

# THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

## THE TRUTH ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY

### **Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

*THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST*. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Mt. 5:28). Welcome to our study on the truth about pornography. We are living in an age where pornography is becoming a very serious problem. Many marriages have been destroyed because one of the mates (or both) got involved in a problem with pornography. We see problems with pornography in our homes. If you have children, and if you have Internet access, then you need to be aware of pornography. Schools and universities are cracking down because of pornography problems. Pornography even has become a problem for churches (in regard to computers that are used in the work place). Companies and churches are hiring others to ensure that their employees are not using work-related computers to view pornography. This is a very serious problem that causes many harmful things to occur in a person’s life.

How do we define pornography? Pornography comes from the Greek word *porneia*, which means “sexual immorality.” It is described as illicit sexual activity. The word *porneia* is combined with the word *graphos*, which means “to write.” So, pornography has to do with the portrayal of illicit sexual activity by writing or by viewing—whether by video tape, magazines, or the Internet. Any one of those forms definitely would define pornography. This is a billion-dollar industry. Those who run the pornography business are making loads of money. Consider these statistics. The pornography industry brings in billions of dollars. Revenues from pornography are larger than the combined revenues from all professional football, baseball, and basketball franchises, and exceed the combined revenues of ABC, CBS, and NBC. We are talking about \$6.2 billion here. Child pornography alone generates \$3 billion annually. Nearly 900,000 theaters show pornographic films, and more than 15,000 adult bookstores and video stores offer pornographic material. In fact, adult bookstores outnumber McDonald’s restaurants in the United States by a margin of at least three to one. So, yes, this is a very serious problem. We have more pornography stores than we do McDonald’s restaurants?! There are so many pornography stores in our day and age that at times it seems as if a person hardly can go around a street corner without finding one. And these stores generate more money than professional football, baseball, and basketball combined?! And they generate more money than the three major television networks?! This is a money-producing industry, and a lot of people are involved in it for that reason.

We must understand, however, that pornography is a sinful activity for the child of God. One of the reasons that pornography is so devastating is because of the violent sin to which it is related. When you find violent sins such as rape, murder, and things like them, the people who commit those acts have often committed such sins after having viewed pornography. They started by looking at pornographic pictures. So, pornography often is related to violent sins. Consider the following statistics relating to pornography and rape. A Michigan state police detective, Darrell Pope, found that out of 38,000 sexual-assault cases in Michigan, in 41% of those assaults, pornographic material was viewed prior to or during the crimes. Think about that. Of those 38,000 cases, in 41% the perpetrators used pornog-

raphy. Shere Hite found that 67% of the males who admitted that they wanted to rape a woman reported reading pornographic magazines. Sixty-seven percent of those people who had a desire to rape reported looking at pornographic materials. Sociologists Murray Straus and Larry Baron of the University of New Hampshire found that rape rates are highest in states which have high sales of sex magazines and lax enforcement of pornography laws. Eighty-six percent of convicted rapists admit to regular use of pornography, and 75% of rapists admit to simulating acts they viewed in pornography. If you do not think that this is a serious problem, you'd better wake up. Much of the harm that occurs from crimes is due to the influence of pornography. Pornography is related to specific violent sins of the flesh. Eighty-one percent of recent mass murderers admitted to using pornography extensively. Think about mass murderers in society. Eighty-one percent said that they were addicted to pornography. In fact, the crime rate increases two to seven times wherever pornography is sold. If you have a place where pornography has not been sold, but you bring in pornography, crime rates will naturally go up in that area. If there is nothing wrong with pornography, why do crime rates go up? Why do people who view pornography often get involved in other things that are not right? Dr. James Dobson interviewed Ted Bundy, one of this nation's most notorious serial killers. On the day before his execution, Ted Bundy said that "the most damaging kinds of pornography are those that involve violence and sexual violence, because the wedding of those two forces, as I know only too well, brings about behavior that is just, just too terrible to describe." It is clear, then, that the wedding of pornography and violence is a horrible combination.

But pornography also is sinful because of the mental and moral problems that it creates. Pornography causes problems in our minds—problems that Christians ought not to have. Pornographic thoughts are not the types of things about which Christians should be thinking. For example, pornography makes a person's mind unwholesome. In Matthew 5:28 Jesus said, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Jesus was not saying that such an action was literal adultery, just as a little later He was not speaking of literal murder when He said that if a person had anger in his heart toward another, he had murdered that person. The principle is that things such as these make our minds and hearts unholy. Pornography leads to things like lying and dishonesty that are unholy. In Revelation 21:8 we are told that all liars will have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. Those who get involved in pornography through magazines, video tapes, or on the Internet often have to lie to their mates or to their families. And when they go to worship, they are living a lie. Pornography also is a problem of the mind because it is directly linked to secrecy and those things that are done in shame and darkness. Jesus said in John 3:19 that He came to free us from sin, darkness, and shame. If you are involved in a pornography problem, you are in the throes of sin, darkness, and shame. Pornography also is a problem because it creates a lack of trust and self-worth. If you have been involved in any form of pornography, you know that when you use pornography it makes you feel guilty, it makes you feel dirty, and it makes you feel as if you are not worth much. Proverbs 23:7 says, "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." If your mind is focused on things that are unholy and ungodly, then your self-worth and self-value naturally will plummet.

But I also want to suggest to you that pornography is a very serious problem because it has destroyed an untold number of marriages. Let me give you a few examples. At the 2003 meeting of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers, two-thirds of the 350 divorce lawyers who attended said the Internet played a significant role in divorces in the past year, with excessive interest in online pornography contributing to more than half of those cases. More than two-thirds of the lawyers who attended that meeting said that the Internet and the viewing of pornography caused great problems in marriages. Had one spouse

not done that, the family probably would be together today. Pornography threatens marriage by creating a lack of trust. It is a violation of the principles of marriage that God established. A study done by Dolf Zillman of the University of Indiana, and Jennings Bryant of the University of Houston, revealed that repeated exposure to pornography results in a decreased satisfaction with one's sexual partner, with the partner's sexuality, and with the partner's sexual curiosity. There also was a decrease in the valuation of faithfulness and a major increase in the importance of sex without attachment. These are alarming statistics. There was a decrease in the value of faithfulness. Pornography causes a spouse to become less faithful. It causes a spouse to think less about the intimacy that is supposed to be found in the marriage relationship as God intended that it be. God created sex to be something holy between a man and a woman in the marriage relationship. But pornography ruins the holiness and purity that God intended. The Bible teaches that married couples are to be satisfied with one another. Proverbs 5:19-20 says, "As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; and always be enraptured with her love. For why should you, my son, be enraptured by an immoral woman, and be embraced in the arms of a seductress?"

God established marriage to be a relationship of intimacy between a man and a woman—one that is holy. In the marriage relationship, the husband and wife are to satisfy one another's sexual desires. There must be no relationships outside of that, since those would not be holy in God's sight. Beware: pornography is a threat to marriage! If your mate gets involved in it, or if you get involved in it, serious problems will arise. Pornography in a marriage creates a lack of trust. In Ephesians 5:22-33, the Scriptures teach that a husband and wife are to love one another, and that they are to put their mate before themselves. They are to trust one another. If you are involved in a pornography problem, you cannot trust your mate and your mate cannot trust you. You will always be wondering and paranoid because of things that are in your mind. Pornography causes one to be unfaithful to his mate mentally. Remember that Jesus said, "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:28).

Pornography also is a serious problem because it can endanger children. If you have young children, you need to know that they are in danger because of the insidious threat of pornography. Let me give you some statistics that document this. Eight-two percent of child molesters admitted to imitating the sexual behavior they had seen in pornographic material. Where did their problems start? Where did these horrible actions originate? A lot of them are related to pornography. Of the 1,400 child sexual molestation cases in Louisville, Kentucky, between July 1980 and February 1984, adult pornography was connected with each incident, and child pornography was connected to the majority of them. The average age of first exposure to Internet pornography (according to Family Safe Media, December 15, 2005) is 11 years of age. If you do not think that young children viewing pornography is something about which to be alarmed, then you need to wake up. Pornography is a serious threat to children. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children revealed, in a June 2005 study, that 40% of arrested child pornography possessors were in possession of child pornography and had sexually victimized children. This is a serious problem, and our children can be at risk because of it. If we are not careful, we can look the other way and say, "It's no big problem, and I don't have to worry about it." But if we do that, then pornography will become a threat to our children. If we think about this in relation to our children, we will understand that children are a gift from God (Ps. 127:3). Our responsibility as parents is to protect our children from evil things in the world such as pornography. Whatever it takes—whether it is shutting down the computer or monitoring more closely what your children are doing—you need to make sure that these types of things are not allowed in your home. You also need to ensure that where your children go, pornography

is not present. Look at some more statistics concerning how harmful pornography is for children. Of those arrested in the U.S. for the possession of child pornography between 2000 and 2001, 83% had images involving children between the ages 6 and 12; 39% had images involving children between the ages 3 and 5; and 19% had images of infants and toddlers under age 3. People who commit some of the vilest acts are directly associated with pornography. Another study (*The Washington Post*, July 1, 2004) showed that 140,000 child-pornography images were posted to the Internet according to researchers who monitored the Internet over six weeks. Twenty children were estimated to have been abused for the first time, and more than 1,000 images of each child were created. More than 11 million teens regularly view pornography online. If you do not think that this is a problem, then you need to think again. We need to understand that our children are at risk because of pornography. In a study of convicted child molesters, 77 percent of those who molested boys, and 87 percent of those who molested girls, admitted to the habitual use of pornography in the commission of their crimes. Those who would harm our children are directly connected to pornography. Some of the most evil and violent people in this world are those who purchase and use this type of material. Thus, we need to wake up, be careful, and avoid looking the other way. We need to know what is going on so that we can be aware in order to ensure that this type of material does not affect our children. Pornography is a threat to children because it takes away a child's innocence. In Matthew 18 Jesus said that the kingdom of Heaven was composed of those who were like little children. These children of whom Jesus spoke were innocent and pure. Yet pornography takes away that innocence. It leads children to become sexually promiscuous, and causes many other mental and/or psychological disorders.

Pornography is a sin because it causes us to exhibit a lack of self-control. In Acts 24:25 Paul was preaching to Felix. He preached "righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come." A person who is involved in pornography is a person who exhibits a lack of self-control. Listen to what the Bible has to say about our need to control ourselves. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 6:12, "I will not be brought under the power of any." But the person who is addicted to pornography cannot say that because they are "brought under the power" of that passion and lust. In 2 Corinthians 10:5, the Bible says that we are to "bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ." Yet the person whose mind is corrupt, and is thinking immoral things, has not brought his thoughts "into the captivity of Christ." In Romans 13:14 the Bible says, "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts." If we are going to stop fulfilling the lusts of the flesh, then surely we would not want to be involved in pornography. In 1 Peter 2:11 Peter said, "Abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul." In Galatians 5:22-24, one of the fruits of the spirit is "self-control." A person who is involved in pornography does not have the self-control that he ought to have. He is not living the life that God wants him to live.

Pornography also violates the purity principle. Christians are to be pure in heart. Jesus said in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart." The psalmist said in Psalm 24:3-4, "Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who may stand in His presence. He who has clean hands and a pure heart." Matthew 5 teaches us that we should be people who possess a pure heart. Paul said in 1 Timothy 5:22, "Keep yourself pure." You cannot keep yourself pure if you are looking at ungodly and unholy images that the Lord does not want you to see. The purity principle, as it applies to intimacy, is found in Hebrews 13:4—"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." If you are looking at things that are not right, then you need to realize that you are committing a sin against God and against your own body.

Someone might say, "How can I deal with the pornography problem?" Suppose you have a problem with pornography. How do you deal with it? First, you must realize that you have a problem. You must realize that viewing pornography is not right, and that it is against the will of God. Second, you need to pray to God about this problem. Ask God to help you deal with this problem, and to help you control the thoughts that are in your mind. Ask Him to help you have self-control in your life. You must learn to control the things about which you think. Your mind is your own. And although the devil may want to use it for his purposes, you need to learn to control the things about which you think. How do we do that? Listen to Philippians 4:8—"Brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy, meditate on these things." We must stop thinking about the bad, and then we must insert good in its place. That is how a person can start thinking correctly. We must deny the flesh. Galatians 5:24 and Romans 7 teach us that we must deny the works of the flesh—those things that are sinful and lusts that are not right. We need to stop thinking on (or doing) such things, and instead start denying ourselves. Isn't that what Christianity is about? In Luke 9:23 Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." You also need to seek help from those closest to you. It may be the hardest thing to do, but you need to admit to others who are close to you that you have a problem. You need to ask for their help in dealing with this problem, and seek help from those to whom you look up on a daily basis. And you need to realize that if you continue in this sin, it ultimately will cost you your immortal soul. Ask yourself if a passing pleasure is worth your immortal soul. Some people in the Bible gave in to the pleasure of sin—and were lost. Do not let that happen to you. Realize that the lust and passions that tempt us in the here and now are not worth our immortal souls.

But what can we do to prevent a pornography problem? Let me offer some suggestions that I think will help prevent a pornography problem from ever occurring. First, do not open Pandora's Box even one time. Don't do it. No matter how badly you are tempted, and no matter what the situation may be, do not give in to it even once. Do like Joseph—even if you have to run out of the room, get away from it. Do not have anything to do with it. If it's present, do not look at it. Do not take part in it. Go somewhere else and do something else. Do not open Pandora's Box even one time. Second, you need to realize the sinfulness of pornography. I have stressed this already, but it is worth mentioning again. Jesus said in Matthew 5:28, "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Do not put yourself in a compromising situation. Do not get around friends who you know are not good Christian people, and who like to look at pornography. Surround yourself with godly people. Do not be found in a situation where you know there are people who will participate in pornography. How can you prevent a pornography problem today? Third, do not watch a lot of what is on television today. Much television has some type of pornography (even so-called "mild" pornography). There is often some type of luteness or nudity in such shows. Know the types of show you watch. Be careful. Parents especially must monitor what their children are watching on television. For example, according to Sex on TV (from the Kaiser Family Foundation), in November 2005 statistics showed that number of sexually explicit scenes in television programs had almost doubled since 1998. Seventy percent of all shows had some sexual content, averaging five sexual scenes per hour compared to fifty-six percent and 3.2 scenes in 1998. Realize that much of television today is perverted, being based on the sex drive. That is how television is trying to sell things. So how can you prevent a pornography problem? Do not open Pandora's Box even one time. Realize that pornography is sinful. Do not get into wrong situations. Do not watch must television.

Parents especially need to be on guard to protect their children. Having a computer in your home, without having an Internet filter on it, is like having a gun with shells in it. Parents need to be careful to ensure that computers are fixed so that children cannot view pornography on them. It is easy, and it is free. You can get Internet blockers online that will stop pornography from coming into your house. You can go to various Websites to obtain these filters. But know that if you have a computer that is not protected, it is like having a loaded gun in your home. You are just asking for something bad to happen.

As Christians, we must understand the sinfulness of pornography, and we must be ready to deal with it in a God-approved way. Let's say that you have had a sin problem like this in your life, and that you have been involved in pornography. We want to encourage you to repent. We want to encourage you to get back in a right relationship with God. Look at how much harm you have already done to yourself. Look at how much harm you have done to others—such a boy friend, girl friend, husband, wife, parents, the church, or to those who knew you one time as a good person. Look at the harm that you have done to your example for Jesus. Do you really want to live your life like that? Is that really what life is all about? Repent and make things right. In James 5:16 James said, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much."

Or, if you have been involved in a sinful and sensuous life, and you have never come to know Jesus Christ, we want you to know today that God's love and mercy can help you deal with these problems. If you are willing to submit yourself to the will of God and put away all of these evil things so that you can live for Jesus, you can be free from all of that sin. The truth will make you free (Jn. 8:32). If you have never become a Christian, we urge you to do so today. The Bible says that if you are willing to hear God's Word, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of your sins by turning from sin to God, confess Christ's name before men, and be baptized in water, you can have the hope of going to Heaven. May each of us examine ourselves today. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?" Are we the type of people who are willing to say, "I am against pornography, and I don't like it." But when television shows or commercials come on, or if we are driving down the road and we see a sensuous billboard, do we "get into" those things? The temptations are there every day. But we need to pray that the Lord will deliver us from temptation, and that we will have the strength and endurance to not give in to these types of things. It is a sad fact that every day homes are being destroyed, children are being victimized, and marriages are crashing because of pornography. Let's have the faith, the fortitude, and the endurance to stand up and condemn these things. If these things are occurring in our area, as Christians we need to stand up and speak out against them. We ought to speak out with one voice to let people know that we will not support these types of things. Instead, we ought to look to Jesus for the hope and mercy that can lead us to Heaven itself. Thank you for joining us in our lesson today. I hope that our discussion has been beneficial to you, and that you will be alert to the problem of pornography, and how it is hurting so many in our world today. It is our hope and prayer that if you have been involved in pornography, you will turn to the Gospel of Christ and live faithfully before Jesus rather than living in sin.

**Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:**

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## STUDY QUESTIONS FOR “THE TRUTH ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY”

1. What point was Jesus making in Matthew 5:28 (“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart”)?
2. What is the definition of pornography?
3. What types of violent sins does pornography often accompany (or lead to)?
4. How does John 3:19 (“Men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil”) come into play in regard to pornography?
5. What message does Proverbs 23:7 convey in regard to pornography?
6. In certain instances (for example, in a marriage) the use of pornography leads to dishonesty. What does Revelation 21:8 have to say about that?
7. It is obvious to most people that children need to be protected from things such as pornography. But how does Psalm 127:3 reinforce such a viewpoint?
8. What point was the apostle Paul making in 1 Corinthians 6:12 when he said, “I will not be brought under the power of any”?
9. In Acts 24:25 Paul preached to Felix about three things. Which one of those things applies to the problem of pornography today?
10. What does 2 Corinthians 10:5 admonish us to do?
11. How does Paul’s statement in Romans 13:14 (“Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts”) apply to the problem of pornography?
12. How does 1 Peter 2:11 apply to the problem of pornography?
13. How does 1 Timothy 5:22 apply to the problem of pornography?
14. Which “fruit of the spirit” listed in Galatians 5:23 applies to the problem of pornography?
15. How does Hebrews 13:4 apply to the problem of pornography?
16. In Philippians 4:8, what did the apostle Paul admonish us to do?
17. How does Galatians 5:24 apply to the problem of pornography?
18. How does Jesus’ statement in Luke 9:23 apply to the problem of pornography?
19. How does Romans 7:5-6 apply to the problem of pornography?
20. How does the apostle Paul’s statement in 2 Corinthians 13:5 apply to the temptation that pornography may present for a person today?