



Chapter 2: Seven Reasons Why Guys Like Porn

Why are guys drawn to pornography? Experience tells us it isn't merely because guys like looking at naked women. For many guys the draw to pornography can become almost compulsive.

Here is the beginning of a testimony from a man brave enough to share his story:

I was around the age of 10 when I discovered something the others hadn't. It was something that finally gave me the attention I had been craving, the affection I'd felt I was missing, and it provided me a feeling of adequacy I yearned for. Pornography.

Initially, I found it almost melodramatic. While I had heard about it, I'd never seen any before. As I think back on it I can remember exactly where I found it, exactly how it was folded, and sadly enough, I can

remember the picture on the front in enough detail it makes my heart ache. It's the damage of images that cannot be unseen. This small experience was the first step in aligning myself with a lifestyle that would hijack huge chunks of my life for the next 20-plus years.

Internally, I was hooked. The attention I craved came from the women staring back at me from those pages. No girl I knew in real life would look at me like that. So comforting and so accepting. They didn't judge me; they loved me for who I was. This was my special world and I had decided for me that I was going to do all I could to keep it a secret from everyone.

As my time with pornography continued into my middle-teen years I began to progress with a collection of more magazines, and further to

videos if given that chance. Pornography had become a constant vehicle in my life. With the discovery of masturbation, pornography merely became a means to an end. With the onset and proliferation of computers and the Internet, I never stood a chance resisting it and the instances of looking at and using pornography increased exponentially. My compulsion for pornography opened the door (acting as a catalyst) for easy justification for anything and everything.

Does this sound familiar? The details are different for each guy, but across the spectrum many guys report the same power pornography once had or continues to have over them.

Proverbs 7

¹ My son, keep my words
and treasure up my commandments with you;
² keep my commandments and live;
keep my teaching as the apple of your eye;
³ bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
⁴ Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and call insight your intimate friend,
⁵ to keep you from the forbidden woman,
from the adulteress with her smooth words.
⁶ For at the window of my house
I have looked out through my lattice,
⁷ and I have seen among the simple,
I have perceived among the youths,
a young man lacking sense,
⁸ passing along the street near her corner,
taking the road to her house
⁹ in the twilight, in the evening,
at the time of night and darkness.
¹⁰ And behold, the woman meets him,
dressed as a prostitute, wily of heart.
¹¹ She is loud and wayward;
her feet do not stay at home;
¹² now in the street, now in the market,
and at every corner she lies in wait.
¹³ She seizes him and kisses him,

and with bold face she says to him,
¹⁴ "I had to offer sacrifices,
and today I have paid my vows;
¹⁵ so now I have come out to meet you,
to seek you eagerly, and I have found you.
¹⁶ I have spread my couch with coverings,
colored linens from Egyptian linen;
¹⁷ I have perfumed my bed with myrrh,
aloes, and cinnamon.
¹⁸ Come, let us take our fill of love till morning;
let us delight ourselves with love.
¹⁹ For my husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey;
²⁰ he took a bag of money with him;
at full moon he will come home."
²¹ With much seductive speech she persuades him;
with her smooth talk she compels him.
²² All at once he follows her,
as an ox goes to the slaughter,
or as a stag is caught fast
²³ till an arrow pierces its liver;
as a bird rushes into a snare;
he does not know that it will cost him his life.
²⁴ And now, O sons, listen to me,
and be attentive to the words of my mouth.
²⁵ Let not your heart turn aside to her ways;
do not stray into her paths,
²⁶ for many a victim has she laid low,
and all her slain are a mighty throng.
²⁷ Her house is the way to Sheol,
going down to the chambers of death.

The View from Solomon's Window

The story is a fairly simple one to follow. Solomon is looking out his window, looking down on the streets of Jerusalem, and he sees a featherbrained young kid walking down the street at night. He comes across a seductive woman who entices him to come home with her. Adultery ensues.

This text reveals to the reader the crafty ploys of this seductive woman. Solomon is giving his reader both a literal and metaphorical birds-eye-view of the situation. It's like watching the suspense movie where you, the viewer,

know who the bad guy is, you know where he's hiding, you know what's up his sleeve, but the unsuspecting victim does not know. If the characters on-screen only knew what you knew, they wouldn't fall into the deadly trap.

That's the view Solomon is giving us. He wants his readers to first see this temptation through the safety of his window so that when they find themselves on the same street on a dark night they aren't falling into the same traps.

This sexual encounter is no accident. Solomon says of this woman that she is "wily of heart." The Hebrew expression literally means "guarded," which means she has secret strategies that she holds close to her; she has a plan, a scheme. She has planned this encounter.

This story—and the lures the woman uses to get the man in bed with her—offer some startling parallels with modern pornography.

Lure #1: Physical Lust

The first lure, physical lust, is the most directly observable temptation. Verse 10 states that she is "*dressed as a prostitute*." This woman is dressed to kill. She is seductive.

This is the most obvious, in-your-face reason why men are drawn to pornography. They like to look at naked women, plain and simple.

Men have a sex drive. When a man is attuned to a woman's form, when he sees a sensual image, or when he fantasizes, this triggers a reflexive release of testosterone in his body and his brain begins to cultivate a desire for sex.

Remember: this sex drive is created by God. When you read the creation account in the book of Genesis, what is the apex of the physical creation? After creating the moon and stars, plants and animals, and the garden of paradise, the climax of the physical universe is *the woman*. God forms Eve and brings her to Adam, and as they stand naked before each other, he erupts with a poem packed with anticipation and excitement: "*This at last is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh*." It is then God calls his creation not just good but very good.

But when sin entered the picture it changed the way we relate to the created world. Paul comments in Romans

1 that as we look at the visible created world our minds should perceive the invisible God. We should notice His eternal power and divine nature, and then as we perceive Him we should be moved to honor and worship Him as the immortal God. But instead, Paul says, we are always exchanging "*the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things*" (Romans 1:23). This is idolatry.

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Notice what Paul says here is our chief problem: it's a worship disorder. Our hearts should be captured with the glory of the immortal God, but instead we become fixated on images of created things. Among all the created things the image of a woman's body often ranks at #1 for men. Man's natural draw to a woman's beauty becomes twisted, and we make images of women our god—the things that truly captivate us and capture our imaginations.

This is what pornography does. Pornographers are basically modern day idol-makers, only their material is not wood or stone, but pixels on a monitor. Their chisels are camera angles, lighting, makeup, and clever photo and video editing. And just like Israel before us, we take these idols into our hearts (Ezekiel 14:3).

Lure #2: Passive Pleasure

She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him... (Prov. 7:13).

This is the woman's very first move. No words: just an in-your-face sensual embrace, telling him everything he wants to hear with her body language and her gaze.

What message is she sending this man? She is easy, vulnerable, and eager. He can have her with no commitment or work on his part. He merely has to follow her home; she will do the rest.

This is another reason why guys like porn. The actresses in this digital harem are eager and willing. He just has to find them. This is the lure of *passive* pleasure.

A man wants the embrace of a woman—a good and godly desire—and so God has set up the institution of marriage. A few chapters prior, Solomon encourages his readers to “rejoice in the wife of your youth” (5:18). A man’s godly character beckons him to not only seek a wife, but more importantly, to cultivate the virtues of a godly husband, and be a man of character.

But our sexual drive is not neutral. Like everything in our psychological make-up, our sex drive is stained with sin. We have this bent toward *passive* pleasure, not loving commitment. Marriage involves commitment, pursuit, intentionality, romance, love, and respect. Marriage is about taking care of someone other than yourself. Lust involves none of this. This is why pornography is so alluring to some men. Like a lot of temptations, pornography offers a quick fix, a shortcut to pleasure without virtue. Pornography rips sexual pleasure from its relational context and creates a realm of fantasy. It enables a man to feel like a man without requiring him to be one.¹

Lure #3: Escape

I had to offer sacrifices, and today I have paid my vows [...] I have spread my couch with coverings, colored linens from Egyptian linen (Prov. 7:14,16).

These are the very first words out of her mouth. The word “sacrifices” is the word used in the Old Testament for the fellowship offerings, animal sacrifices presented and slaughtered at the temple, with a portion given back to the worshipper for them to eat. It was usually eaten that day among friends and family. These were the choicest cuts of meat. She’s effectively saying to this man, “I have a table with the best foods spread at my house right now.”

In verse 16 she continues talking about her couch. Usually people in that culture would recline to eat, and she is describing a special seat reserved for him at her table, covered with expensive, exquisite cloth imported from Egypt. This was the luxury bedding of Solomon’s day. She has spared no expense for him. She is inviting him into an experience of comfort and delight.

For many men pornography is their place of comfort, their refuge, their escape. For some this is a conscious thing:

they justify spending hours and hours looking at pornography because it is their treat to themselves—the way they wind down or escape. For some this is a subconscious motivation: they don’t even realize it, but they run to pornography again and again because it is a fantasy where all the arrangements have been made for them, and where they can forget their worries, dissatisfaction, and discontent.

The world is full of hardships and difficulties, and when we encounter them something in us revolts. Something in us longs to return to Eden, before the curse and decay of sin entered human existence. We long for the comforts of Paradise. The gospel tells us there is a day coming when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, when Paradise will be restored to us, when there will be harmony between us and God, harmony with one another, harmony with creation. But when we face the stress of fallen conditions, our sinful hearts don’t retreat to *that* hope. We retreat by making temporary Edens, small paradises that we can control, paradises centered not around God but centered on ourselves.

This is one reason why porn is so alluring: it gives us a ready-made cast and plotline for a fantasy world to which we can escape.

Lure #4: Secrecy

For my husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey; he took a bag of money with him; at full moon he will come home (Prov. 7:19-20).

She informs him that her husband has gone on a business trip and isn’t expected to return until the next full moon. In other words, she is saying, “Don’t worry. There is no fear of getting caught.”

Often porn is enticing because of its secrecy. Pornography thrives on secrecy.

Psychologist Al Cooper noted this when he coined the “Triple-A Engine” of Internet pornography and cyber-sex. People are drawn to porn because it is (1) affordable, (2) accessible, and (3) anonymous. Affordable—porn is relatively cheap or free online. Accessible—the Internet brings

pornography right into the private corners of your home or office at high speeds. And anonymous—no one has to know that you see it; it is secret.

It's been said true character is who you are when nobody's looking. We let our true colors shine when nobody else sees what we're doing.

This applies to both the good and the bad, doesn't it? Jesus said if you want to pray, fast, or give to the poor from a *pure* heart, then do these things when no one is looking except your Father in heaven. Then, He says, you will receive the true lasting reward of doing them.

To use the old Latin phrase, we must live *coram Deo*, "before the face of God." We are to live our lives conscious of God's presence and omniscience and all-penetrating gaze. *Coram Deo* means we not only *know* but also supremely *care* that God always sees us, that God is sovereign. There is nothing hidden from His sight, and knowing this utterly transforms how we live.

The Internet has brought this issue to the forefront. As more and more of us live detached, anonymous lives online, we start to see what really motivates us, what really makes us tick. Behind closed doors our real motivations surface. Before the Internet, many Christians might have avoided the trap of pornography, but was that avoidance merely conformity to Christian social norms, or born out of a desire to please the God who always sees us?

The anonymity of the Internet has exposed something deep in our hearts, a deeply rooted belief that there is a piece of life that we can totally have as our own, a territory that we can rule outside of God's sovereign gaze, a small kingdom of our own where we can play by our own rules. But in order to live in this deception, we need secrecy. By shattering the anonymity we shatter the illusion that our decisions affect no one else but us.

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Lure #5: Pride

I have come out to meet you, to seek you eagerly, and I have found you (Prov. 7:15).

Notice how she plays this guy. "*I have come out to meet YOU, to seek YOU eagerly, and I have found YOU.*" She probably would have said the same thing to the next guy who came along, but she insists that he's the one and only. She makes him feel desired, wanted and attractive.

Solomon crystallizes this so well in verse 21: "*With much seductive speech she persuades him; with her smooth (or flattering) talk she compels him.*"

Today we might say she is stroking his ego. She is playing to his pride. This is the same ploy used in pornography today: to catch the man up in the fantasy experience where HE is the main character. The woman on the screen is selling the lie: she wants HIM, she notices HIM.

For many guys, physical lust is not the only thing driving their fixation on pornography, masturbation, and fantasy. It's also motivated by pride or self-worship. The fantasy world is like a film playing in their minds. When they fantasize they cast their latest crush as the leading lady in the movie of their minds—but who is the main character? He is the main character, producer, and director all in one. The lady reads the script he wants her to read. In the movie of his mind, the plot is all about him, and she is merely the *supporting* actress. The fantasy is about how irresistible he is and how she makes him feel about himself.

This, again, is idolatry. One of the reasons why porn is so powerful is because it reinforces our sinful desire to worship ourselves.

Lure #6: False Intimacy

Come, let us take our fill of love till morning. (Prov. 7:18)

What a wonderful phrase for a husband to hear from his wife, and yet it is found in the mouth of an adulteress.

She speaks of the "love" they will enjoy all night long. The Hebrew word, *dowd*, translated here as "love," is used

many, many times in Solomon's celebrated love poem, the Song of Solomon. It is used as the pet name between the two lovers: "my Beloved." It is also used to refer to the affectionate, passionate love they share:

How beautiful is your love, my sister, my bride!
How much better is your love than wine, and the
fragrance of your oils than any spice! Your lips drip
nectar, my bride; honey and milk are under your
tongue; the fragrance of your garments is like the
fragrance of Lebanon (Song of Solomon 4:10-11).

This sort of love describes the physical and verbal foreplay between Solomon and his bride right before making love.

The forbidden woman is playing on this deep motivation for love. This is what pornography offers a man. Pornography seeks to tap into a deep part of us that desires closeness and then creates parody of it. Porn is false intimacy.²

A lot of single guys have a dreaded fear of being alone. They want to experience love and intimacy. Even married guys experience this, especially if their marriage is not all they hoped it would be.

Of course we were created for intimacy. It is a part of our make-up as God's creatures. But in our sin-soaked hearts, this desire becomes an idolatrous demand. To the one who desires companionship more than God's glory, being alone is hell. To save ourselves from this hell, the porn girls in our fantasies become fitting saviors. But as we bring our twisted desires to Christ and make them subservient to His glory, then and only then do we begin getting a taste of intimacy the way it was meant to be.

Lure #7: The Forbidden

Solomon describes the adultress as "the forbidden woman" in verse 5. The word carries the idea of someone who is foreign or a stranger. She belongs to someone else. She is not his. It's not just that she is an attractive woman: she is a forbidden woman. She is off-limits.

This is what our sinful nature does: we want what we can't have. The Bible calls this covetousness. Paul spoke about this in Romans 7:

[I]f it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me (Romans 7:7-11).

Follow Paul's logic here. First, Paul speaks about the principle of sin in the members of his body: a drive in his bones to live autonomously, to disobey God. Second, he speaks of God's law. He specifically mentions the tenth commandment: You shall not covet. What happens when this sinful drive meets God's law?

It was as if covetous desire was laying dormant in Paul— asleep, dead. Then the command not to covet brought his sin to life, arousing the sleeping giant. The command, of course, promises life to those who walk in it (Deuteronomy 5:33), but our sinful drives within actually use the command to stir up more lust. Knowing we are not allowed to have something kicks lust into overdrive and produces what Paul calls "all kinds of covetousness." This is one more reason why this foolish young man follows her home; he wants what he cannot have.

A few chapters later Solomon sums up the motto of Lady Folly: "*Stolen water is sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant*" (Proverbs 9:13). This is why "the other woman" pulls at a man's heart. Pornography gives a man the feeling that he has been given the key to the back door of forbidden pleasures.

1. This observation comes from Michael Cusick, particularly his involvement in the *Somebody's Daughter* project. Visit SombodysDaughter.org for more information.
2. Dr. Harry Schaumburg wrote an excellent book called *False Intimacy* about how things like pornography hijack our desires for intimacy and offers a cheap replacement of pleasure without relationship.