



Doing Family Right

How to PORN-PROOF your Family

By Dr. Dave Currie

I hope that what you read here scares you into action – seriously, I do. It's a battle!

When I wrote this, I was in the Denver airport on my way home from a 2-day Leadership Summit focusing on helping the church to better face the porn epidemic within its walls. Over 50 leaders, authors and experts from all the major sexual recovery ministries across North America, under the direction of Dr. Doug Weiss, joined together sharing concerns, perspective and ideas on how to assist local churches in better ways to face the growing impact pornography is having on its people. Powerful!

But why the concern for the church – and thus your family? These experts commonly used the 70-80% range as to the numbers of Christian men who are regularly involved with porn. They referred to and agreed in discussion that around 50% of pastors are also struggling with porn. And the female leaders at the summit reminded us all that women are battling with porn at higher numbers than ever before. Can you feel it? If this understanding isn't cause for concern, I don't know what is!

Now hear this: over 90% of the men that I am working with in sexual addiction recovery counselling started looking at porn in the early teen years – 11-14 years old. They got into porn as KIDS! The roots of their sexual addiction started really young. Parents – are you reading this?

Some parents think that because they are a Christian family that they have this covered. They assume that their kids are going to be fine. Let me bring another perspective. May it alter your reality.

First off, of the over 40 men that I am working with in sexual addiction recovery in the last 2 years, I can only think of three that didn't come from a home with Christian values. Further, two of the men that I have recently started working with come from very solid Christian homes. One man's dad is head of the men's ministry at his church and the other's father is in full-time Christian ministry. You'd think these kids would be safe. Why not? Because parents assume too often that their strong Christian values are being passed down effectively – naively believing porn would never impact their home.

Trust me. If these families could do it over – or if they only knew then what they know now – they would gladly do whatever it would take to prevent their son (or daughter) from having grown up on porn. The destruction on their adult child's family – the spouse and the children – is massive as the long-standing addiction is being played out in devastating ways today.

Please stay with me too even if you have daughters. Don't forget that the porn draw is growing within the female population too. We are running into a rising number of young women – still teens – who are coming forward asking for help. Literally today, the day that I was writing this, a request for support came in from the family of a 17-year-old girl who had acknowledged to her mother that she'd been addicted for a long time. Girls need coaching and protection too.

Parents, can you feel the urgency? We have to do all we can to prevent the Next Generation – that’s your kids and my grandkids – from getting hooked by the porn phenomenon. Problem. It is not going to be easy. Why?

Porn is everywhere. Keep in mind that the average age that little boys are running into porn is 9.5 years old. Be careful on saying “Never MY kid”. You see, the accessibility has never been higher. Any device that has an internet connection is a gateway to porn. Cell phones, computers, iPads, notebooks, X-boxes, PlayStations and more can all be entryways to viewing porn.

And it can be done so easily in secret. Their porn viewing can almost be anonymous. Further, to the young impressionable mind, the vivid sexual images and videos are so enticing to their new journey of going through puberty. Then their peers are saying porn is cool and harmless while the general culture implies that watching porn is the norm – even healthy and everybody’s doing it, right?

And pre-teens and young teens are so vulnerable physiologically as the addiction factor is even greater because their brain is still developing and is so easily shaped. If they get hooked as young teens, it’s a very long battle to rewire the brain functioning and untangle their habits toward a healthy and God-honouring sexuality.

Finally, the erosion of morality and modesty is so great within our culture that requesting and sending naked selfies to the one you are dating is pretty much part of the teen relational culture. I have helped 3 families in the last 18 months, where police were involved, because their teens – all aged 14 or 15 – were caught exchanging nude images of themselves and then passing them on to others. Soliciting, possessing and distributing child porn – boom! Three felonies that could be punishable by law.

Parents and grandparents...do I have your attention?

Helping people beyond porn’s influence is my advanced training, my growing counselling focus and in my world every week. Here are my best suggestions to begin to safeguard your family from the impact of pornography. We’d all be wise to go overboard on protecting our children until they are mature enough and wise enough to respect the shaping of their minds, the developing of their sexuality and the clear danger of porn’s draw.

Five Best Ways to Start Porn-Proofing Your Family:

1. **PROTECT ALL DEVICES.** Install safeguarding and accountability software on all devices owned by any member of your family. Any electronic device that has internet access through any means needs to have protection software installed like **Covenant Eyes** (Simply the best out there) with limiting further by **Kid’s WiFi**. Be intentional as parents to protect your family through today’s sexual tsunami and through this turbulent season of their young lives.
2. **LIMIT THE HOURS.** Be the parent. Make the hard choice even though the pre-teens and teens in your home may buck your system. Remember, parenting isn’t a popularity contest and you can’t get voted out. Do what’s right for them whether they like it (or you) or not. Try to steer them toward balancing

face time (real person interaction not iPhone's video conversations) with screen time on some device. Socialization is so important. Electronics make you go private. Shut down the WiFi in the home say at 9 pm every night. When the mid-teen gets their own data plan, all phones must be charged each night at a centralized charging station – on top of Dad's dresser. No phones or devices in their rooms at night.

3. **SET BOUNDARIES EARLY.** Stop now at using electronics as a baby-sitter. Kids as young as age 3 and 4 are becoming addicted to the images on the screens. And no, it's not all bad but be really careful on setting up a dependency on electronics – that's an addiction. This sense of norm and entitlement will come back to bite you when they are Tweeners (10-14 years olds) Remember, the younger they are – the easier it is to get addicted to all things electronic. Start boundaries on devices when they are little – before they even have more access to one of yours or one of their own. Set priorities like, “be ready for school before you get your device or get your homework done first”. Keep boundaries like no devices at meal time, while driving or during church. Talk as parents and then implement your plan to protect your kids from pornography.
4. **TALK ABOUT PORNOGRAPHY.** Actually, have good and thorough sex talks – dads with the boys before age ten and mothers with the girls before age ten (see podcasts and articles on giving a sex talk on our website). Read and share the contents of the article ***Pornified: 5 Facts You Must Tell the Next Generation*** (see DFR website). For younger children, have a clear discussion on what to do when they come across “***Naked Pictures***” (see DFR website). Teach teens “***What porn is doing to your future sex life in marriage***” by listening to my talk on the same (DFR website). Tell them specifically how to face Porn. Share your journey. Learn ***What to Do if You Find your Child Looking at Porn*** (see podcast on DFR website). Parents, get educated (read ***Indecent Exposure*** on website) and get talking. Don't make excuses and don't delay.
5. **LEAD THE WAY.** Clean up your act. Lead by example. Face your personal purity challenges here and now as a gift to your family. Break the silence if you are secretly struggling with porn. Talk to someone in the next 24 hours. Tell your spouse as well. Get help. Recovery is a team sport. Begin to walk with integrity as a parent to create a foundation for strength in guiding your children. And pray. Pray for their protection, for their innocence, for their choices and for courage to face the temptations that will come publicly with peers and privately online. Protect your home by getting on track yourself.

I'd love to hear from you on what is the most helpful thing you are doing to Porn-Proof your family. There are a ton of resources available on the DFR website on porn and sexual addiction recovery for better facing your own struggle and helping your family and others in your world. Reach out to our Care Centre if you need professional support. May God be your anchor as you guide your family through the online battle with pornography.