

# Ep\_40.2\_Dear\_Pastors\_part\_2

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

church response, problematic porn, brain chemistry, ethical inhibition, dopamine hit, addiction cycle, mental health, ADHD correlation, Father wound, sexual issues, emotional intimacy, Christian resources, trauma-informed care, betrayal training, legacy changer

## SPEAKERS

Lyschel, Pam B., Bonny

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**L** Lyschel 00:00

Music. Hi. I'm Pam Blizzard from recovered peace, and I'm Lachelle Burkett with hope redefine, and

**B** Bonny 00:08

I'm Bonnie burns of strong wives, we're so glad you're joining us.

**L** Lyschel 00:15

Welcome to another episode of hope for wives. Today. We're continuing our conversation around the church's response to betrayal, trauma, sex addiction and sexual issues in marriage. Last episode, we shared stories of churches that have responded well and churches that responded poorly. We finished this topic by brainstorming solutions for the leadership of churches to consider in this valuable and tender area of sex and betrayal. So ladies, let's move into our question to kick us off today is, what would you tell pastors about the consequence of problematic porn viewing on a husband,

**B** Bonny 00:52

as Pam alluded to in the last episode? So well, it changes brain chemistry. And there's also a study that says the more that you are exposed to pornography, the more a part of your brain is inhibited, and this part of your brain is actually the ethical part of your brain. So the more you watch, the more you're going to justify your actions that they aren't going against your values. So it's a catch 22 the more you watch, the more you justify, not only the other reasons, because of the dopamine hit that you know kind of that creates the addiction, that dopamine high, that feel good, space that creates the addiction. All of these things rewire the brain

towards dysfunction. So I think it's important to understand that the consequence of porn viewing is not just spiritual. It is spiritual. However, there is past trauma. There's a lot it's a complicated mess, and it's not black and white.

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Lyschel 02:01

I'll go with them. I totally agree, Bonnie, and we'll add that. The best way I can sum it up is that it leads to a distortion of reality. Pornography is an instantaneous hit, and oftentimes you will see men talking about dissatisfaction sexually in their marriage, because pornography doesn't include laundry children having to make emotional connection with another person.

Pornography is instantaneous, like the like the majority of things in our life, and so the work that it takes to get to true intimacy, many who view porn on a consistent basis, that is a foreign concept to them. There's a ton of great resources that I'll make sure we have in the show notes through an organization called fight the new drug, and they have just great articles and videos to talk about the impact of porn on various aspects and then also what it's leading into, but it does say that porn consume consumers tend to experience more negative communication with their partners, feel less dedicated to their relationships, have a More difficult time making adjustments in their relationships, are less sexually satisfied and commit more infidelity.

Research also shows that porn consumers tend to become less committed to their partners, less satisfied in their relationships, and more accepting of cheating. And I just think those are things that are going to feel really counter to our Christian belief systems, but yet, these are the undertones, and the way that it shifts their moral compass is this leading into this consistent consumption,

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Pam B. 03:50

as with any addiction, whether it's alcohol or drugs or a process addiction like gambling or or eating or pornography or sex, the addicted person turns more inward and becomes more selfish, more self consumed, self absorbed, very protective, very defensive, of the self, and so they become less concerned about what's going on with other people, they lose empathy. They lose empathy and compassion for the other people in their lives, and at the same time, ironically, they lose that compassion for themselves. And there's this constant struggle of and this cycle of shame and acting out and shame and acting out. And so it's going to be really hard to get that person out of defensiveness. They become very defensive. And when somebody is defensive and they can't acknowledge a problem, they can't work on the problem. So any relationship grievances about leaving. The milk out, there's going to be defensiveness about taking your shoes off when you come in, there's going to be defensiveness. And it just really makes it hard to connect with that authentic person and problem solve, because there's this constant image management going on, and it's a withholding of the true self.

B

Bonny 05:26

I'll also say that one of the consequences of porn viewing is that it's kind of a gateway drug. So if a couple comes to you and the man does admit to porn viewing, there's a high likelihood it's doesn't it hasn't stopped there. And that's not to scare anybody. That's just reality, because there's a tolerance with porn. As a person gets used to watching a certain kind they will progress towards more intense experiences because of this tolerance that builds in the brain,

and so that because of that tolerance, then it can also lead to acting out with real people. And that's where Lachelle was talking about how because affairs, the statistics on affairs go up because of this tolerance that's built.

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Pam B. 06:21

Yeah, addiction is a progressive disease. It's like the alcoholic who starts with a six pack and then has to move to a 12 pack, but then has to move to the harder stuff. They need more and more stimulation to achieve the same effect of escape or a high. It's a true addiction. And

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Lyschel 06:39

then they also have, they also have studies that that directly relink pornography use to a lot of mental health, but also other disorders. So they've done studies on individuals reporting extreme depression and loneliness and the direct correlation or high usage of pornography, and it's perpetuating the cycle, because essentially what it starts to trigger is shame, right, which throws you into depression and the loneliness, which goes into helplessness. So there's a lot of information out there about the impact on someone who's actively consuming it. The other thing we've recently heard is that there's a direct correlation between ADHD and pornography, and there's arguments about how ADHD increases porn use, or is porn use amplifying ADHD, because they have very similar components to them in the way that it's one of those moments of like the carton for the horse based on the individual. But I think those are all things that are just really important for our listeners to know that it's a deep impact. Bottom line is a lot, and it's a spider web of things, and it can go from one place to the next. And I know that there's been times for myself when I learn about something new and I go really like everything comes back to that one subject. But in this particular case, I think it's also hard for us to delineate a lot of the things that we're seeing in men, specifically in this day and age, because pornography has been so accessible for men in their 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s, right? And so on. The, you know, smartphones have been in pockets since was it 1998 I think is the year that they started coming out. And so you can only imagine. And Bonnie, you were talking about the escalation of choice. It's funny. I not a great potential example. But I heard an interview of Chris Rock talking about how distorted his thinking became through his porn consumption, and that it was, it was just what he called mild, I think, in the beginning, and then it escalates to a level of violence. So Bonnie, I know that's kind of where you were going with that. And so hearing people offer testimony of the destruction, I think, is so powerful for us to take note,

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Bonny 09:08

because if you're viewing violence, there's a high likelihood that's going to be carried over into the home. So in the last episode, I talked about the constellation behaviors. It's not only to protect his addiction. It also comes from his addiction as he sees these things, and his the part of his brain where the ethics live has been diminished. He's going, he there's a high probability he will start to display the things he's been viewing, and it can, it can become sexual abuse in the marriage bedroom.

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Pam B. 09:43

There's another impact that I can't speak to from a real knowledgeable level, only from hearing about it and learning about it, because I'm not a man and I'm not a person who's addicted to pornography. I hear about, and I've heard my husband talk about the Father wound, and the connection between the relationship with a man with God and the Father wound. And when a man is consumed, because that's what happens, they just become completely consumed with constantly thinking about pornography and the last time they used and the next time they're going to use, it causes a complete hiding from God, the inability to face God, knowing it's more than just Shame, shame, that social shame. It's shame from the Father, the perceived shame from the Father. And a really good resource that demonstrates this in a very beautiful way is a movie. It's a docu drama called the heart of man, and it's, it's the prodigal son story, but it's all around sexual brokenness, and so if you want a resource on understanding that more, that's a really good movie documentary to watch that demonstrates how a man can cut himself off from the love of the Father and feel that he's not worthy and not good enough. And it's Psych. It's cyclic.

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Lyschel 11:32

So ladies, let's scoot this angle just a tad. What would you want to tell pastors about couples who come to them with sexual issues in their marriage.

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Bonny 11:42

So I'm going to assume that this question means that it's not necessarily overtly known if there's pornography being used or not. So if they're just coming to the pastor with with a sexual issue, I would like pastors to know that typically, sex isn't the problem. It's something underneath that that's really the problem. Sex is just a symptom. It's just one of those. So my favorite analogy is pneumonia. So you go to the doctor and you've got a cough and you've got a fever, and the doctor prescribes you coding cough medicine and some really great fever reducing medicine. And you go home and you take it, and you kind of feel better, but it never really resolves. That's because, if it's pneumonia, the true problem is underneath that cough and underneath that fever, it's either bacteria or virus, and that's usually what is happening when sex problems present themselves in a marriage. It's something underneath that spilling over into the sexual experience of the sexual intimacy of the marriage. Because sex is meant to be a deep knowing. It's meant to be an overabundance of that connection you have outside of the bedroom. So what's probably happening is there's limited connection outside of that bedroom. So that's what I would say. If a pastor has a couple coming to them with sexual issues, it's not just about sex.

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Pam B. 13:20

Yeah, it's emotional intimacy. It's it's authenticity, being authentic, vulnerable. Vulnerability. You know, maybe it's about the kids or something. It's got totally nothing to do with the physical intimacy. But because you don't feel seen or heard or known, it's not always a grievance. Sometimes it's something very joyous that lights me up, and my husband goes, Okay, great, right? And doesn't get it, and I feel unseen and unheard, and that can show up in

me, not wanting to be vulnerable, or maybe in him, maybe, maybe I did that. Maybe I went, Oh, yeah, big deal. Great, yeah, whatever. What happened at work? Oh, cool, whatever. And maybe he doesn't feel seen and heard.

**L** Lyschel 14:13

I think it's you're you're just adding to what Bonnie already said is that the the sexual issue is the symptom. And the invitation for any pastor who's sitting with a couple in this space is to get curious and look for what's underneath all of that, what is playing into it, not just assuming that it's a mismatch in that space and giving the couple the opportunity to get back to the root of certain things is, what is the only thing I would add to that question?

**B** Bonny 14:48

Yeah, there are great, there are great Christian sexual intimacy resources out there outside of the problematic sexual behavior world. So. There are books the great sex rescue is a is wonderful at unpacking some wrong teaching we've all had. We can put that in the show notes. And the other podcast, I'm on sex chat for Christian wives, deals from a very mutual perspective of the marriage bed. And another thing I think that really dumbfound pastors is when a wife comes with maybe a sexual complaint. Because women out there, there are about 20 to 30% of women in marriages who have the higher desire than their husband, for whatever reason, it's another place to get curious what's going on in their marriage. So I love that, Michelle, you said to get curious. That's exactly it. Don't make assumptions,

**L** Lyschel 15:57

all right, friends, what kind of hope can we leave to our listeners today, I'll

**B** Bonny 16:02

just reiterate from last episode about Sam Black's new book. It's called the Healing Church. What churches get wrong about pornography and how to fix it. What I love about this book is that it offers solutions. It's not just a big gripe, it's here's what's happened and here's how we can move towards better. So we'll have that in our show notes again. Another thing, the covenant eyes website has a great blog with just an abundance of information, scientifically and Christian graced information to call through, and they're short, it won't take you more than five or seven minutes to read one of the blog posts.

**P** Pam B. 16:48

The hope I'd like to leave is that there is information out there, and please avail yourself of it, and you can be such a huge help to a man struggling with pornography or problematic sexual behavior. If you have a specific problem, I'll throw this out there. I'll speak for you. Bonnie and Michelle, I know if you're looking for a specific resource or have a specific issue that you need

help with, reach out to us. We may not have the answer, but we may be able to point you in a direction of getting help. So please, if you need assistance learning or or getting a specific resource, reach out to us. We'll do what we can to help you.

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Lyschel 17:30

I really want our listeners to be able to hear that there are other believers out here who want to equip you, who want to partner with you, who want to come alongside you and empower you to impact the ministry field that the Lord has put you in that's right in front of you. No one, none of us, can be in every place and at every time. Right? We need more soldiers in this way. I also just want to give a perspective for the work that we're doing. I have a sticker on my monitor that says I'm a legacy changer, and I believe that with all my heart, I'm a legacy changer, and that is exactly what we are doing in this work. And I believe that as pastors and front workers, frontline workers, we're legacy changers, and we have this opportunity to step into a subject matter that has consistently destroyed families for decades, and we get to have conversations and get in the mud and be in the mess with them in the hope of changing the story and we change the legacy. And so I just want to encourage you to keep going, to keep learning and keep exploring, looking for those resources and ways to be equipped. One training that I will specifically call out that I'm a big fan of is through an organization called App SATs. It is their betrayal, trauma, religious leaders training. This training is designed specifically for religious leaders. You can be lay leader, Pastor, youth pastor, Assistant care team, whatever it looks like Stevens ministry. But the intent is, is that you would be if you complete the training. It's an opportunity for you to understand trauma, informed care, what, when and how to refer based on a situation that's in front of you, and as well as building a network of others who have a heart to care for people in this space. So if you are interested in that, we can put their website in the show notes as well, but it's appsats.org, it does come. From the lens of betrayal trauma. So it's definitely about caring for the person who is who's being impacted by the betrayal, but it's a phenomenal training and gives a good high level of addiction as well. So that would be one of those extra resources that I would love to share with our listeners. Well, thank you for joining us today. We hope to be a bright spot on your recovery journey. If you'd like to leave us a question or comment, please use the contact button on our website. Hope for wives.com Also, if this podcast has helped you, please consider donating for the cost of our publications. We would be very grateful. Have a great day. Bye. You?