

ACT LIKE A MAN ON THE INTERNET

Bleach is one of the greatest products currently available. It cleans and disinfects. It sterilizes and removes stains. It can destroy anthrax or make a public pool safe for swimming. But it is also lethal. Breathing it or drinking it can kill you. Spilling it on your skin can burn you and splashing it will ruin your garments.¹

The internet is like bleach. It is an amazing tool for many reasons. Even if we limited internet use to Bible study, it would still be the most revolutionary invention of all time. At this moment you can listen to thousands of sermons from excellent pastors. You can do research and read commentaries. You can study maps and cross-reference differing translations. However, like bleach, the internet has the potential to kill. And I mean that both figuratively and literally.

2 exhortations before we talk about what we really need to talk about. The first is this: the news. More and more people are getting their news from the internet than from any other source. My first exhortation to you is to be very careful about the information you put in your mind from any news source, especially the internet, where any person can post any opinion they desire. We might believe that we are impervious to propaganda, but we aren't. Fill your mind with God's Word, not with BBC or FoxNews or CNN. Fill your mind with scripture, not with political infighting or social commentary.

The second exhortation has to do with gaming. I'm sure there are guys in here who enjoy video gaming, whether that be online or not. Men of God, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Treasure is not just dollars and cents, but time and energy. Time away from your wife is time away from your marriage. Don't find yourself gaming for hours at a time, late into the night, while your wife and family live their lives apart from you.

But, that is not my purpose this morning. Those things can be traps, they can be detrimental to your walk with God and your relationships with others, but they are not my focus in the short time we have together. Gentlemen, we are in the midst of an epidemic. If the statistics are correct, then as many as one half of the men in this room are struggling with pornography in their daily lives. That is the current statistic regarding Christian men, not non-believers. Across the board it has been well-proven that pornography is a serious issue in the Church. And men, let me be clear that reading, watching, using pornography is sin. It is sexual immorality. It will kill your marriage. It will destroy your witness. It will separate you from God.

We think of David, the poet-king, who stayed home when the men went to battle. And there on his rooftop he looked upon the woman who was bathing on her roof, and the Word says that she was beautiful to look upon. And from there David allowed his mind to wander and to fantasize. His mind fixated on the images he had seen and he moved further from God and closer to sin. And he sent and he took her and lay with her and before the story is over there is an illegitimate child, a murdered husband, and the Bible says that "the thing David had done displeased the Lord."ⁱⁱ You see that wandering eye, that lust of the eyes had led David down the road to destruction. He is a Biblical example of what happens when a man gives himself to pornography. Now, I'm not saying that every man that delivers himself into pornography will become a murderer, but every man that delivers

himself to pornography destroys his relationship with God. Not only does it separate man from God but it erodes at the marriage and the family and the habits and the job and the man.

Do you know that Ted Bundy confessed before he was executed for multiple murders that addiction to pornography fueled his violent behavior.ⁱⁱⁱ Do you know that pornography is chemically addictive?^{iv} Did you know it is more addictive than cocaine?^v Do you know that people who stop using pornography go through withdrawal symptoms?^{vi} Do you know that research shows that men who use pornography are "more likely to go to prostitutes, engage in domestic violence, stranger rape, date rape and incest?"^{vii}

Now, there are probably some here that don't believe those things. So let me tell you some real numbers:

There are between 372 and 420 million pornographic web-pages online right now. 35% of all internet downloads are pornographic. 116 thousand times per day search engines receive the words "child pornography" as a request. 18% of all emails are pornographic in nature.^{viii} 40 million American adults regularly visit porn sites and in 2006 the revenue from the pornography industry in the United States alone was \$13.3 Billion...that's more than the NFL, the NBA and Major League Baseball combined.^{ix}

I look out on you today and see men who love God, men who desire authenticity in their Christian faith, men who desire to be used by the Almighty to change the world. But the fact remains that pornography has found its way into the Church and has been decaying our young men and our old men alike. In our shame and in our political correctness we fail to address this issue enough in most churches.

It's like 1 Kings chapter 3.

1Kings 3:1-3 - Now Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh king of Egypt, and married Pharaoh's daughter; then he brought her to the City of David until he had finished building his own house, and the house of the Lord, and the wall all around Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the people sacrificed at the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days.

And Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of his father David, except that he sacrificed and burned incense at the high places.

Solomon had made a treaty with Egypt, that great nation, that great symbol of worldliness, and had taken the daughter of Pharaoh to be his wife. And with each foreign wife that Solomon took he became more and more numb to the things of the Lord. Until eventually we find him at the end of his life, there in 1 Kings 11 and we see that he loves many foreign women and that he clung to them in love and he did not love the Lord for they had turned his heart away from God.

You see the Bible puts pornography in this same category. When we look with desire on the nakedness of a woman that is not our wife we are sinning. Our wonderful Lord, Jesus Christ, said that it is the same as having an affair with that woman. But men, we are in a time where that affair can take place any time during the day, at any computer, without charge. Not only is it easily available online, but now pornography is actually sent to us via email and pop-up ads. The war for our eyes and our minds is

on. The fight for purity is raging and gentlemen many Christians are falling.

Men, Proverbs 6 warns us. It asks us can we take fire to our bosom and not be burned? Can we walk on hot coals and not be hurt? It tells us do not lust after the beauty of the seductive woman in your heart. She will reduce us. She will destroy us.

So this morning, men of God, are you struggling with pornography? Are you bound by it? Are you consumed with it? There is hope for you. Our desire is not to condemn but to heal. Our desire is the same as Jesus Christ's desire when He told the woman caught in adultery, caught in that sexual sin, "neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more." Our message is the same this morning: that you can find freedom from the chains of sin. You can find healing and restoration in the Church. Jesus loves you, He forgives you, He wants something so much better for you.

The internet is one of the most dangerous tools ever made. When you look out in the world you see Pastors falling, Christians falling. Men decimated by a little look...a little curiosity...'I'm a red-blooded man after all and I have needs.' Men of God listen to the Spirit in your hearts. Pornography is never acceptable. Masturbation is never acceptable. Treating your wife as just another sexual outlet is unacceptable. Treating your wife as unbeautiful or unalluring is unacceptable. Serving God while delighting in the world's pleasures is unacceptable.

So what can we do this morning? I know there are guys here that are struggling. I know there are guys here who don't think that pornography is a problem in their life. It's time to gird yourself up like a man. It is time to live holy and separate yourselves from those things.

The Bible says that if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out. So here are some ways to do that.

First off, if you look at internet pornography, cancel your internet service.

Second, if you can't cancel your internet service for whatever reason, or if you decide that you want to keep it then there are things you can do to help yourself not to sin.

First, don't get online when you're home alone.

Second, get a content filter. SafeEyes.com and integrityonline.com offer excellent filters for pornography.

Third, get accountability software. X3Watch is a program that automatically sends an emailed report of every website you've been to each day or week to 2 accountability partners.

Fourth, get prayer. We are available to you to talk. We are not going to ostracize you or belittle you. We are not going to condemn you or hate you. We want to help you in the love of Christ to stop using this stuff. Gentlemen, it will kill you, one way or another.

ⁱ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bleach>

ⁱⁱ 2 Samuel 11.27

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.pureintimacy.org/gr/intimacy/understanding/a0000121.cfm>

^{iv} A Drug Called Pornography

^v Ibid.

^{vi} The Science Behind Pornography Addiction – Dr. Mary Anne Layden

^{vii} Ibid.

^{viii} Internet Startling Facts – localtelonline.com

^{ix} Statistics And Information On Pornography In The USA – blazinggrace.org

