

April 29th, 2017

Restoring Hearts Conference

Mom's, Children and Needed
Conversations About Pornography

by Eric Gomez, MS LMFT MHP

Purpose

Proverbs 22:6

Protecting our children from
the lure and dangers of
pornography.

Proverbs 22:6

“Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it.”

Proverbs 3:19-24

“My son, preserve sound judgement and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.”

The Protection and
Safety of Our Children.
It's Personal.

Culture

Living in a World That's Lost

That it's acceptable **exploit** another person's sexuality.

It's normal to **sell** the sexuality of another human being (Playboy - 1st issue, 1953).

What are you willing to do as a parent at home and culturally (in your church, government, school, etc.)

View yourself as an “**Agent of Change** (Action vs Talking).”

Humanity

A Necessary Reclamation

We have forgotten what it means to be **human** (it isn't sacred anymore).

We have to reclaim the sense that, **“Every life matters and contains immeasurable value.”**

We're placing other factors above the value of each human life. Our children our often taking the brunt (e.g., **Porn Addition**).

When are they learning
about sex?

9 of 10

boys are exposed to pornography before the age of 18.

Covenant Eyes

6 of 10

girls are exposed to pornography before the age of 18.

Covenant Eyes

Before 12

51% of male and 32% of female students first viewed porn before their teenage years.

Covenant Eyes

My Story

Venturing Into the Unexpected

- About 7 years of age.
 - Exploring near my home.
 - Found a porn magazine.
 - My parents never knew.
 - Affected my childhood and adulthood.
 - Guilt, shame, anxiety, depression.
 - Feeling like a failure.
-

My Story

What Might Have Changed?

- Broke the bonds of porn over time through vulnerability.
 - Letters, conversations (with family and close friends)
 - Challenging my fears of rejection.
 - What might have changed if:
 - My parents talked to me about healthy sexuality and the dangers of porn as a child?
-

What does porn teach our
children about sex?

What Porn Teaches Children

Gail Dines, in her book [Pornland](#), addresses how women are portrayed in porn as:

- Always being "***...ready for sex and enthusiastic to do whatever men want, irrespective of how painful, humiliating, or harmful the act is.***"
- She adds that "***in American society, porn is probably the most visible, accessible, and articulate teller of sexual stories to men.***"

What Porn Teaches Children

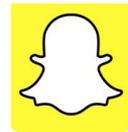
- Verbal, Sexual and Physical Abuse are a normal part of sex.
 - **This applies from the standpoint of men and women** (*women have historically taken the brunt of this abuse*).
- Women are always ready and willing to have sex.
 - **Gail Dines** addresses this as a prevalent theme in our culture (*i.e., magazines and film*).
- Intimacy and true relationship building are irrelevant.
 - **This human element simply doesn't matter in porn.**
 - **People are sexual objects for your own pleasure.**

What Porn Teaches Children

- There are no **consequences** from having sex or from porn itself.
 - Pregnancy, STD's, emotional-sexual trauma.
 - Altered and very unhealthy worldviews of human sexuality.
 - Living in a **pornified culture**.
- Sex is all about **eroticism**.
 - Emotional Intimacy and Marriage are **irrelevant**.
 - Agape love is cast aside.

How will that learning
shape the rest of their
lives?

Where will our children learn about **sex**?



These sources will leave
them lacking important
information.

Will they
learn from:

—

You?



You will always be the best source of information.

**Yes, but when and how
do we begin?**



Preparing Ourselves



Getting Ready



Preparing Ourselves

Gearing Up for Conversation

- Be **Emotionally Prepared**
 - Be **Informed** about the dangers of pornography?
 - Be willing to **Face** your **Fears**?
 - Be **Patient** and **Calm**.
 - Be **Loving** and **Non-Shaming**?
-

1. Start Early

Protecting our children from the dangers of pornography begins early in their formation (e.g., [Safe Touch Principles](#)).

2. Get Informed

Do your research and familiarize yourself with the emotional, relational and neurological effects of pornography. **We need to be ready to have answers.**

Book Recommendations: [Good Pictures Bad Pictures](#), [EXXIT](#), [Every Young Man's Battle](#), [Every Young Woman's Battle](#), [Wired for Intimacy](#), [The Heart of Addiction](#), etc.

Websites: [protectyoungminds.org](#), [fightthenewdrug.org](#)

3. Face Your Fears

We must be willing to have the courage needed to teach our children about healthy sexuality and the dangers of pornography (otherwise, they will learn about human sexuality from our secular culture).

4. Create “Safety”

Through: **Curiosity, Listening, Empathy, Affirmation, Validation, Encouragement.**

- We must create an environment of “**SAFETY**” where conversations can freely take place.
- **Curiosity, Listening, Empathy, Affirmation, Validation, Encouragement.**
- When our children feel safe, they can be open with us about the subject of porn, sexting, or human sexuality as whole. They can approach us with **questions** and **concerns**.
- Otherwise, we lose the ability to **speak into** their lives.

5. No Shaming

The worst thing we can do is shame our children for any experiences with porn, sex, etc. We know this is damaging from certain effects of the “purity movement.”

- We must show them respect and love instead.

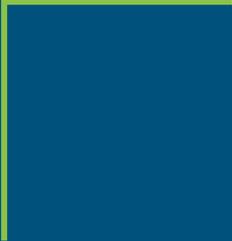
Dr. Tina Sellers

Sellers, T. (2013). **The Naked Truth About the Purity Movement.** Blog ([Sex God and the Conservative Church](#))

The “Christian” Purity Movement is a focus on virginity prior to marriage. It is a focus on “purity” and a focus on not doing sexual behaviors and not having sexual thoughts prior to marriage. It promises if you do this that you will have a blissful marriage with an ecstatic sex life – at least this is what kids who grow up in this movement believe. The opposite is believed as well ... if you screw up in any way ... your marriage and sex life, if you have one, will be doomed. In truth however, it does nothing to build the skills, attitudes or values needed to understand your core call as God’s beloved or the core call on your life to love as Christ.

Approaching Different Age Groups

Strategies for Different Stages of Life or Development



3 - 5 Years of Age

- Good Pictures / Bad Pictures
 - Safe Touch Principles
 - Filters / Safe Settings on Devices
- 

3-5 Years of Age

The Risk: Our children stumble across porn on a device. We neglect to establish a foundation of boundaries and respect for their bodies and those of others.

Action Steps:

- Address questions about their **body**.
 - Why is this happening?
- Define / **name** parts of their body.
- Discuss how they can respect their body and the body of others.
- “**Safe** People” and “**Unsafe** People.”

3-5 Years of Age

- **Encouraging them to talk about and report to you:**
 - Anyone who tried to touch their penis, anus, vagina.
 - Anyone who tried to show them porn.
 - Times they stumbled across porn on their own.
- **Good Pictures / Bad Pictures**
- **Place **Filters** on Devices**



Good Pictures Bad Pictures

Porn Prooding Today's Young Kids
By Kristen A Jenson, MS and Gail Poynor, PhD.



Good Pictures / Bad Pictures (Summary)

- **Chapter 1 Excerpt**
- **What is Pornography?** – pornography shows parts of the body we keep private (like we cover with our swimsuit).
 - Introduces how addiction develops (i.e., chemicals, choices, etc.)
 - Lies to your brain about how people should treat each other (i.e., being mean, hurting people, acting like it's fun).
- **What is an Addiction?** – Is like a powerful habit that is so strong, most addicts feel they can't quit.
 - Some are more easily addicted than others.
 - We often can't stop because of our **two brains**.

[Good Pictures / Bad Pictures](#)

Jenson, K. A., & Poyner, G. (2014). Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids.

Good Pictures / Bad Pictures (Summary)

- **My Feeling Brain** – works automatically and is in charge of basic drives keeping you alive (e.g., sweating / shivering); is located in the center of your brain.
 - Has a special **reward system** that works when you fun things like eating.
- **My Thinking Brain** – helps you make plans, solve problems, and know how to tell **right from wrong**.
 - Every time you decide to make a good choice, your thinking brain becomes stronger so it can protect you from things like addiction...**The more you work it, the stronger it gets.**
- **Two Brains Working Together** – helps protect you overall.
 - “With your thinking brain in charge, your two brains work together to keep you safe and help you get what you want...Without your thinking brain, your feeling brain would do whatever it wants, even if it’s not safe for you. (**POINT: Keep the thinking brain in charge!**)”

[Good Pictures / Bad Pictures](#)

Jenson, K. A., & Poyner, G. (2014). Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today’s Young Kids.

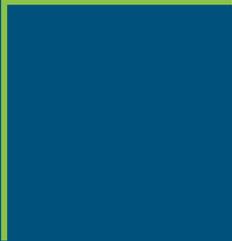
Good Pictures / Bad Pictures (Summary)

- **My Brain's Attraction Center** – one of the most powerful parts of the brain.
 - Creates feelings of excitement and happiness that lead people to fall in love. It makes them want to be closer together.”
 - Is designed to bring real people together, but can't tell the difference with porn.
 - Creates feeling that are difficult to control.

PORN is dangerous because it puts the feeling brain in charge of driving you, a long time before your thinking brain is strong enough to control those kinds of feelings. And that can lead to developing an out of control addiction (e.g., Race Car without Brakes).

[Good Pictures / Bad Pictures](#)

Jenson, K. A., & Poyner, G. (2014). Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn-Proofing Today's Young Kids.



5 - 8 Years of Age



5-8 Years

The Risk: Children are very likely to hear about or actually view porn at this age (having it shown by a peer / being curious online, etc.).

Action Steps:

- **Good Pictures / Bad Pictures.**
- **Reinforce Moral Principles** – to guide them through life.
 - Is just as, if not more important than just talking about the dangers of porn.”
- **Discuss why filters are needed on their phone, computer, etc.**
 - “Mom and dad have decided to protect ourselves and you by placing filters on our devices.”
- **Answer their “tough questions” to the best of your ability.**
 - About their bodies, sex, porn, girls, boys, love...

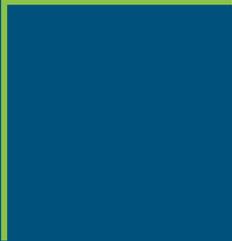
Note: Porn is a “**Heart Issue.**”

Principles of Wisdom to Live By

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (**Proverbs 4:24**).”

“Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil (**Proverbs 4:26, 27**).”

“Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires. Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God, as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer the parts of your body to him as instruments of righteousness. For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace (**Romans 6:12-14**).”



8 - 12 Years of Age



8-12 Years

The Risk: This is one of the most common ages of initial exposure to porn. Children are very curious, are developing sexually, and are hearing sexually related conversations. They realize they live in a sexualized culture.

Action Steps:

- **Open Conversations about SEX**
 - As being sacred.
 - Addressing their curiosities.
 - Setting boundaries with peers.
 - Discussing **WHEN** having sex is appropriate (i.e., marriage - and discuss **why**).
- **Reinforce Moral Principles** – to guide them through life.
 - Every human life matters and must be loved and treated with respect.
 - Is just as, if not more important than just talking about the dangers of porn.”

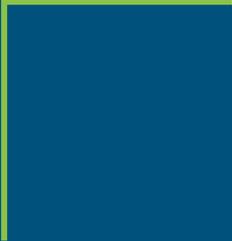
8-12 Years

- **Discuss why filters are needed on their phone, computer, etc.**
 - “Mom and dad have decided to protect ourselves and you by placing filters on our devices.”
- **Answer their “tough questions” to the best of your ability.**
 - About their bodies, sex, porn, girls, boys, love...
- **Be understanding if they have already viewed porn** (it is likely they already have).
 - Encourage them to make better choices and use their “thinking brain” next time.
 - Avoid shaming in any way.
- Reinforce **moral principles**.

8-12 Years

- **Don't expect "perfection."**
- **Encourage them to continue protecting themselves against viewing porn by making sound decisions:**
 - With peers by choosing to treat sexuality as something sacred and not viewing porn.
 - With what they view media wise.

Note: Porn is a **"Heart Issue."**



13 - 18 Years of Age



13-18 Years of Age

The Risk: Our teens find themselves accepting the sexual “**norms**” or our modern society, experimenting with sex and being influenced by the porn culture.

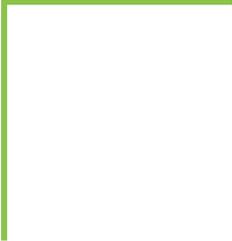
Action Steps:

- **Stay Culturally Relevant**
 - Know what teens are interested in (e.g., gaming, Kardashians, music, books, etc.)
- **Be on the lookout for opportunities that can lead to some “**little**” talks.**
 - TV, movie, music video, news headline, article, magazine, etc. related to sexuality or porn.
- **Don’t push too hard for conversation.**
 - If a foundation of safety and trust has been laid, they know they can come to you.
 - If this foundation has yet to be laid, start by using CLEAVE (e.g., asking open questions about porn, sex, etc. - “What have you heard about...?”).

13-18 Years of Age

- **C.L.E.A.V.E**
 - **Curiosity, listening, empathy, etc.** go a long way to establishing ongoing communication with our teen. **Expect to be challenged.**
- **Your teen may not always agree or have a similar worldview.**
 - This doesn't mean you need to argue.
 - State your views and ask them to consider them.
- **Allow them to see you are aware (informed), involved, prepared and looking out for them.**

Point: Remember the Lord is with you, to guide you, give you grace and empower you to build a strong connection with your teen. **And PRAY, PRAY, PRAY over them.**



Final Overview

Additional Takeaways



Side Effects of Porn

Addictive Qualities. **Worldview** Formulation. Shaping the Behavior of **Children** and **Adults**. **Emotional** and **Relational** Effects.

Key Messages

You are loved. I am always open to you as a parent. Your body and sexuality are sacred. Treat them as such. Porn is harmful and misleading. Make sound decisions regarding your body, mind and sex.

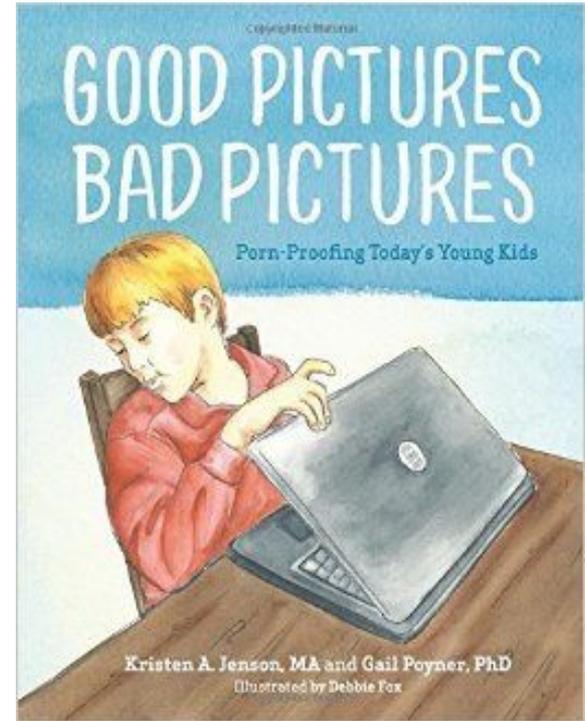
Safe Touch Principles

Learning to respect your body and the body of others. Defining who is safe and who isn't. How to handle violation of the "ground rules" with us.

Place filters on your electronic devices.

Utilize this as a partial, yet helpful solution. Children can often get around filters through apps, video games, friends with non-filtered devices, etc.

**Help your
children
develop an
“Internal Filter.”**



Kristen A. Jenson & Gail Poyner
(authors: [Good Pictures, Bad Pictures](#))

Don't watch porn yourself.

It is very possible for children to pick up or login to devices where parents have pornographic images or videos stored on them (some of the most painful stories I've heard regarding children and porn involve this dynamic).

Remember, it's addictive (it can also shape your moods, altering you interact with your spouse and your children).

Be “Involved.”

Be a “**Change Agent**” your **Community, Church, Government**, etc., as part of taking on the porn industry and protecting your children.

Join with Other “Women & Families.”

Teaching your children about porn **is not something we have to do alone.**



Thank You!

Eric Gomez, MS LMFT MHP

Learn more at:

www.fulfilledchristiancounseling.com

