

This introductory lesson is from the Bible study Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society. It is intended to assist in answering the question, "Why should someone participate in a Bible study about sexual temptation in a high tech society?" It may be taught live as an introduction to this study, or it may be copied and assigned for completion at home prior to Lesson 1 of the Bible study to encourage people to participate in this study.

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Introductory Lesson:

Why a Bible Study on Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society?

Our world is being transformed by the latest developments in media technology. Computers, the Internet, and cell phones bring an unfathomable amount of information to our fingertips.

Roger Sonnenberg, pastor of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Arcadia, California, and instructor in the family life ministry program at Concordia University in Seward, Nebraska, says:

Few things have revolutionized our society over the last decade more than the computer and the Internet. Family members no longer watch television together but instead sit at their personal computers surfing worlds that were never before accessible to them. One survey indicates that about 60% of households have one or more computers with the majority of them having access to the Internet.

This new media brings many blessings. It delivers into our homes an Alexandrian library where we can find anything from how to tie a tie to the latest happenings in Iraq. However, as with all good things, Satan has invaded and tarnished this gift.¹

One of the most serious evidences of the tarnishing of this gift is the use of sexually explicit websites such as Internet pornography.

How much of our society is affected by sexually explicit websites?

Many are simply unaware of how extensive the use of the Internet for sexual activity has become. As a simple test of your understanding of the issue, answer the following questions; then compare your answers with those immediately following.

1. What percentage of men ages 18 to 34 acknowledge visiting a pornographic website in a typical month?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 30%
 - c. 50%
 - d. 70%

2. What percentage of those accessing sexually explicit websites are women?
 - a. Less than 5%
 - b. 10-15%
 - c. 20-25%
 - d. 30-35%

3. What percentage of children between the ages of 11 and 16 have viewed pornography on the Internet?
 - a. 10%
 - b. 40%
 - c. 67%
 - d. 90%

4. What time of day do most visits to sexually explicit websites occur?
 - a. Early morning
 - b. Daytime
 - c. Evening
 - d. Late at night

5. Which of the following statements is true?
 - a. In 2002, 2/3 of the divorce lawyers from the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers reported that Internet porn plays a major role in divorce.
 - b. 29% of born-again adults in the U.S. think it is morally acceptable to view movies with explicit sexual behavior.
 - c. The U.S. Customs Service estimates that 100,000 websites offer illegal child pornography.
 - d. Youth with significant exposure to sex in the media were shown to be 2.2 times more likely to have sexual intercourse at ages 14 to 16.

Compare your answers:

1. (d). According to a survey, 70% of men ages 18-34 admitted to viewing Internet pornography in a typical month (comScore Media Metrix).
2. (d). Various surveys reveal that 30-40% of Internet pornography users are women (Internet.filterreview.com).
3. (d). 90% of children ages 11-16 have viewed Internet pornography, usually unintentionally at first (Gaines, Sara. "Why sex still leads the net." *Guardian Unlimited*, February 28, 2002).
4. (b). Gretchen Hyman reported for ABC News (August 12, 2002) that most visits (70%) to sexually explicit websites occur during the work week between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.
5. All four of these statements are true.

Aren't Christians minimally impacted by sexual temptation?

We live in a society that has desensitized us to sexual impurity. Thus, we often fail to recognize its danger to us and its offense to God. As Christians, we dare not ignore its effects.

It's all around us. From primetime television to daytime dramas. From the magazines and tabloids at the grocery check-out to billboards and other advertisements. Sex is used to entertain, tantalize, and sell.

Internet pornography is rampant in our society. It tears apart marriages and introduces children to sexual sin at very young ages. It is easily accessible in multiple locations. It is not a temptation that only non-believers struggle with. It is common throughout our society and affects even Christian families and professional church workers. Consider this:

- A *Christianity Today* leadership survey (December 2001) reported that 51% of pastors indicate that Internet pornography is a possible temptation and 37% reported that it was a current struggle. Four out of ten pastors have visited a porn site.
- A *Leadership Journal* survey dated March 2005, in an article entitled "Christians and Sex," states that 57% of pastors say that addiction to pornography is the most sexually damaging issue in their congregations.

What makes this form of sexual temptation so dangerous?

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.
(Ecclesiastes 1:9)

The dangers of sexual sins come in many forms and are certainly not new to mankind. However, more than any other form of pornography known before, the exploding industry of Internet pornography threatens to spark a new wave of sexual immorality and misconduct in our homes, businesses, churches, and throughout society.

- It is easily accessible to anyone regardless of age or gender.
- It offers a sense of anonymity.
- It seeks users out – a person doesn't have to be looking for it.
- It exposes users to all forms of sexual temptation.
- It feeds sexual lust and contributes to a deeper progression of sexual sin.

Does God's Word really address such a current issue as Internet pornography?

The Word of God has much to say on the subject of sexual sin, including lusts, cravings, coveting, and idolatry. In fact, the English word *pornography* is derived from the Greek word *porneia* (meaning sexual immorality), which is used frequently throughout the New Testament. The Bible presents us with words of confrontation (Law) and words of hope and healing (Gospel). Look up the following Bible verses and discuss what the Lord is teaching us.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

1 Corinthians 6:11

Galatians 6:1-2

Colossians 3:5-7

What differences exist between secular counseling and Christ-centered approaches?

Secular counselors recognize the severity of the problem of Internet pornography and have written much about it that is very helpful in understanding addictions and even addressing some of the issues. However, many do not see this as a "sin" problem; therefore, they fail to address the root cause: man's heart. When sin is not acknowledged and confessed, the Gospel is unable to do its healing work. Jesus noted that such sins are rooted in our heart:

Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality.... (Matthew 15:19)

God does not condone sexual sin or immorality of any kind. However, his Word of forgiveness and healing is for anyone who turns to him in repentance and faith. In Holy Scripture we are taught to *gently restore* those who are trapped in sin. God's Spirit working through the Word gives us the power we need to amend our sinful lives and to overcome sin, even sexual sin.

When sexual sin becomes addictive, Christian counselors, pastors and support groups may aid people in changing their behaviors and developing systems for accountability. They can also guide people to reconcile broken relationships. The use of God's Word, addressing sin and applying his grace, are essential for healing all those affected.

Why should I participate in a Bible study on sexual temptation in a high tech society?

While not everyone has personally experienced the specific use of Internet pornography, *everyone in our society is impacted by its affects*. Christians need to be aware of these new forms of temptation in our society so that they are better equipped to resist temptation, help restore others in their temptations, and be comforted in the hope of the Gospel. *Every teen and adult Christian can benefit from this study.*

Further, the approach to addressing sexual temptation relates directly to dealing with other forms of sin common to mankind. Whether or not the sin is sexual in nature, God's Word provides direction for us in confronting sin, repentance, confession, forgiveness, and living the sanctified life.

DVD: View the "Introduction" segment on the DVD, "Responding to Sexual Temptation in a High Tech Society." Answer the following question: "How can studying this topic benefit Christians in their families, their workplaces, and the church?"

The chapters that follow in this study will examine what it is like living in a sensual society and how we might get to the heart of the matter. What really is the problem and what can be done about it? Join us as we explore God's Word on this issue.

Homework assignment

As you reflect on this introductory lesson, what particular insights did you discover? What do you hope to gain personally from this study? Be prepared to share your answers with the class next week.

If you would like to purchase the Bible Study or DVD, please follow the links below:

[Purchase the Bible Study](#) | [Purchase the DVD](#)