

ALPHA COUNSELING SERVICES

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Dear Friends,

Over the last thirty plus years serving God at Alpha the message of **Christ as Life** has always been the theme and it is surprising how many Christians have been disappointed with our message. Most people who get upset with the message of **Jesus as Life** are looking for something *'to do'* to solve their situation. They want a list of steps or set of rules, a way to work at their problems so they can overcome them. Once a woman expressed her exasperation when she said she didn't want 'a new philosophy', she just wanted better communication skills. My answer was, "what good are better skills if the root problem is conflict with God over who is in control?"

Over the past thirty years one problem seems to surface more often than any other. This problem is addiction to pornography! The word pornography comes from two Greek words. PRONE, meaning a prostitute and GRAPHEIN, meaning to write. Literally it means to write about prostitutes. Webster's Dictionary meaning is: The writings and pictures. INTENDED to arouse sexual desire. Today pornography has only two purposes. 1) to arouse sexual desire. 2) to make lots of money. Some time ago I read that in the United States alone pornography is a multi billion dollar business annually.

Mike Wells in his newsletter *Lifelines* stated that Christian men are seriously addicted to porn thinking that porn is at least not adultery. A man will justify his fleshly addictions to porn by mumbling that at least he hasn't broken his marriage vows. Mike says *"He sets a standard to keep in order to still be "good". "He will look but not touch."* That fleshly thinking won't work if you read Matthew 5:27-28. *Jesus said; You have heard that it was said you shall not commit adultery; but, I say to you that EVERYONE who LOOKS at a women with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* Please remember Webster's definition of pornography as words and pictures intended to arouse sexual desire.

All addicts lie!!! Sadly they are best at lying to themselves. Those addicted to porn tell some of the wildest lies. I have heard: "I collect the pictures but I don't look at them." "They don't affect me sexually" (if this is true they have to find worse stuff). Maybe the worst lie is; It's not that bad to look as long as I don't touch.

I am aware of dozens of marriages that have ended, and pornography was involved in the failure. In my opinion, pornography is the one most prevalent fleshly sin the church today.

The solution to pornography addiction for the Christian is not sexual workshops to better understand the problem. It is not sexual addiction support groups that try to provide accountability. These may help in the short term but, Mike Wells, comments that every time we try to read, study and overcome a vexing problem all we get is more defeat. It is not until we are in an abiding relationship with Jesus that we find lasting victory over sin. Jesus is to have first place in our lives. **If He is not first we cannot stop falling into sin. "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."** John 15:

As we approach the ending of another year and the nights get longer please know that your prayers and gifts do help many people!

May God bless you with growing faith and good health!

Richard