another's genitals, as taught in the Scriptures, either orally (Song 2:3; 4:12) or with their hands (Song 2:6). I am also not classifying as masturbation self-stimulation done with the blessing and in the presence of one's spouse. What a

married couple does together with a clear conscience is for their pleasure and freedom. What I am referring to by masturbation is self-pleasuring done in isolation that is usually also accompanied with unbiblical lust.

In any event, until recent years masturbation was widely regarded as a deviancy. However, times have certainly changed as it is now championed as normal and natural. Comedian Jerry Seinfeld may have summarized the modern opinion of masturbation best, saying, “We all have to do it. It’s part of our lifestyle, like shaving.”

The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior and Sex in America indicates that masturbation is frequent, as the following results show:

Single men who admit to masturbating once a week or more – 48%

Married men who admit to masturbating once a week or more – 44%

Divorced men who admit to masturbating once a week or more – 68%

Despite the widespread approval and practice of masturbation, people persist in feeling varying degrees of guilt about it. A 1994 University of Chicago survey used as the basis for the book *Sex in America* cites that about half of all men and women who masturbate feel at least a little guilty at least some of the time. The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior released in 1993 cited that just 13 percent of Protestants think masturbation is a natural part of adult life.

Many Christian pastors have tried in vain to find a mention of masturbation in the Scripture so they can condemn and forbid it. Unable to find any verses on the matter, some have foolishly used the story of Onan in Genesis 38:6–10 as their proof text. However, the story of Onan says nothing of masturbation. Instead, the story is about a man who died, leaving his wife a childless widow. The dead man’s brother was then expected to marry his widowed sister-in-law, have normal sexual relations with her, and enable her to have children. Although Onan was happy to have sex with his sister-in-law, he would pull out of her just prior to his orgasm and ejaculate on the ground rather than obey God and become a father. To argue against masturbation with Genesis 38:6–10 is as ludicrous as arguing for masturbation like one young guy did with me by quoting Ecclesiastes 9:10, which says, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might.”

Practical and Theological Reasons to Not Masturbate

The question remains, is it permissible for God’s men to masturbate? Yes, and no.

It must be noted that the Bible does not condemn masturbation outright. Though the practice is as old as the Scriptures, the Bible’s silence on the matter should cause us to avoid calling something a sin that God does not. So, we must examine the issue principally with the following questions:

Question #1 – Can you masturbate without lusting (Job 31:1)?

Question #2 – Can you masturbate in a way that builds oneness with your spouse, pulling you together more intimately through the act (Gen. 2:24)?

Question #3 – Can you masturbate without experiencing shame (Gen. 2:24)?

Question #4 – Can you masturbate with a clear conscience (Titus 1:15)?

Question #5 – Can you masturbate without capitulating to the cravings of your sinful desires and thoughts (Eph. 2:3)?

It is most certainly possible that a man could masturbate without violating these simple biblical principles, but highly unlikely. In addition, there are some additional practical reasons why it may not be wise for God's men to do so.

First, masturbation can be a form of homosexuality because it is a sexual act that does not involve a woman. If a man were to masturbate while engaged in other forms of sexual intimacy with his wife then he would not be doing so in a homosexual way. However, any man who does so without his wife in the room is bordering on homosexuality activity, particularly if he's watching himself in a mirror and being turned on by his own male body.

Second, masturbation is a form of monosexuality because it is sex that does not include another person. Since sex is given for such purposes as oneness (Gen. 2:24), intimate knowledge (Gen. 4:1), and comfort (2 Sam. 12:24), having sex with oneself seems to miss some of the significant biblical reasons for sexual intimacy.

Third, masturbation is often done in haste because of the mortifying embarrassment of possibly getting caught in the act. Subsequently, masturbation encourages a man to become a notorious minute-man who will not be well skilled in the self-control necessary to satisfy a wife.

Fourth, masturbation can establish a pattern of laziness. If a single man wants to have an orgasm, he needs to first become a man and undergo the hard work of courting and marrying a woman. If a married man wants to have an orgasm, he needs to first undergo the hard work of loving, leading, and romancing his wife. But, lazy men are prone to rub one out in the shower each morning rather than undergo the labors usually associated with responsible masculine married life.

Fifth, though masturbation is biblically permissible, the question remains whether or not it is beneficial for you (1 Cor. 10:23). God's men are quite divided on this matter, as many find it to be very beneficial to them before they are married, during seasons of their marriage when they are away from their wife, etc. Conversely, other men claim that masturbating is not beneficial for them because they become mastered by it and unable to keep it under control (1 Cor. 6:12). This is biologically caused by the fact that masturbating does temporarily relieve sexual urges and frustrations, but also causes greater and more frequent biological urges for additional ejaculations. Practically, as

the body emits semen it then quickly produces more so that supply can keep up with demand. So, a man who masturbates to ejaculation will find himself masturbating with increasing frequency as his body continues to demand more frequent relief, thus negating his original goal of masturbating to relieve sexual frustration.

Practical and Theological Reasons to Masturbate

Scripture does not forbid masturbation outright because there are some occasions in which it may be done in an acceptable and sinless way. To help you think through these possibilities I will share with you some questions that I have personally received in my pastoral counseling and the answers I have given. Some of the questions may seem too frank for many readers, but I am honored that the people in our church feel free to bring any personal question to their pastors because we would not want them to go anywhere else for answers.

Question: Sometimes when I go out of town on business, my wife slips nude photos of herself into my briefcase so that while I'm on the road I can call her to have phone sex while looking at her photos as we mutually masturbate. This really helps reduce my temptations on the road and is the best thing we can think of doing when we cannot be together. Is this okay? Or, could we privately iChat online and see one another and mutually masturbate that way when we are separated?

Answer: Nude images of your wife are redeemed images and providing she is agreeable to this arrangement I would encourage you to thank God for the freedom your wife enjoys with you. Practically, I would urge you to not allow any other people to see your wife to ensure a protection of her. Also, since you are considering using technology you need to be wise so that you do not end up as an oddity on the worldwide web. Since the purpose of sexual activity is oneness, your option is both creative and permissible because you are being as intimate as you can be when distance separates you.

Question: I am a single man who has a very strong sexual desire and do masturbate upon occasion to prevent a lack of self-control that would lead to lustful and sinful actions. When I masturbate I am not lustful, so is this okay?

Answer: First, I would encourage you to be working toward marriage since you are obviously not built by God to endure a life of singleness. Second, I would be very cautious in evaluating your heart since only you truly know if you are lustful when you masturbate. Third, it seems possible but unlikely to be sexually aroused without sexual thoughts; I guess you could think of tractors or something to divert yourself, which seems

peculiar but not evil. Fourth, I would be careful to ensure that your masturbation does not lead you into pornography and other sins if/when it becomes unsatisfying.

Question: Can my wife masturbate me?

Answer: Yes. During a menstrual cycle, following a pregnancy, when there is not sufficient time for lovemaking, etc., this can be a helpful option if the two of you are willing. Some married men also prefer to have a quick helping hand from their wife so they can settle into a long session of foreplay in which they concentrate on arousing their wife, which then climaxes with intercourse and the husband's second ejaculation.

Question: My wife and I are new Christians and we want to have sex according to the Bible but we're not sure what things we're allowed to do?

Answer: The Bible is, quite frankly, more liberated on the matter of sex than most Bible teachers. In the Song of Songs alone, we see the condoning of marital kissing (Song 1:2), a sexually aggressive wife (throughout the Song of Songs), a wife who likes to perform oral sex/fellatio (Song 2:3), masturbation performed on one spouse by another (Song 2:6, 5:4–6), massage and petting (Song 4:5), a wife who enjoys her husband performing oral sex/cunnilingus (Song 4:12–5:1), a wife who performs a striptease (Song 6:13b–7:9), a husband who enjoys his wife's breasts (Song 7:7–8), erotic conversation (throughout the book), and ongoing variety and creativity that includes new places and new positions such as lovemaking outdoors during a warm spring day (Song 7:11–13). The bottom line is don't sin, but have fun. Douglas Rosenau has also written *A Celebration of Sex* that would be a helpful read for you and your wife.

Question: Is it okay for a spouse to masturbate during the act of lovemaking?

Answer: Yes. The combination may heighten the degree of pleasure. For example, many wives cannot climax from normal intercourse but can climax from stimulation of their clitoris, which is not a point of contact during normal sexual intercourse. So, some wives enjoy also stimulating their clitoris while making love to their husbands to heighten their pleasure and many husbands report being very turned on by the freedom and enjoyment of their wife.

Question: Is it okay for my wife and I to masturbate ourselves if we are together and both turned on by it?

Answer: Yes. Providing this act does not replace normal intercourse and does not decrease your oneness, then it may be permissible. In particular, some couples have cited a number of reasons why this may be helpful. One husband and his wife do not have

intercourse during her menstrual cycle and so she cares for him during that time with masturbation. But, upon occasion she cannot bring him to climax and so he will do so while fondling her breasts so that the two of them are still participating. Some people report that their spouse simply has no idea how to stimulate their genitals and so they stimulate their own genitals in front of their spouse to teach them what they enjoy so that their spouse could then satisfy them. Some spouses also report that during heavy petting and/or deep massage they prefer to stimulate their own genitals while their spouse stimulates other erotic zones and enjoy watching their spouse simultaneously enjoy sexual stimuli from many places on their body.

Question: I am much hornier than my wife and need sex far more often than she does. She has gotten tired of me keeping her up at night to have sex when she is tired and so we have porno that I can look at and masturbate to when she's not in the mood. She's okay with this and we're wondering if it's a sin?

Answer: Yes, it is a sin. You should stop this practice immediately and throw out all of your pornography. You are lustng after women and committing adultery in your mind and your wife is depriving you, which is a sin (1 Cor. 7:3–5). Lastly, your wife's lack of interest is likely indicative of your failings as her husband to love and initiate with her outside of the bedroom. The key to your sex life is to address underlying problems you may be having. You need to work on your marriage.

Question: My wife wants sex more than I do, what should I do?

Answer: Don't tell your buddies or they will mock you incessantly for the rest of your life after staring at you blankly without blinking for about an hour in total silence. Do have sex with your wife as often as she likes and thank God.

Question: My wife and I watched pornography together a lot before we became Christians and imitated what we saw people doing on the television. We both really enjoy watching pornography and wonder if it is okay to continue watching pornography if we do it together and only have sex with each other?

Answer: No, you should not watch pornography because it is a sin of lust. Also, you do not want your lovely wife to think of herself as a whore. Since it is your job to wash her with the Word of God, cleansing her and making her holy, you should put down your dirty, defiling porn and pick up your Bible as the beginning point for your marital intimacy.

Question: My wife likes to masturbate me and wants to know how to get better at it, what should she do?

Answer: Lou Pagett (a non-Christian) has written a book called How To Be A Great Lover for women that includes a chapter with many alternatives for a helping hand that she may want to try. In addition, tell her what you do and do not like while she is experimenting so that she can learn through experience with you.



manly men

Why does all of this matter? I know some will undoubtedly be asking this question because it is important.

We live in a culture of hook up, shack up, break up. Men are marrying later and staying married shorter than ever. The average dude is not a dude but just a boy who can shave. Many Christian men are enslaved to pornographic lust and live in silent shame, which hinders their growth in Christ and service in ministry. Meanwhile, the number of Christian leaders making headlines because of sexual sin further stains the reputation of Jesus and undermines the credibility of his church.

Nevertheless, in 1 Corinthians 11:7, we are told that God's men are the glory of God shining forth into a perverted and dark world. You, as God's man, are not to be led around by naked whores and stiff erections like the pagans who do not know God. You need to memorize these words, "A man . . . is the image and glory of God." The next time you are out hunting or camping and sitting around a fire, take a long stick and put one end of it in the fire. When that end gets hot and glowing red from glorying in the fire until its heat and light are transferred to it, take it out and look at it. Remind yourself that when the Bible says you are the glory of God, it means that you are like that stick and supposed to draw near to the pure and powerful God who is your Father and radiate his heat and light to the world.

You are not an animal. You are the glory of God.
You are not a pervert. You are the glory of God.
You are not an addict. You are the glory of God.
You are not a victim. You are the glory of God.
You are not a fool. You are the glory of God.

Jesus, the god-man who radiated the Father's glory perfectly, has made it possible for you to be the glory of God. Jesus your King, Warrior, and Lord hung upon his cross in your place to atone for all of your sins, including sexual perversion (Col. 2:13–15). If you repent of your sin, Jesus will forgive you for it and cleanse you from it, thereby taking away your guilt, shame, defeat, and filth (1 John 1:9; Zech. 3:1–9).

As God's man, you will then be able to rise above your lusts, but not by works or self-willed deprivation. Instead, God's grace that alone saves you will also empower you to live life with Jesus and like Jesus. As Paul says in Titus 2:11–12, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age."

This grace enables us not merely to hide our sin, diminish our sin, justify our sin, or accept it as inevitable. Rather, God's grace enables us to put to death our sin so that we live dead to sin and alive to Christ where we were previously alive to sin and dead to Christ (Rom. 8:13–14).

Indeed, our God is Lord over all of our lives and helpful for the practical matters of what to do with our mouth, hands, and genitals. As God's men, we do not pursue this redemption and holiness solely for ourselves but also for God's mission to save and redeem the sea of lost men around us who are their own god and sin with their mouth, hands, and genitals.

My desire as a Christian pastor is to see churches raised up as communities of grace ruled by Jesus and led by his gloriously masculine men who work their jobs, eat their meat, drink their beer, romance their wives, study their Bible, and raise their kids in glory and joy (Jer. 29:4–7; Eccl. 9:7–10). The countercultural nature of the church stands in condemnation of all other false gods who cannot save, bless, or liberate. First Peter 2:11–12 details this grand vision saying, "Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation."

In 125 AD, Athenian philosopher Christian Aristides reported on the sexual practices of the Christian church to his king. He said, "They (Christians) do not commit adultery or immorality. . . . Their wives, O king, are as pure as virgins, and their daughters are modest. Their men abstain from all unlawful sexual contact and from impurity, in the hopes of recompense that is to come in another world."

In our sick day we pray that the local newspapers would give the same report about God's men and their wives and daughters under their loving leadership. Why? Because what you do with your eyes and your penis is not simply your business. If you belong to the Lord Jesus Christ then there is urgent kingdom and gospel business for you to be about and neither time or money for you to waste while standing on the sidelines with your pants around your ankles looking for a bottle of lotion.



answers to common questions

I have tried to lay a reasonable theological and practical framework for our discussion of pornography and masturbation. But, I know there are some men with lingering particular questions. To help answer those questions I will share my answers to some of the more common questions I receive from God's men on these matters.

Question: If I cannot stop looking at porno and masturbating, should I disconnect my Internet connection and get some roommates to live with for accountability?

Answer: Again, the problem is in your heart and not in your Internet provider. Paul is clear in Colossians 2:20–23 that legalistic man-made rules may sound helpful but in the end are worthless in restraining sin because they only address outward behaviors while neglecting inward causes. It may be wise for some men to not have cable television or an unfiltered internet provider, but unless their heart changes, they will simply rearrange the flesh and stop one sin to begin another, such as being proud of their morality once they have stopped looking at porno. Whatever you do, begin with your heart.

Question: Is it a sin to have a wet dream?

Answer: Men who have erotic dreams must first be sure that they are not spending their days filling their minds with images that rattle around their imagination as they dream at

night. They should also pray before they sleep each night that God would protect them from the enemy inside of them (their flesh) and the enemy outside of them (the devil). But, if a man should have a wet dream after taking precautions to not lust, there is little he can do to prevent this from happening. For some men, a wet dream is simply the body's way of relieving itself and may be little more than a natural biological function.

Question: Is it a sin to notice that a woman is beautiful?

Answer: No. Genesis 12:10–14 says that Sarai was beautiful, despite the fact that she was quite old. Some women are lovely and to recognize this fact is, in itself, not a sin. However, recognizing a woman's beauty does become a sin when a man lusts after that beautiful woman and begins to undress her in his mind.

Question: What can I do to stop being sexually tempted?

Answer: Hebrews 4:15 tells us that Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, yet he did not sin. Because Jesus was a fully human virgin male, we can safely assume that some of the temptations he faced were sexual in nature. But Jesus never gave into those temptations and is our sinless and perfect God. So, it is not a sin to be tempted, but it is a sin to give into temptation. We must accept that in a fallen and sinful world, we will continually face varying kinds of sexual temptation but must learn, like Joseph, to run from it.

Question: At what age should a father speak to his son about these issues?

Answer: A Christian father should be the first person to speak with his son about these issues. The best age to discuss these matters varies from son to son but if a father is going to error he should error on the side of bringing up the matter too soon rather than too late. Simply, ensuring the lines of communication are open and honest between a father and son is paramount. A father must vigilantly remain aware of the questions and curiosities of his son(s) and speak with frank and masculine biblical wisdom like the dad in Proverbs. Lastly, a godly father should never shame or embarrass his son while speaking on this subject, but treat him as an emerging fellow man. As a general rule, since the average son sees his first porn by age eleven, by age ten a father should start speaking to his son about sexual issues as the beginning point for an ongoing dialogue. This conversation needs to be ongoing and not a one-time event.

Question: When I get married won't that cure my lust problems?

Answer: No. Satan did not even show up to tempt Adam until he had a wife. Many men simply kill their sexuality before marriage and once they are married, their desires awaken in full force. Consequently, once you have been married long enough to learn how to please a woman and be adventurous, you will likely find your desires for sexual sin increase rather than decrease, unless you have disciplined yourself to channel all of those desires solely to your wife.

Question: Should I tell my wife if I look at pornography and/or masturbate?

Answer: Yes, you are sinning against her and your sin is affecting other aspects of your marriage and causing her to suffer, though she may not know why. Right now your sin is growing because it is hiding in darkness, and by confessing it to her and asking for her forgiveness you will be bringing it into the light, where it can be forgiven and healed. When you do confess to your wife, please be careful to not blame her for your sin, but accept responsibility as the head of your home for your condition and the condition of your home.

Question: Isn't looking at porno and masturbating an acceptable alternative to adultery or divorce if sex with my wife is terrible, infrequent, and/or unsatisfying?

Answer: First Corinthians 11:7 says that your wife is a reflection of your leadership. If your sex life is not satisfying, then it is your responsibility whether or not it is entirely your fault because you are the head of your wife (Eph. 5:23). Therefore, rather than excusing your sin, you should repent of your sin and the condition of your home and seek counsel from your pastor(s) and/or professional Christian counselor(s) on how to be about redemption, like Jesus, rather than blame-shifting, like Adam.



8

pornography and the slippery slope of ted bundy

If you are the guy who at this point somehow still considers himself the exception to every rule who's able to manage his sexual sin, this next section should get your attention. Former Seattleite and graduate of the University of Washington, Ted Bundy became one of the nation's most notorious and feared serial killers for beating, raping, and then murdering at least thirty girls and women between the ages of twelve and twenty-six. Shortly before he was executed, Bundy was interviewed by Christian leader James Dobson. Shockingly, Bundy admitted that he possessed none of the normal triggers for such sinful behavior, as he was raised in a loving Christian home with five siblings and did not experience any sexual abuse growing up. Rather, he confessed in clear detail how as a young boy he began, as most boys do, viewing common pornography, which grew into increasingly harder and more deviant forms of pornography that eventually led to his acting out his evil fantasies. Quoted below is an edited transcript of the conversation that occurred just seventeen hours before Ted was led to the electric chair. I trust that it will be a sobering reminder to my Christian brothers that the sin of lust is an insatiable parasite that you must not feed, lest it grow and lead to death.

James C. Dobson: It is about 2:30 in the afternoon. You are scheduled to be executed tomorrow morning at 7:00, if you don't receive another stay. What is going through your mind? What thoughts have you had in these last few days?

Ted: I won't kid you to say it is something I feel I'm in control of or have come to terms with. It's a moment-by-moment thing. Sometimes I feel very tranquil and other times I don't feel tranquil at all. What's going through my mind right now is to use the minutes and hours I have left as fruitfully as possible. It helps to live in the moment, in the essence that we use it productively. Right now I'm feeling calm, in large part because I'm here with you.

JCD: For the record, you are guilty of killing many women and girls.

Ted: Yes, that's true.

JCD: How did it happen? Take me back. What are the antecedents of the behavior that we've seen? You were raised in what you consider to be a healthy home. You were not physically, sexually or emotionally abused.

Ted: No. And that's part of the tragedy of this whole situation. I grew up in a wonderful home with two dedicated and loving parents, as one of 5 brothers and sisters. We, as children, were the focus of my parent's lives. We regularly attended church. My parents did not drink or smoke or gamble. There was no physical abuse or fighting in the home. I'm not saying it was "Leave it to Beaver", but it was a fine, solid Christian home. I hope no one will try to take the easy way out of this and accuse my family of contributing to this. I know, and I'm trying to tell you as honestly as I know how, what happened.

As a young boy of 12 or 13, I encountered, outside the home, in the local grocery and drug stores, softcore pornography. Young boys explore the sideways and byways of their neighborhoods, and in our neighborhood, people would dump the garbage. From time to time, we would come across books of a harder nature - more graphic. This also included detective magazines, etc., and I want to emphasize this. The most damaging kind of pornography - and I'm talking from hard, real, personal experience - is that that involves violence and sexual violence. The wedding of those two forces - as I know only too well - brings about behavior that is too terrible to describe.

JCD: Walk me through that. What was going on in your mind at that time?

Ted: Before we go any further, it is important to me that people believe what I'm saying. I'm not blaming pornography. I'm not saying it caused me to go out and do certain things. I take full responsibility for all the things that I've done. That's not the question here. The issue is how this kind of literature contributed and helped mold and shape the kinds of violent behavior.

JCD: It fueled your fantasies.

Ted: In the beginning, it fuels this kind of thought process. Then, at a certain time, it is instrumental in crystallizing it, making it into something that is almost a separate entity inside.

JCD: You had gone about as far as you could go in your own fantasy life, with printed material, photos, videos, etc., and then there was the urge to take that step over to a physical event.

Ted: Once you become addicted to it, and I look at this as a kind of addiction, you look for more potent, more explicit, more graphic kinds of material. Like an addiction, you keep craving something which is harder and gives you a greater sense of excitement, until you reach the point where the pornography only goes so far - that jumping off point where you begin to think maybe actually doing it will give you that which is just beyond reading about it and looking at it.

JCD: How long did you stay at that point before you actually assaulted someone?

Ted: A couple of years. I was dealing with very strong inhibitions against criminal and violent behavior. That had been conditioned and bred into me from my neighborhood, environment, church, and schools.

I knew it was wrong to think about it, and certainly, to do it was wrong. I was on the edge, and the last vestiges of restraint were being tested constantly, and assailed through the kind of fantasy life that was fueled, largely, by pornography.

JCD: Do you remember what pushed you over that edge? Do you remember the decision to "go for it"? Do you remember where you decided to throw caution to the wind?

Ted: It's a very difficult thing to describe - the sensation of reaching that point where I knew I couldn't control it anymore. The barriers I had learned as a child were not enough to hold me back from seeking out and harming somebody.

JCD: Would it be accurate to call that a sexual frenzy?

Ted: That's one way to describe it - a compulsion, a building up of this destructive energy. Another fact I haven't mentioned is the use of alcohol. In conjunction with my exposure to pornography, alcohol reduced my inhibitions and pornography eroded them further.

JCD: After you committed your first murder, what was the emotional effect? What happened in the days after that?

Ted: Even all these years later, it is difficult to talk about. Reliving it through talking about it is difficult to say the least, but I want you to understand what happened. It was like coming out of some horrible trance or dream. I can only liken it to (and I don't want to overdramatize it) being possessed by something so awful and alien, and the next morning waking up and remembering what happened and realizing that, in the eyes of the law, and certainly in the eyes of God, you're responsible. To wake up in the morning and realize what I had done with a clear mind, with all my essential moral and ethical feelings intact, absolutely horrified me.

JCD: You hadn't known you were capable of that before?

Ted: There is no way to describe the brutal urge to do that, and once it has been satisfied, or spent, and that energy level recedes, I became myself again. Basically, I was a normal person. I wasn't some guy hanging out in bars, or a bum. I wasn't a pervert in the sense that people look at somebody and say, "I know there's something wrong with him." I was a normal person. I had good friends. I led a normal life, except for this one, small but very potent and destructive segment that I kept very secret and close to myself. Those of us who have been so influenced by violence in the media, particularly pornographic violence, are not some kind of inherent monsters. We are your sons and husbands. We grew up in regular families. Pornography can reach in and snatch a kid out of any house today. It snatched me out of my home 20 or 30 years ago. As diligent as my parents were, and they were diligent in protecting their children, and as good a Christian home as we had, there is no protection against the kinds of influences that are loose in a society that tolerates....

JCD: Outside these walls, there are several hundred reporters that wanted to talk to you, and you asked me to come because you had something you wanted to say. You feel that hardcore pornography, and the door to it, softcore pornography, is doing untold damage to other people and causing other women to be abused and killed the way you did.

Ted: I'm no social scientist, and I don't pretend to believe what John Q. Citizen thinks about this, but I've lived in prison for a long time now, and I've met a lot of men who were motivated to commit violence. Without exception, every one of them was deeply involved in pornography - deeply consumed by the addiction. The F.B.I.'s own study on serial homicide shows that the most common interest among serial killers is pornography. It's true.

JCD: What would your life have been like without that influence?

Ted: I know it would have been far better, not just for me, but for a lot of other people - victims and families. There's no question that it would have been a better life. I'm absolutely certain it would not have involved this kind of violence.

JCD: If I were able to ask the kind of questions that are being asked, one would be, "Are you thinking about all those victims and their families that are so wounded? Years later, their lives aren't normal. They will never be normal. Is there remorse?"

Ted: I know people will accuse me of being self-serving, but through God's help, I have been able to come to the point, much too late, where I can feel the hurt and the pain I am responsible for. Yes. Absolutely! During the past few days, myself and a number of investigators have been talking about unsolved cases - murders I was involved in. It's hard to talk about all these years later, because it revives all the terrible feelings and thoughts that I have steadfastly and diligently dealt with - I think successfully. It has been reopened and I have felt the pain and the horror of that. I hope that those who I have caused so much grief, even if they don't believe my expression of sorrow, will believe what I'm saying now; there are those loose in their towns and communities, like me, whose dangerous impulses are being fueled, day in and day out, by violence in the media in its various forms - particularly sexualized violence. What scares me is when I see what's on cable T.V. Some of the violence in the movies that come into homes today is stuff they wouldn't show in X-rated adult theatres 30 years ago.

JCD: The slasher movies?

Ted: That is the most graphic violence on screen, especially when children are unattended or unaware that they could be a Ted Bundy; that they could have a predisposition to that kind of behavior.

JCD: One of the final murders you committed was 12-year-old Kimberly Leach. I think the public outcry is greater there because an innocent child was taken from a playground. What did you feel after that? Were they the normal emotions after that?

Ted: I can't really talk about that right now. It's too painful. I would like to be able to convey to you what that experience is like, but I won't be able to talk about that. I can't begin to understand the pain that the parents of these children and young women that I have harmed feel. And I can't restore much to them, if anything. I won't pretend to, and I don't even expect them to forgive me. I'm not asking for it. That kind of forgiveness is of God; if they have it, they have it, and if they don't, maybe they'll find it someday.

JCD: Do you deserve the punishment the state has inflicted upon you?

Ted: That's a very good question. I don't want to die; I won't kid you. I deserve, certainly, the most extreme punishment society has. And I think society deserves to be protected from me and from others like me. That's for sure. What I hope will come of our discussion is that I think society deserves to be protected from itself. As we have been talking, there are forces at loose in this country, especially this kind of violent pornography, where, on one hand, well-meaning people will condemn the behavior of a Ted Bundy while they're walking past a magazine rack full of the very kinds of things that send young kids down the road to being Ted Bundys. That's the irony. I'm talking about going beyond retribution, which is what people want with me. There is no way in the world that killing me is going to restore those beautiful children to their parents and correct and soothe the pain. But there are lots of other kids playing in streets around the country today who are going to be dead tomorrow, and the next day, because other young people are reading and seeing the kinds of things that are available in the media today.

JCD: There is tremendous cynicism about you on the outside, I suppose, for good reason. I'm not sure there's anything you could say that people would believe, yet you told me (and I have heard this through our mutual friend, John Tanner) that you have accepted the forgiveness of Jesus Christ and are a follower and believer in Him. Do you draw strength from that as you approach these final hours?

Ted: I do. I can't say that being in the Valley of the Shadow of Death is something I've become all that accustomed to, and that I'm strong and nothing's bothering me. It's no fun. It gets kind of lonely, yet I have to remind myself that every one of us will go through this someday in one way or another.

JCD: It's appointed unto man.

Ted: Countless millions who have walked this earth before us have gone through this, so this is just an experience we all share.

Ted Bundy was executed at 7:15 am the day after this conversation was recorded.

In closing, sin leads to death. Jesus died for your sin. You are in a war. Be a man. Put your sin to death.



appendix

A Final Word to Military Men and Other Men Who Like Prostitutes - by Justin Holcomb

I know that there are many men in the military who tune in to my sermons and read what I post online. It is a great honor to serve those who are serving us and enabling the freedoms we enjoy. Some of my favorite emails have come from those soldiers deployed overseas who are having Mars Hill services in their tents on the field of battle by gathering around a laptop to watch a video of one of my sermons.

A lot of the soldiers contact us about their struggle with the prevalent pornography that surrounds them and I hope this simple booklet is of some help. Some male soldiers have also reported great temptations to pay prostitutes and engage in sinful sex of various sorts and kinds. I want to share with you some insights to help give you tempted men God's heart for the women whom you will find appealing unless you see them through Jesus' eyes. To help me with this project I had my Christian brother Justin Holcomb, who teaches on these issues at the University of Virginia, compile some information for you. He also serves as a pastor at his church and teaches at Reformed Theological Seminary. His wife, Lindsey Holcomb, has a Master's in International Public Health and

works at a sexual assault crisis center. They are both very informed and active regarding issues involving prostitution and the sex trade. The remainder of this appendix is his gift to you, with my closing comments at the end.

Sex Slavery

Over the past three decades the world has witnessed four distinct waves of trafficking for sexual exploitation.¹ The first wave of trafficked women came from Southeast Asia in the 1970s and was composed mostly of Thai and Filipino women. The second wave arrived in the early 1980s and was made up of women from Africa, mainly Ghana and Nigeria. The third wave, from Latin America, followed right behind and was comprised of women mostly from Colombia, Brazil, and the Dominican Republic. The newest wave is from Eastern and Central Europe. Just a decade ago these women did not even register in the sex trafficking radar screen. Today they represent more than 25 percent of the trade.

There is a wall of complacency, complicity, and corruption that has allowed this trade to explode recently. Sex trafficking runs by the laws of supply and demand. Demand is generated by thousands of men. Economic, social, cultural, and gender factors make women and girls vulnerable to being exploited as an endless supply.²

The international political economy of sex not only includes the supply side—the women of the third world, the poor states, or exotic Asian women—but it cannot maintain itself without the demand from the organizers of the trade—the men from industrialized and developing countries. The patriarchal world system hungers for and sustains the international subculture of docile women from underdeveloped countries. These women are forced or lured into the trade of providing international sexual services. Men accept this world order as well, regardless of their background. The world that is so satisfying to too many men is the same world that is utterly devastating to too many women and girls.

How Are Women Procured?

The Trafficking in Person Report is an annual report that serves as the primary diplomatic tool through which the U.S. Government encourages partnership and increased determination in the fight against forced labor, sexual exploitation, and modern-day slavery. In the 2008 report, these true stories were documented:

Lila, a 19-year-old Romanian girl who had already endured physical and sexual abuse from her alcoholic father, was introduced by an “acquaintance” to a man who offered her a job as a housekeeper/salesperson in the U.K. When she arrived in the

U.K., the man sold her to a pimp and Lila was forced into prostitution. She was threatened that she would be sent home in pieces if she did not follow every order. After an attempted escape, her papers were confiscated and the beatings became more frequent and brutal. Months later, after being re-trafficked several times, Lila was freed in a police raid. She was eventually repatriated back to Romania where, after two months, she fled from a shelter where she had been staying. Her whereabouts are unknown.

Nineteen-year-old So-Young stands at less than five feet tall after being chronically malnourished in North Korea. A refugee, she crossed illegally into China with hopes of a better life, but found instead a nightmare of sexual exploitation. An “employer” offered her approximately \$1.40 per day in exchange for work—money that So-Young planned on sending back to her family. Deceived by this empty promise, So-Young spent the next several months being passed between handlers. Just days before she was to be purchased by a forty-year-old Chinese man, So-Young managed to escape with the help of a local pastor. Three years later, she was forcibly repatriated to North Korea where she was imprisoned for six months before escaping once more to China. Traffickers kidnapped her once again, repeatedly raping her prior to her sale. Her new “husband” also raped her multiple times before she was able to escape. So-Young remains in hiding today: “There are many people coming out of North Korea, but they don’t have anywhere to go and no other choice but to go that route [into China].”

Samya lived with her mother, step-father and three brothers in a small Cairo apartment. When her step-father raped her, she ran away from home and started living on the streets at the age of 14. She met a group of street kids who, like her, had fled abuse at home. After two months on the streets begging for food and avoiding harassment from police, she met Shouq, an older lady who allowed some of the street girls to stay with her. The first night Samya stayed at Shouq’s apartment, Shouq told her she would have to earn her keep by having sex with male clients for the equivalent of \$16. Samya, afraid to live on the streets and fearful of returning home, had sex with several men a day for nearly one year; Shouq kept all of the money.

Kunthy and Chanda were trafficked into prostitution at ages 13 and 14. Held captive in a dilapidated structure in Phnom Penh that locals called the “Anarchy Building,” the girls were raped nightly and routinely beaten, drugged, and threatened by the brothel-keeper and pimps. The girls were released thanks to police intervention and placed in safe aftercare homes. The brothel owner and pimp were prosecuted, tried, and sentenced to 15 and 10 years in prison, respectively, for trafficking and pimping children. Today, Chanda lives in a local aftercare home where she receives excellent care; she wants to become an English translator. Kunthy’s dream is to own an Internet café and design Web sites for businesses. Right

now, she works at a local NGO, attends a computer training school, and lives in a transitional housing facility that allows her both freedom and security.

Mary, a young Kenyan woman, met a German tourist in his late sixties at a beach resort and he impressed her with presents and pampering. After departing Kenya, he convinced her to visit him in Germany, but immediately upon her arrival he confiscated her passport and forced her into prostitution. “He raped me, as did the men I was forced to pick at the bar.” Lucy’s health then deteriorated. “I knew it was time to escape—or risk death trying.” Fortunately, Lucy was able to gain access to a telephone and seek help from German police who then rescued her from her trafficker.

Women do not sign up for sexual slavery. Most girls were recruited or coerced into prostitution. Others were “traditional wives” without job skills who escaped from or were abandoned by abusive fathers or husbands and went into prostitution to support themselves and their children.³ There are numerous ways that women are procured for the sex trade. Below are the most prevalent:⁴

1. Bogus recruiters offer prospective job seekers a “complete package” for positions abroad. These offers don’t require prior work experience, and they almost always seek young, preferably single, women. These arrangements often include training, travel documents, and airfare, at no cost to the applicant. In 95 percent of these cases, the promised job does not exist.
2. Ads are placed in seemingly legitimate employment agencies. Some set up “career day” booths at universities and offer “contracts.” These firms are nothing more than hunting grounds for criminal networks involved in the sex industry.
3. Relatives, neighbors, or acquaintances can gain trust and approach a young woman or her family with an offer to help her land a job abroad. These culprits include teachers, orphanage workers, police officers and their wives, etc.
4. Other trafficked women lure in new women. Sometimes this is the only way for the old ones to escape. Sometimes pimps give them the option of going home if they can reel in a certain number of other women.
5. Sometimes family members (parents, siblings, spouses, etc.) sell women or girls into sex slavery.
6. New boyfriends also lure women by promising a night out and then force them into waiting vehicles to sell them to pimps or traffickers.

7. Outright abduction is one of the most terrifying. Women and girls are simply taken while walking home from school or work.
8. The most horrible is the targeting of orphans. Many girls are at risk when they must leave the orphanage when they graduate at sixteen or seventeen. Most have no resources or funds for living expenses or any education or training to get a job. Traffickers often know when these girls are going to be turned out of the institution and are waiting for them with job offers. Sometimes girls are even purchased from orphanage workers.
9. Drugs also play a role in procuring and keeping women. Some women are involved in sexual exploitation because they need money for their addiction. But many are forced drugs to make them compliant and to incapacitate them.

It is important to note that not every woman is an innocent dupe. In fact, police and government officials often go to great lengths to stress that some of these women willingly enter the trade. In their eyes, this so-called willingness justifies their apathy and indifference. Nothing could be further from the truth. Even the “willing” women have no idea of what really awaits. It’s true that many women know full well when they accept a job offer that they’ll be working in some aspect of the sex industry—massage parlors, strip clubs, peep shows, and escort agencies. The vast number of women are not aware of the nature or conditions of the work that awaits them. Women are told they will earn \$5,000 a month, live in luxury, have three days off, and be able to pick their clients. Also, the “contracts” they sign are for three months, after which time, they are told they are free to leave.

Most women are put into debt bondage, unable to pay off the high interest rate their pimp charges them. They are sold in markets, raped, forced to service ten to thirty men a day, can’t refuse any paying customer, are given no sick days and no days off for their periods, get pregnant, acquire HIV and other STDs or medical and psychological problems, and experience constant abuse and frequent gang rapes.

Customers of these women are sex tourists, U.N. peacekeeper and international humanitarian aid workers, U.S. military men, and local men in the area. The presence of these “mongers” has provided a valuable, readymade market for local brothel keepers trading in trafficked women.

“Breaking” the Women

In secret training centers, thugs snap the spirit and will of their terrified hostages. Women are quickly raped, often a few times. Their travel documents are taken and their

activities are tightly controlled and restricted. They are locked in their rooms where they “work” and are under constant guard. They are warned that if they attempt escape they will be severely punished. And they are told that if they do escape their families are targeted. Often, they are videotaped or photographed in embarrassing sexual encounters, and warned that if they escape, the pictures will be sent to their families and hometowns. One woman forced into sex slavery shares her story:

There were many women in this one apartment. Some were crying. Others looked terrified. We were told not to speak to each other. Not to tell each other our names or where we were from. All the time, very mean and ugly men came in and dragged girls into the rooms. Sometimes they would rape girls in front of us. They yelled at them, ordering them to move certain ways . . . to pretend excitement . . . to moan. . . . It was sickening. Those who resisted were beaten. If they did not cooperate, they were locked in dark cellars with rats with no food or water for three days. One girl refused to submit to anal sex, and that night the owner brought in five men. They held her on the floor and every one of them had anal sex on her in front of us all. She screamed and screamed, and we all cried. That girl killed herself the next day.⁵

After women are beaten and threatened, they are sold to brothel and bar owners that service the huge numbers of foreigners who make up sex tourists, international peacekeeping forces, and U.S. military men. The level of physical violence and psychological intimidation used to control these women is deliberate and extreme. It's meant to instill fear—to crush them, destroy their will, and force them to comply. Some women have been mutilated and murdered as punishment for refusing to engage in the sex trade. Some are killed as examples to other women. In short, women are forced to do whatever it takes with whoever pays, and they are forced to do it with a smile on their face, a sparkle in their eye, and a moan on their lips. But all this is done because they will be killed and discarded if they do not.

Organized Crime and Corruption

In source countries, illegal trafficking is fueled by a desperate need for a better life. In the destination countries, it is driven by an insatiable, self-indulgent appetite for purchased sex, much too often by U.S. military men and transnational businessmen. The force that brings them together is organized crime, notorious for acting swiftly to attractive market forces.⁶

It is a booming industry, run with ruthless efficiency by powerful, multinational criminal networks. These are not casual criminals. Women are bought, sold, and hired

out like any other product. The bottom line is profit. Trade in human beings earns up to \$12 billion worldwide.

The groups are Russian organized crime, Italian mafia, Colombian drug cartels, Chinese triads, and the Japanese yakuza. These groups are expanding worldwide, and sometimes join forces when it comes to sex slavery because the profits are too high to not work together.

When organized crime groups are not trafficking women, corrupt government officials have their hands out for bribes or pants down for sex. There are numerous examples of corrupt police officers, judges, civil authorities, and government officials helping brothel owners continue in their business. There is just too much money to be made.

Traffickers use bribes—money or free sex—to entice police and officials to look the other way, to gain protection, and to circumvent borders. Complicity not only guarantees impunity for traffickers; it sends a message to trafficked women that their traffickers enjoy impunity and that they cannot escape.

U.S. Military and Prostitution

Militarized prostitution develops around foreign U.S. military bases. Militarized prostitution is seen as providing for the sexual needs of the soldier, rationalized in different ways as “boys will be boys,” maintaining morale, and rewarding long overseas service.

At first glance, the rape of women by warring soldiers may seem unconnected to soldiers’ use of prostitutes for R&R away from combat. But they have much more in common than one might think. First, war rape and recreational military prostitution both occur within the context and under the auspices of militaristic structures. Moreover, both rape and use of prostitutes are thought to be inevitable, if not normal, behavior of warring soldiers. Military leaders recognize that soldiers will rape women during warfare. It has happened in every war since the beginning of time. Rape is a weapon in warfare. The expectation of rape was captured succinctly by General George Patton during WWII, when he told an aide that in spite of efforts to thwart it, “there would unquestionably be some raping” by American GIs.⁷ R&R prostitution is often condoned under the assumption that providing soldiers access to prostitutes will reduce wartime raping—when, in reality, the two are complementary.

Militarized prostitution for R&R rewards soldiers away from the battlefield by giving them sexual access to and use of others’ women. Because access to women after a battle has been a traditional reward of war, it is impossible to discuss rape in warfare without touching also on prostitution, since the two have been linked in history. Not that if prostitutes are not readily available men will turn to rape “to satisfy their needs,” but

that the two acts—raping an unwilling woman and buying the body and services of a more or less cooperating women—go hand in hand with a soldier’s concept of his rights and pleasure.

Militaries have been instrumental in ensuring soldiers access to prostitution across time and cultures. The extent to which military leadership has been proactive in or supportive of the organization of prostitution during modern wars has varied. By the time of WWII, some military leaders had determined that prostitution was too important to their soldiers to be left to develop on its own. In fact, the U.S. military thought back on WWI, when prostitution for its troops was available, but not regulated, and STD infection rates among GIs were high. In WWII and thereafter, the U.S. military took a more proactive role in organizing and regulating prostitution for its troops.

The organization of prostitution close to military bases and installations has resulted in the evolution of prostitution economies in towns or areas nearby. During war or war threat, the demand for prostitutes is met by trafficking women to those areas near U.S. bases. When troops leave, prostitution towns lose their customer base and move the women elsewhere.

Demand for prostitution is virtually always high when and where men gather collectively for war, as well as for peacekeeping and other kinds of work and play. In the last half of the twentieth century, it has been the buildup of organized military prostitution for soldiers’ R&R that has set the stage for a country or city’s sex industrialization. Once a prostitution economy has become firmly rooted in a town or country (because of the presence of the U.S. military), sex trade entrepreneurs move in to either share in or take over the industry. Given the military customer base in poor countries with poor women, sex industries flourish. And as demand begins to outstrip supply, the trafficking of women into prostitution goes global.

Most Prostitution Is Trafficking

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act defines “severe forms of trafficking” as:

- a. *Sex trafficking* in which a *commercial sex act* is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age; or
- b. The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another in order for the crime to fall within these definitions. *Sex trafficking* means the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. *Commercial sex act* means any sex act on account of which anything of value is given to or received by any person.

Coercion means (a) threats of serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; (b) any scheme, plan or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that failure to perform an act would result in serious harm to or physical restraint against any person; or, (c) the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

Involuntary servitude includes a condition of servitude induced by means of (a) any scheme, plan, or pattern intended to cause a person to believe that, if that person did not enter into or continue in such condition, that person or another person would suffer serious harm or physical restraint; or (b) the abuse or threatened abuse of the legal process.

Debt-Bondage—A common scenario in labor trafficking cases is for traffickers to promise people a good job, even benefits, in order to lure them to a new workplace. Then, the traffickers add arbitrary debt as a tool of coercion. A similar debt scheme is increasingly used to enslave women and girls in prostitution throughout the world.

Many women trafficked into prostitution report a never-ending cycle of debt—first they are charged exorbitant fees for the cost of transportation, then daily expenses are frequently added and mount up exponentially. Many women trafficked into prostitution receive no money from pimps or brothel owners. This becomes a cycle of entrapment.

In the United Kingdom, according to a leading NGO, brothel keepers and traffickers force some victims to pay debts that could range as high as \$39,000 to \$78,000. Commenting on patterns of abuse in prostitution of East European women in London, Detective Inspector Dick Powell from Scotland Yard told the *Guardian*, “Some women have sex with as many as 40 men a day. It’s very rare for her to get to keep any of the money she earns. We’ve seen places where 300 pounds (\$580) a day goes to the brothel pimp or ‘madam,’ and that’s even before the woman begins to try and pay off the ‘debt bondage’ of thousands of pounds charged to bring her here.” Often, the debt can never be repaid because costs for food, rent, medicines, and condoms are added every day.

Sex trafficking is considered the largest specific subcategory of transnational modern-day slavery. Sex trafficking would not exist without the demand for commercial sex flourishing around the world.

Prostitution and related activities—including pimping and patronizing or maintaining brothels—encourage the growth of modern-day slavery by providing a façade behind which traffickers for sexual exploitation operate. Where prostitution is tolerated, there is a greater demand for human trafficking victims and always an increase in the number of women and children trafficked into commercial sex slavery.

Conclusion

In conclusion, there are three myths that need to be challenged.

The first myth is that prostitution is a victimless crime. The mongers who buy prostitutes spew the myths that women choose prostitution, that they get rich, that it's glamorous, and that it turns women on. Studies show that most women in prostitution, including those working for escort services, have been sexually abused as children. Incest sets young women up for prostitution. Prostitution statistics show that 90 percent of young women involved in prostitution were sexually abused as children. An estimated 80 to 90 percent of young women in the criminal or juvenile justice system have been physically or sexually abused. The average age of entry into prostitution is thirteen. Whether the woman is in a hotel room or on a side street in someone's car, whether she's in New York or Bangladesh, the Philippines or Germany, the experience of being prostituted causes her immense psychological and physical harm. And it all starts with the buyer.

The second myth is the myth of "consensual" or "willing" sex. Young women and children have fled towards cities in an attempt to escape from the harshest, grinding poverty. Poverty had forced them into unfavorable unions. There is a non-voluntary aspect to their sexual activity. Under the weight of devastating poverty, one wonders what to make of the notion of "consensual sex." Few women seek out or choose to be in prostitution, and most are desperate to leave it. A 2003 scientific study in the Journal of Trauma Practice found that 89 percent of women in prostitution want to escape prostitution but had no other options for survival.

The third myth is that this is a "women's problem." Prostitution and sex trafficking are not women's problems or up to them to solve. Men are the perpetrators and women are the victims. Men are the problem. Sex trafficking is a men's issue involving men of all ages and socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Men are not only perpetrators or possible offenders, but also empowered bystanders who can confront abusive peers. Don't remain silent.

In closing, to my Christian brothers in the military, you need to know that you work for the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. His name is Jesus and he sees and knows all. He has commissioned you to bring his shalom to the world and be an agent of justice and righteousness. Against you are both visible and invisible enemies and there is a very real battle raging not just around you, but in you. It is your duty as an ambassador of your King to be about protection of the weak and liberation of the oppressed. You have no business working with Satan in furthering the enslavement of women made in God's likeness and loved by Jesus. He is ordering you to do nothing to harm them, dishonor them, or defile them. Jesus does not put such women in your path for you to sin against, but rather to pray for and possibly even liberate from evil, oppression, and the Serpent

who desperately wants you to join his ranks and participate in his darkness. As Paul told Timothy, you need to fight a good fight.

So keep your pants on, your Bible open, your eyes focused, your hands ready, and your heart broken, and fight in such a way that when you stand before Jesus in the end, you can look him in the eye.

notes

¹ Victor Malarek, *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), pp. 1–7.

² For a thorough explanation of these factors, see Kathryn Farr, *Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children* (New York: Worth Publishers), pp. 132–162 (Chapter 5—“From Here to There: Sex Trafficking Flows and the Economic Conditions That Drive Them”).

³ Denise Gamache and Evelina Giobbe, *Prostitution: Oppression Disguised as Liberation*, National Coalition against Domestic Violence, 1990.

⁴ Victor Malarek, *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), pp. 9–29 (Chapter 1—“Smuggler’s Prey”).

⁵ Victor Malarek, *The Natashas: Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003), p. 33.

⁶ For more on the role of organized crime, see Kathryn Farr, *Sex Trafficking: The Global Market in Women and Children* (New York: Worth Publishers), pp. 56–131 (Chapter 3—“Criminal Networks and Corrupt Guardians” and Chapter 4—“Sex Trafficking and the Changing Face(s) of Organized Crime”).

⁷ George S. Patton, *War As I Knew It* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1947), p. 31.

author biographies

Mark Driscoll

Mark Driscoll was born on October 11, 1970, and graduated from Highline High School in Seattle. Raised Catholic, he became a Christian as a college freshman in the fall of 1989 at Washington State University, where he received a B.A. in Speech Communications. In 1992 he married his high school sweetheart, Grace, whom he had dated since 1988.

Pastor Mark and Grace founded Mars Hill Church in Seattle in October 1996. The church started as a small Bible study in their living room and has since grown to include over six thousand people. The church meets in seven different locations throughout the Puget Sound region, with twenty weekly services broadcast via satellite from the Ballard campus. In 2008, Outreach magazine named Mars Hill Church the second most innovative church in America.

Pastor Mark co-founded and is president of the Acts 29 Church Planting Network, which plants churches in the U.S. and internationally. Outreach magazine has ranked Mars Hill Church as the second most prolific church planting church in America.

Pastor Mark also founded the Resurgence, an organization that hosts conferences and provides theological training for pastors, church planters, and other Christian leaders. The cooperative's website, theresurgence.com, has become a major source for news and theology within the missional, emerging, and reformed communities.

He has received accolades from a variety of sources. Seattle magazine named Pastor Mark one of the twenty-five most powerful people in Seattle, ironically one of the least-churched cities in America. The Church Report and Christianity Today have recognized Pastor Mark as one of the most influential pastors in America.

Media coverage of Pastor Mark varies just as widely, including such outlets as National Public Radio, The Bible Answer Man, Mother Jones magazine, the Associated Press, USA Today, the New York Times, Blender music magazine, Outreach magazine, Preaching Today, Leadership magazine, and ABC Television.

Pastor Mark has published many books, including The Radical Reformation: Reaching Out Without Selling Out and Confessions of a Reformation Rev.: Hard Lessons from an Emerging Missional Church. In 2008 he published Vintage Jesus: Timeless Answers to Timely Questions, Death by Love: Letters from the Cross, and four books in the new series called "A Book You'll Actually Read": On the Old Testament, On the New Testament, On Who Is God? and On Church Leadership. He has also contributed to the books The Supremacy of Christ in a Postmodern World, edited by John Piper and Justin Taylor, and Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches, edited by Robert Webber. In 2009 he will be publishing the books Vintage Church, Religion Saves, and Doctrine.

Pastor Mark reaches a global audience as his sermons are given away free on the Internet and are downloaded millions of times a year from around the world, including iTunes, where he is usually among the top ten Religion and Spirituality podcasts. In addition, Pastor Mark helps train other leaders through speaking trips around the country and internationally. In 2008, he spoke across the U.K. and Australia on two separate occasions, equipping and teaching pastors and church leaders about the centrality of the Gospel, the necessity of understanding culture, and the changing face of the contemporary church, with attendance reaching ten thousand people per event.

Pastor Mark holds a master's degree in Exegetical Theology from Western Seminary in Portland, Oregon. He is also considering pursuing a Ph.D. in biblical studies.

Most enjoyably, Pastor Mark and his high school sweetheart, Grace, delight in raising their three sons and two daughters, playing baseball with the boys and accompanying the girls on "daddy dates."

Justin Holcomb

Justin is a pastor at Christ Church (Charlottesville, VA) and teaches at the University of Virginia and Reformed Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Lindsey, started Mosaic, which is a non-profit that serves those suffering in Sudan and Uganda.



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