



START

To get things started, go around the circle and answer this question:

When you were a kid, can you remember a very memorable time where you got in big trouble for something? If so, what was it? What did you learn from that experience?

(Important note about this study: As we talk about sexual temptation, the questions are designed to take a 30,000 foot view of pornography and to talk about the topic itself, the struggles of living in an over-sexualized culture and God's life-giving promises. As pastors we highly recommend that the group separate into men and women if you are in a co-ed group if you desire to talk more in depth. There will be many people in groups affected by this topic, so we highly encourage you to wait till the end of the group to share relational struggles with a trusted person who can listen and pray with you as sharing your story is deeply personal. Red Rocks Church also can help individuals or couples with getting connected to some great counselors to gain victory in this common struggle. We would really recommend that everyone have an accountability partner and if you don't have one, to really be diligent in finding a godly friend to keep you accountable.)

SHARE

Welcome to our teaching series called "Off The Record."

Have you ever wondered about certain topics that never seem to be talked about in church? Topics that stand like elephants in the room, yet the church seems to shy away from? Many times we like to talk about these things 'off the record,' because we are either too afraid of what people might think of us or many times, we are not sure how to answer tough topics that are difficult to answer. As a church, we believe that we are accountable before God to bring the full counsel of the word of God and that we can't shy away from the truth.

The truth is we are all broken, we all struggle and the life Jesus offers us is better; better than anything else the world offers. So during this series, we are going to be full of grace. Every one of us needs grace. There is not one of us who should point the finger at another broken person, for we are all at the table of grace thanks to Jesus Christ. We will allow the word of God to speak to us and trust that even

if we differ in opinion at times, that we can trust the Holy Spirit to do what He does. It is the very spirit of God that will bring change and conviction, not a domineering argument.

What a journey this series has been. We have talked about marijuana, homosexuality, the end times, heaven, what other difficult topics can we cover? Welcome to week five as we talk about pornography. That's right, we are going to be talking about the crazy over-sexualized culture we live in. We will discuss God's original intention regarding sex and finally, the great reminders God gives us in his word about grace, forgiveness and restoration that is available to every one of us today.

Here are some statistics:

- Pornography is a multi-billion dollar industry that creates more revenue than all the professional sports combined
- There are 24 million pornographic websites on the Internet
- 70% of men under age 50 view porn once a month
- 1 of 3 viewers of porn are women
- 34% of all Internet users have viewed porn accidentally
- 25% of all word searches are for pornography according to Google/Yahoo/Bing search engines
- 90% of children ages 9-16 have viewed pornography
- Average age a child starts looking at porn is 11

As pastors, we first want to say that we want Red Rocks Church to be a place where we can openly talk about struggles, because we have a God who has conquered sin and death. In Christ, we are **already victorious**. We just need to realize who God made each of us to be. Our identity is not found in our moral performance. Our identity is found in Jesus Christ. So we can be perfect in Christ as Christians, yet still struggle with temptation. When we fall, we get right back up and set our eyes on Jesus Christ and the cross, reminding ourselves that we are forgiven and loved.

Why pornography? We want to address this head-on because let's all be honest...most of us have seen pornography. All of us have either willingly searched for it or accidentally viewed it online or in a movie. It is difficult to avoid it at times. Our culture is crushing us from every direction with images from catalogues, laptop screens, smart phones, billboards, commercials, movies, erotic romance books and magazines. Almost anytime we watch television, there are commercials with scantily dressed women eating hamburgers or selling something. What do half-naked women and hamburgers have to do with each other? Nothing. But, it's the culture we live in that tries to use sex to sell hamburgers, because advertisers know exactly what tempts their consumers. Advertisers are paid to know this.

All of us have been affected by pornography in some way. The good news is that God has made a way for us and truly understands the struggle we all face.

Hebrews 4:15-16

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Do you tend to think of God as empathetic to your struggles with temptation?

Why do you think our culture today is so over-sexualized?

There are so many temptations in life, why do you think that pornography is such a big problem in our culture?

GROW

It is evident that pornography isn't just your typical temptation. It has a much more profound effect on a person. The truth is that God is the originator and designer of sex. There is no pleasure in life that the enemy can create. The enemy cannot create anything. God is the originator of pleasure, and Satan can only try to deceive, pervert and abuse what God created as good. So when we drift from God's original, beautiful and soul-mingling intent of sex to a perverted form of it, we are deeply affected. We see it ruin sex lives, create a chasm of disconnectedness in relationships, and have adverse effects on sexual performance or lack thereof. It has destroyed countless families.

Let's read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Why do you think that of all things that people struggle with, sexual sin seems to be the most difficult to talk about, especially among Christians?

Do you think that Paul is right when he says that sexual sin is different than all other sins?

God tells us that we "were bought at a price," and that makes us valuable in God's eyes. When we fall to sexual sin, it can be very difficult to want to connect with God. Why do you think Paul wanted to remind us about our value?

MOVE

Let's lighten things up by talking about God's great promises to us. For many of us, just talking about this in a room of others is very difficult. For some of us, it is probably very freeing to have a place to be open about the struggle - when we talk about what is in the dark and bring it into the light. It is when we come into the light that God can do his greatest work of healing in our lives. Be encouraged that God does not hate you. God wants to hear from you today. Remember that there is help, hope and healing for anything you are facing. God is a restorer of purity, the great giver of second chances and brand new starts and nothing can separate you from his ferociously graceful and protective love!

Romans 8:35-39

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who can separate us from the love of Christ?

What is one way you can change or arrange your life better to "flee" from sexual temptation?

PRAY

As a group, spend some time praying for each other and the struggles that we all face. If you are in a co-ed group, consider breaking up into men and women's groups to talk more freely.

TO GO

James 5:16

Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Additional Resources:

Mingling of Souls by Matt Chandler (about God's design for love, marriage, sex and redemption)

If you would like to talk with a counselor, please contact us at care@redrockschurch.com and we will do our best to get you in contact with specialized counselors who can help! There is help and hope!

*We would also highly recommend when studying the Bible that you find a solid study bible with notes. The NIV Study Bible or the ESV Study Bible, are both excellent Bibles that have scholar notes, cultural content and time-line charts. This will change the way you read the Bible and help engage you into what is really happening as you read.