



Controlling Pornography

by Ronald L. Dart

Is there *really* such a thing as sexual addiction? Some professional counselors say, “Oh yes, there is.” Others say, “No, not really. It’s just a matter of choices people make.” Now, I don’t know who’s right on the issue. I get the feeling that these counselors are disagreeing on mere semantics; they’re talking past one another when there really is no substantive disagreement. I’ll leave the argument to the professionals, but I have to admit there is a *real* problem in our society with something that looks *very much like* an addiction to sex.

Thanks to the Internet, pornography is clean out of control. Think of this: Of all the kids you know between the ages of, say, 11 to 17, how many of them would you think *accidentally* would be exposed to pornography on the Internet? Answer: nine out of ten. 90% of all teens have been exposed to pornography on the Internet *by accident*. Now, if I point out to you that there are 8,000 new cases of sexually-transmitted diseases among teenagers *every day*, would you agree we have a problem? No? Well, what if I add the hard fact that two out of ten—20%—of 15-year-olds—ninth graders—have slept with *four or more* partners, then would you agree we have a problem?

Now, it’s true to say that pornography is out of control in our society (in the world, for that matter). But when we say that, we raise the specter of *control*. If we are to control it, who’s the controller? The government? Well, someone will argue, “No, no, the government shouldn’t be trying to control that. The First Amendment prevents it, anyway. And it’s really a parental responsibility.”

But this thing is too *big* for parents. Parents can try to do their best with their own kids, but their efforts are simply swept away and *drowned* by the flood of sexuality that just threatens to overwhelm us. Parents lock the doors, and it comes in the windows. They lock the windows, it comes down the chimney. Parents need help. But society is not only not helping; society is systematically rendering parents *powerless*. There was even a case where a mother listening in on one of her young teenage daughter’s phone calls with a felon was ruled, by the courts, to be invading her daughter’s privacy.

One of the things that’s killing us is the way the courts are now interpreting the First Amendment. “Free speech” means we can’t control much of anything. There are still a few restrictions, but they are becoming fewer by the day. Now, what’s odd about all this is that for 200 years we lived under the First Amendment and still managed to keep sex away from children. We kept it out of movies. We kept it off the radio. We kept it out of television. We kept it out of print, except for rare exceptions. You could get titillating material, but it had to come under the counter.

Now, what do you suppose was the overriding social need that allowed us to interpret the First Amendment in such a way that we could control pornography and smut, and why can’t we do it now? To answer that question, I have to change the subject for just a moment.

There’s a huge battle going on in public right now over the issue of gay marriage. The whole issue seems completely absurd when you take it in a broader concept. Let me explain. For generations, it was extremely difficult to get a divorce in this country. Some of us are old enough to remember the stories

of people who fled to *Reno* to get a divorce because it was easier in Nevada. All the other 47 states made divorce hard. (That was before we had 50 states and before no-fault divorce.)

How does no-fault divorce relate to gay marriage? Well, let me put the question to you this way: What business does the government have regulating marriage *at all*. Why are they even in the business? What was the overriding concern—the overriding consideration—in restricting the freedom of people to divorce and marry again to their heart’s content? Why did the government issue marriage licenses and *formalize* the marriage relationship? In other times and other places, governments didn’t do that; people did their *own* marriage contracts. What the government has done is simply to impose a standard marriage contract by means of a marriage license.

Why did they do that? The answer to the question seems obvious enough to me. If I can borrow a phrase from a late political campaign: It’s the children, stupid. The government felt justified in restricting our freedom to divorce in the interest of protecting *the children*, who are not usually consulted when we gaily break up our marriages. Few laws have been more harmful *to children* than no-fault divorce.

But it all seems so logical. “Why fight? Just let people split up and go their separate ways.” The answer is just as logical. If you marry and bring children into the world, you are required to *stay married and take care of the children*, because that’s good for the kids. It’s what the children need.

No-fault divorce has been a *disaster* for kids. It would have made more sense for the government simply to bow out of marriage altogether than to have created no-fault divorce. It would have more sense for the government to say, “Hey, you’re on your own, folks. We’re going to treat each of you as an individual, not as families. It’s up to you to protect the kids. Weddings and marriages are matters for the church; the government will simply ignore them.” Now, my point is simply this: We felt, for a very long time in this country, that *for the sake of the children* we could abridge the freedom of adults to mate like alley cats. We even had laws against *adultery* (as quaint as that may sound to some of you).

And this is what makes the issue of gay marriage so absurd. The only reason the government can use to justify *any* laws about marriage, at all, is to protect the children. And since there is no means by which gay couples can generate kids, they are irrelevant to the marriage question. The government has *no* reason, *whatsoever*, to recognize gay marriage.

And in case you think I’m being homophobic when I say that gay marriage is absurd, perhaps you can forgive me next time you observe some of the fertility symbols that festoon marriage celebrations. Now, I understand, in a way, some of the motivation of gays in pressing for marriage rights. But in the interest of gaining respectability, gays are *trivializing* one of society’s most important institutions—an institution created and protected for the sake of the children.

The Pharisees decided to test Jesus on this very issue of divorce and remarriage. (The incident that I’m reading is recorded in Mark 10, verse 2.)

Mark 10

NIV '84

² Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

³ “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law”, Jesus replied.

⁶ “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’

⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,

⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one.

⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

So Jesus took a very severe line on original intent regarding divorce and remarriage. He didn't deny Moses' law. He didn't argue with Moses' law. He simply said the reason for it was because people are hard-hearted.

Mark 10

NIV '84

¹⁰ When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this.

¹¹ He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her.

¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

So Jesus laid it out pretty hard. Now, at the same time:

Mark 10

NIV '84

¹³ People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them.

¹⁴ When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

¹⁵ I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

¹⁶ And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

And I can't help but think of that old song, *Jesus Loves the Little Children*:

Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
[They] are precious in his sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.

Clarence Herbert Woolston - Jesus Loves the Little Children

But, you see, there's a reason why these two incidents are put together: that the whole point of the law regarding divorce is the children. Nothing else. That's why that law exists. Not all the gospels develop these incidents the way Mark does, The reason why he does it is because children are what adultery and divorce are all about.

Now I return to my earlier question: If for 200 years we were justified in abridging the freedom of adults to publish pornography, what has changed? Why can't we do it now? Here's what the First Amendment says:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

First Amendment to the United States Constitution

For 200 years we felt we could interpret this in a way that allowed us to control smut. Now we have decided we were all wrong; we have to turn smut loose. For 200 years, we now think, we were *wrong* to control pornography and obscenity. And parents are now left trying to control access to the Internet in ways that will never work. Some people are designing Internet filters to control what's allowed into the home. And I think that's probably a good idea. And if I were a parent with kids in the home, I'd probably install one. But, you know, like teaching abstinence in schools, it's attempting to maintain a vacuum. And the truth is, these kids are smarter about computers than you are. And if you can find a way to install the thing, they can find a way to get around it.

There's got to be a better way than this. I think there is. What has happened to us is that sex has replaced love as the central value in human relationships. Nothing could be clearer as you listen to Christian counselors trying to explain sexual addiction. I listened to a panel of these fellows just a few nights ago as they worked over the problem. And while I agree with them on the importance of keeping porn away from kids, they are like King Canute commanding the tide not to come in; you just can't solve it that way. What they are trying to do is like trying to head off a deadly virus by quarantine. Sometimes that works with disease. It won't work here, though, because the ACLU will see to it that we can't quarantine the carriers. The ACLU is going to say, "No, no, you can't put these carriers...you can't lock them up. You can't bar them from society." And so here they come.

Now, if we were talking about a virus, what would we do? We would inoculate our kids. Problem: What's the vaccine? Where can we get it? How can we vaccinate our kids against the wretched pornography virus? That's not going to be easy—not in our society—but the risks are *so high* we have to find a way. Warren Throckmorton, as a professor of psychology, recently said this:

As a mental health counselor, I am really troubled by the numbers of adolescents that I have counseled who cried for days and hurt for years because they engaged in "safer sex" within dead end, unfulfilling relationships. Sadly, they learned that "safer sex" can be hazardous to their emotional health.

Warren Throckmorton - Hey Kids! Want Good Sex? Try Abstinence.

Schools have been passing out free condoms teaching all about safer sex; even teaching kids in science lab how to put a condom on a banana. Who's going to tell the kids about the terrible emotional damage that this is going to cause? Who will tell them how destructive it is to ever being able to love, as they surely hope they will? Who will tell them that it will have destructive effects that will reach into their marriage later in life?

You know, you can cure some cases of sexually-transmitted diseases with antibiotics; but it still leaves you sterile. Worse, there will never be a time in your life that you don't remember *that* sexual encounter. There is no shot, no inoculation, that will kill that memory, and it will eat at you for *a lifetime*. This also accounts for some of the profound psychological problems that attend abortions. Because, if you have had one, you will never ever in your life *not* have had that abortion. It will be a permanent part of what makes you who you are.

Now, you may argue that there could be severe problems of a woman *does not* have an abortion, but you have only made my point for me: A pregnancy outside of marriage is a *disaster*, abortion or no abortion. And every casual sexual encounter becomes a part of *who you are*. And even if you're lucky in sex, it will affect your marriage and your life for years to come. You will *never* be the same.

I listened to a psychologist once, explaining what happens in communication. He says the human mind is like a closet you can never clean out. Everything you ever hear, everything you see, everything you smell—everything you experience—goes into that closet and it stays there...forever. Boy, that last

expression, “forever”, rang through the room when I listened to that. And I thought, “That is *profound*.” You can never clean that closet out. And it’s true, because your experiences make you who you are.

And so, when you’ve done that, and you’ve had to go and get treated for a sexually-transmitted disease, you will *always* remember it; you’ll *always* know it. It’s a part of you now. It’s a part of who you are. If you have an abortion to get rid of an unwanted child, *all your life* you will remember that you had an abortion. It is a part, now, of who you are. You have a child out of wedlock, and you decide to raise that child, you’ve done a good thing by raising a child; but that mistake you made—that sin—will *always* be with you, and you will *never be the same*.

Sex is for marriage, and marriage is for love. Can that be taught in school? Can it be taught at home when it’s being systematically traduced at school? It isn’t easy, but it *can* be done. It *has* to be done. Families and churches *desperately* need to teach their children about love. They teach that by Scripture; they teach it by example. By far, the best inoculation is the Law of God and the fear of God. And these are things the schools won’t teach. Notice, I didn’t say they *couldn’t* teach them; I said they *won’t* teach them.

Before I discuss who has to do this and how it’s done, you should know that there *is* good news. In the past eight or nine years, there has been a reduction—clear reduction—in teenage sexual activity, in teenage pregnancy, and social diseases among teenagers. Why? Well, the surveys that have gone through and determined that the reduction has taken place also determined that the *primary* reason why teens are having less sexual activity is religion and morality.

Now, you have to understand, the public schools cannot teach morality. Because as soon as you start talking about “morals”, someone pops up and says, “Whose morals? Who has the authority? Who can possibly explain to us what’s moral and what’s immoral?” So the schools are helpless. Who’s left? The parents and the church. In Deuteronomy, chapter six, God speaks to Israel and he says:

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

¹ Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you go to possess it:

² That you might fear the LORD your God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, you, and your son, and your son’s son, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged.

“Ah, why am I telling you all these things? And why is it that you’re supposed to do them? So that your days can be prolonged. So you can live longer and be happy. I’m telling you these things for your *good*.”

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase mightily, as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey.

How hard is this? The Law of God is given to us—not as shackles and chains, not as restrictions, not because God hates to see people have a good time—it’s because there are a lot of things in this world where we can fall down and hurt ourselves. And God doesn’t want us to do that. The morality of the Bible, the religion of the Bible, all the things that are taught here are taught so that it might be *well with us*. And he said:

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

⁴ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD:

⁵ And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Love. You see, love is the key. But to love God, you have got to begin to understand that it's not just that he's trying to keep you from having a good time. He says:

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

⁶ And these words, which I command you this day, shall be in your heart:

⁷ And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise up.

In other words: Make the Law of God an *integral part* of everything you do as a family. Talk about at the table. Talk about it by the wayside. Talk about it at bedtime. Talk about it sitting around in the evening; so that your kids understand God is, God loves them, God cares about him, his Law is given to them as an act of love so they will know how to live their lives.

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

⁸ And you shall bind them for a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

And he's not talking here about writing them up there—you know, scribbling them on your forehead. He's talking about *memorization*. Having them where they are a sign upon your right hand; that means what you *do*. Frontlets between your eyes; that's where you *think*. He says:

Deuteronomy 6

AKJV

⁹ And you shall write them on the posts of your house, and on your gates.

¹⁰ And it shall be, when the LORD your God shall have brought you into the land which he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you great and goodly cities, which you built not,

¹¹ And houses full of all good things, which you filled not, and wells dig, which you digged not, vineyards and olive trees, which you planted not [*I'm giving you all this stuff.*]; when you shall have eaten and be full;

¹² Then beware lest you forget the LORD, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

And that, my friends, is *exactly* where we are. We have eaten, we are full, and we have forgotten all about God.

Now, having brought ourselves to this sorry pass, what do we have to look forward to? What does the future hold for us if we continue down that road? Well, the answer is found in Hosea, chapter 4; it's just as clear as crystal. Hosea says:

Hosea 4

AKJV

¹ Hear the word of the LORD, you children of Israel: for the LORD has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land.

² By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood touches blood. [*The blood from one crime runs into the blood of another crime.*]

Yeah, I'm afraid we are there. Now, it's not true to say there is *no* knowledge of God in the land, but increasingly there seems to be no *official* knowledge of God in the land.

Hosea 4

AKJV

³ Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwells therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yes, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away.

⁴ Yet let no man strive, nor reprove another: for your people are as they that strive with the priest.

⁵ Therefore shall you fall in the day, and the prophet [*your preacher*] also shall fall with you in the night, and I will destroy your mother.

Why? What God is telling us here is that the preachers—that is, the people who really ought to be telling us these things—haven't done so, and they're going down with all the rest of us.

Hosea 4

AKJV

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, [...]

Now, what kind of knowledge are we talking about here? Is it just *any* kind of knowledge? Obviously not; it's the knowledge of right and wrong—the knowledge that's conveyed by the Law.

Hosea 4

AKJV

⁶ My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you shall be no priest to me: seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.

I don't like the sound of that. We live in a country that not only has forgotten the Law of God, [but] where there are people who are *absolutely determined* to eradicate the Law of God from public life. Any mention of the Law—even a plaque, a monument, anything with the Ten Commandments on it —“Let's get rid of it.” He says:

Hosea 4

AKJV

⁶ [...] seeing you have forgotten the law of your God, I will also forget your children.

⁷ As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame.

We hang on the ragged edge of what he's talking about here. We have gone a long way down this road and it's doubtful, frankly, to what extent we'll ever be able to turn it around and go the other way. Interestingly enough, the *one hope* is parents and the church, who will stand up for what is right. But, you see, the first thing they have to do is stand up and fight back. If we don't, we stand to lose *everything*.

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