

Sexuality, Gender and Jesus

Part 4: Pornography

February, 3 2013

The Big Idea

Pornography attacks the mind, heart, and body of both men and women; it is ultimately a quest for and an expression of false intimacy.

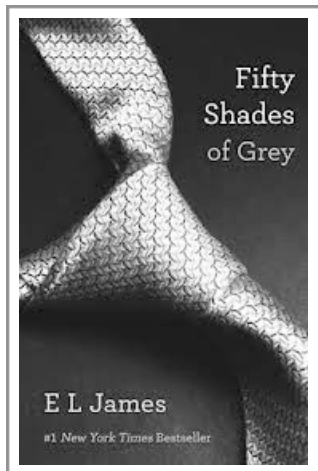
Introduction

"Human sexuality must be understood in light of a variety of influences, including biological, sociological, psychological, theological, as well as gender, emotions, behaviors, attitudes and values... Authentic human sexuality has to do with human beings seeking to live as sexual beings according to God's design and purpose."¹

Learning Task #9: Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places

9A: Listen as the poem "I Looked for Love in Your Eyes" is read aloud.² (Copies available at your table.) As it is read, circle or underline anything that strikes you. Then, as a large group, **answer** the following question: "How does this poem inform the way you understand the problem with porn?"

Notes:



Pornography: Key Terms and Ideas

Pornography - Defined: Any erotic act, depicted in film or in writing, intended to create arousal in the user.

On Women and Porn: 72% of visitors to pornographic websites are men; 28% are women; 17% of women say they struggle with an addiction to pornography.³

On Children and Porn: The average age of exposure to pornography is 11 years of age.

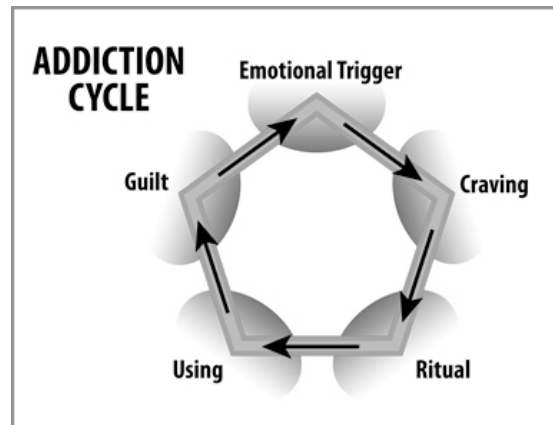
¹ Judith K. Balswick and Jack O. Balswick, *Authentic Human Sexuality: An Integrated Christian Approach* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 13-14.

² <http://www.challies.com/quotes/i-looked-for-love-in-your-eyes>

³ <http://images.onlinepsychologydegree.net.s3.amazonaws.com/Porn-Addiction-In-America.jpg>

Pornography - Why People Act Out: Sexual behavior is sometimes a way to relieve tension, escape boredom, and temporarily avoid the pressures of life. At other times, sexual behavior is an indication of rebellion against parental or church authority, a declaration of independence from one's past, or an expression of anger and defiance against one's mate or some other person, including God.⁴

Notes:



9B: Pornography attacks the heart, mind, and body. As such, we must address a person's addiction or compulsion at all three of these levels. With this in mind, **listen** as Kyle explains the principle of the Elephant, the Rider, and the Path. As you listen, circle or underline anything that strikes you.

Inside each person is an Elephant and a Rider; the former is motivated by emotion, the latter by logic and reason. Without a Rider, the Elephant will run around in circles; without an Elephant, the Rider is going nowhere. To help people change, we have to Direct the Rider, Motivate the Elephant, and then Clear the Path. Without a clear path, the decided Rider and controlled Elephant are going nowhere.



For example, the Rider knows that it's good to get up tomorrow at 6 a.m. and go for a run, but when the alarm goes off, the Elephant decides to sleep in (after all, it's warm in bed and cold outside). This case of an unstoppable force colliding with an immovable object can be helped by clearing the Path: finding a running buddy and setting out your clothes the night before.

Name silently to yourself an elephant in your life. Keep this in mind as we continue our discussion!

⁴ Gary Collins, *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson), 345.

*Below is a more detailed description of the Elephant, the Path, and the Rider. At your tables, **examine** your assigned description, and **answer** the questions that follow.*

The Rider: Directing the Mind

- Point to the Destination: What looks like resistance is usually a lack of clarity; if the Rider doesn't know where to go, they spin out. Direct the rider by creating a crystal clear vision of the outcome.
- Script the Critical Moves: Riders love metrics: they want to know when or how much, along with a specific set of actions and tactics to get there. To direct the rider, give them clear action steps.

♣**Describe** a vision of a life lived without pornography.

♣**Identify** at least two measurable steps a person could take to move toward change.

The Elephant: Motivating the Heart

- Find the Feeling: Knowing something isn't enough to cause change. To direct the Elephant, you have to know what it's feeling and address it there. Providing a sense of milestones or tangible wins gives the Elephant courage.
- Shrink the Change: The elephant is always afraid of change; so, break down the need to change into small steps that don't spook the elephant.

♣**Name** one 'tangible milestone' or 'win' that a person might find after a few weeks of leaving pornography behind.

♣**Describe** one fear or lie that a person addicted to pornography might have when it comes to change, then **identify** a way to make that change seem less spooky.

The Path: Reshaping the Body's Desires

- Tweak the Environment: When the situation changes, the behavior changes. Shaping the path has to do with shaping the environment so the Rider can get the Elephant to the destination.
- Rally the Herd: Behavior is contagious. Find people who will support growth in this discipline.

♣**Indicate** one way you could change the environment of a person addicted to porn.

♣**Name** at least one way you could rally the herd around an individual struggling with porn.

9C: Read the following case study, and **respond** to it with the Elephant-Rider-Path model with at least one action step. Your table will address the case study from the perspective of only one of the Elephant-Rider-Path elements, and then as a large group we'll combine the reflections.

Last week, you met up with George and Becky to catch up and have a cup of coffee. After spending some time chatting, George and Becky exchange glances, and proceed to tell you that they recently caught their sixteen-year-old son, Jack, looking at pornography. Jack has a laptop that he uses for school, and a look through his search history indicates that he has been engaging in this behavior for some time, at least for the last six months. Jack has expressed the desire to change, that he doesn't want to keep engaging in this behavior, but admits that he just can't seem to make it work.

While Jack is well loved by his parents and their peers, Jack struggles to make his own friends at school. He has told George and Becky about how lonely he feels at school, and he has a hard time making friends at church. It follows that he receives little to no attention from girls his age, and last fall he didn't go to Homecoming because he had no one to go with.

George and Becky are at a loss. Becky is disturbed that her son has been watching this 'trash' that treats women so poorly. George, while unhappy with the situation, seems to think that it's just a phase, and that over time Jack "will get over it." Both George and Becky admit they feel paralyzed to help their son, and they ask you what they can do to help their son.

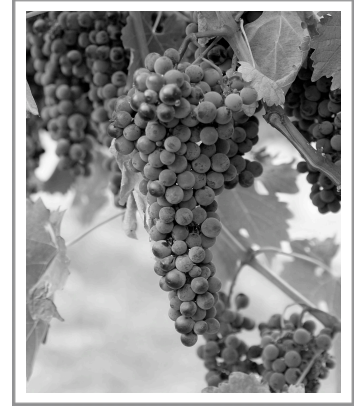
Elephant ~ The Heart	Rider ~ The Mind	Path ~ The Body

A Closing Word: Finding True Intimacy

Intimacy is the process by which we understand and grow toward our purpose in life: to be conformed to the image of Christ.

[William Struthers]

Live in me. Make your home in me just as I do in you. In the same way that a branch can't bear grapes by itself but only by being joined to the vine, you can't bear fruit unless you are joined with me. I am the Vine, you are the branches. When you're joined with me and I with you, the relation intimate and organic, the harvest is sure to be abundant. Separated, you can't produce a thing. [John 15:4-5]



9D: Pornography is just one way we seek to medicate our need for intimacy and love. **Identify** something in your life that is a quest for false intimacy. Then, **name** at least one person you could talk with about this in the next week.

Learning Task #10: Carpe Eruditio (Seize the Learning)

10A: **Name** a day this week that you'll Seize the Learning: _____.

10B: **Review** your notes or **reflect** on a passage of Scripture that particularly struck you. Then, **read** over the information about Elephant-Rider-Path.

10C: **Identify** an area of change needed in your life, and **journal** through the Elephant-Rider-Path questions.

10D: After you've reflected on these questions, **e-mail** Kyle an insight or truth point to one of these questions (if you are willing to share) at kyle.h.tennant@gmail.com.

For Further Reading

William Struthers, *Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain*

Tim Challies, *Sexual Detox: A Guide for Guys Who Are Sick of Porn*

Aileen Challies, *False Messages*⁵

Tim Chester, *Closing the Window: Steps to Living Porn Free*

Vicki Tiede, *When Your Husband is Addicted to Porn: Healing Your Wounded Heart*

⁵ <http://www.challies.com/writings/books-e-books/false-messages>

A Note on The Learning

For this semester's Hot Topics series, Kyle and Stephanie will be utilizing the principles and practices of **Dialogue Education** to learn with you. Pioneered by Jane Vella, a Catholic missionary, nun, and educator, dialogue education believes that the teacher should never do for the learner what she can do her herself. In that sense, there is no teacher: there are only learners of whom the teacher is one.

Jane Vella has written, "The end is learning, the means is dialogue and the purpose is peace." By asking open ended question and engaging in learning tasks, each of us participates in the learning by being attentive to one another and to Christ who is the *dia-logos*, the Word among us. Jesus is who, the how, and the why of our learning.

Our hope is that as we learn together you are able to take your learning to your life in order to be conformed to Christ. This is our hope, and prayer: that through our time together Christ would be formed in you (Galatians 4:19).

In light of this, we commit to come to class each week prepared, with the necessary materials for our learning in-tow, so that meaningful, Christ-centered learning can take place. We invite you to come to each session ready to learn: to engage in learning tasks, to answer questions, and to experience the joy of learning together. Remember: joy is the measure.

Our Coming Sessions

Dates and Topics Subject to Change

Session 1: Sexuality, Gender, and Jesus 2.3 ~ Pornography 2.10 ~ For Men Only & For Women Only Session 2: Hot Topics, Etc. 2.17 ~ Intergenerational Ministry 2.24 ~ Global Outreach Conference 3.3 ~ Politics: To Vote or Not to Vote? 3.10 ~ Politics: Was Jesus a Socialist? 3.17 ~ Entertainment, Culture, and Discernment 3.24 ~ Unfriend Yourself	3.31 ~ No Class - He is Risen! 4.7 ~ Depression, Despair, and Doubt Session 3: Family Matters 4.14 ~ How Low Can You Go? Living within Your Means 4.21 ~ The Role of the Church in the Family 4.28 ~ No Class - Congregational Meeting 5.5 ~ Parenting for Healthy Adulthood 5.12 ~ No Class - Happy Mother's Day! 5.19 ~ Bullying 5.26 ~ Loving Families with Developmental Disabilities
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