

06 Porn & Masturbation

PARENT GUIDE

BIG IDEA:

Porn and masturbation need to be discussed in a manner that cultivates hearts of repentance, instead of crippling students with more shame. Porn and masturbation can be a destructive mix. However, helping students think biblically about both will equip them to navigate its influence throughout their lives.

5 Minute Check-In with Yourself and/or Your Spouse:

1. How is pornography defined in your home?
 2. What do you believe are the most important steps to protecting your child from porn?
 3. If your child views pornography and you find out, how will you respond? Knowing this now will help mitigate anger in the future and assist you in focusing on their heart, not just their behavior.
 4. What will you ask your child to do if they do see pornography?
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5 Minute Check-In with Your Child:

1. What stood out to you in this week's teaching and/or small group time?
2. Do you think that porn is an issue at your school? If not, why do you think that is? If so, what are some of the things you've heard from your friends?
3. Do you understand what I (as your parent) believe about sex, sexuality, and pornography? (If no, then communicate your beliefs to your child. If yes, ask them to reiterate those beliefs back to you. Make sure whatever you share is grounded in God's love for your child.)

Tips for Further Conversation:

Be sure you are ready for this dialogue personally before discussing it with your child. Sometimes we can minister out of our own pain, hurt, and shame. If you've not come to grips with some of your own past sexual mistakes, please take time to seek healing before having conversations with your child. And please know: you don't need to be perfect to help your child in their struggle. You just need to have your heart and mind directed toward the right goal.

Here are some helpful questions to ask yourself as you prepare to enter this conversation:

1. Is this an issue in my life?
2. If it is, what am I doing to get help?
3. Do I lead out of my own shame? Or do I lead out of the healing that has happened in my life?

Pornography is now readily available to anyone at any age in any location. In fact, the average age of first exposure to pornography is now around 11 years old. If youth don't have knowledge or understanding of the Creator's design for sex, pornography can easily become a major source of sex education for them.

Your voice is important and needs to be heard. Here are some helpful tips when talking to your child about the impact of pornography in their life:

1. **Acknowledge the awkwardness of the conversation.** (And remember that this should always be a conversation, not a lecture). Acknowledging awkwardness will help the dialogue move forward by letting your child know that this topic can be just as uncomfortable for you as it is for them.
2. **Be sure the conversation has a broader view in mind.** Use the discussion about pornography to open the door for you to discuss God's wonderful gift of sexuality and the parameters he has established for healthy sexual expression.
3. **This conversation should only take place after several conversations** that allow your child to understand the basics of sex, God's design for it, and the dangers that lurk on the internet.



4. If by chance you find out that your child is viewing pornographic material, be sure to **control your anger, shock, or disappointment**. Also, focus on your child's heart rather than their behavior. You want to deal with the root of the issue, not just the symptoms. A grace-filled approach that points them to Christ and an understanding of their brokenness will help your child turn to Christ for his forgiveness and grace.
5. Remember, **your honesty is just as important as theirs**. As the conversation progresses, don't pretend to have the answer to a question that you don't know the answer to. Sometimes the best thing you can do is be honest and admit you don't know. Let your child know that you will come back to the question when you have all the information required to answer honestly and correctly.

Preparing for a conversation on masturbation

Okay, let's be honest. Rarely do we have talks about masturbation. Why? Because they are uncomfortable and awkward. But if we are going to talk about porn, then we need to have a conversation about masturbation.

Here are some basic things to keep in mind as you dialogue with your teen:

1. **Don't be shocked.** Youth will feel more comfortable being honest with you if you're not tense and awkward.
2. **Masturbation is common among adolescents for a particular reason**—they have a plethora of changes occurring in their bodies all at once. Hormones like testosterone, estrogen, and progesterone are produced at rapid rates to cause these bodily changes. These hormones, which are doing their jobs to make young people physiologically mature and sexually developed, are the same hormones that regulate sex drive and desire. These hormones essentially “turn on” sexual awareness in adolescent bodies.
3. **Be aware of the guilt/shame distinction**, and help your child do the same. Remember: Guilt is the feeling you get when you do something wrong. Feeling guilt is a good thing. It drives us to stop doing the wrong thing. But shame says WE are wrong and disgusting. Shame typically



pushes us further from God (and others) rather than toward God’s forgiveness and grace.

4. **Understand that this issue is not clear in Scripture.** Nowhere in Scripture does it say something like, “Thou shall not masturbate.” We need to be honest about this. Our conclusions about masturbation need to be both founded in Scripture and responsive to what our culture says. Past generations have relied on errors and lies to build a case against masturbation. They proclaimed that masturbation would cause mental illness, addiction, anxiety, and depression. As these myths have been exposed, the following generations have become more skeptical about what to believe. In some cases, they’ve just given up asking.
5. **Although the Bible does not directly identify masturbation as sin, it is okay to express concerns about masturbation**—especially if it’s habitual or addictive. Concerns related to masturbation include sexual fantasy and lust, premature ejaculation, distance from God (mostly due to shame), escapism, and potential future obstacles to healthy marital intimacy. None of this is intended to scare anyone. These are simply some of the realities youth may face if masturbation becomes a force they have no control over.

Additional Resources:

VIDEO: Full-length interview with Stuart Boyd

TOOL: Weekly devotional

