

A Christian
Woman's **Guide to**
Breaking Free
From Pornography



It's Not Just a Guy's Problem

Shelley Hitz and S'ambrosia Curtis

"This book isn't just for women. It is for parents, teachers, faculty and administrators who work with women and girls. It's great for starting honest and transparent conversations about difficult and often embarrassing issues. The statistics are compelling, the ease-of-access to pornography is eye-opening, and the chapter on "your brain on porn" is essential information from which anyone can benefit."

**- *Becky Tirabassi, Founder of Burning Hearts Inc.*
*Author and Speaker***

"What a powerful book! Working with teen girls and talking candidly with them about the issues they face, I know firsthand many girls are struggling with pornography and the path of destruction it takes them on. It has been difficult for me to find Christian resources that address the issue of pornography and females because it has been stigmatized as a "guy thing." The Christian Woman's Guide to Breaking Free from Pornography gives me the resources I need."

**- *Katie Wolfe, Founder & CEO of Get Real inC,*
*www.Getrealinc.org***

"This book by far is the best I've seen on the subject of pornography. If you or someone you know is into porn, please tell them about this book. It might be their only hope."

- *Scott Mason, Speaker and Author, www.ScottMason.org*

A Christian Woman's Guide to Breaking Free from Pornography

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Introduction

I decided to write this book because I know what it feels like to be caught in the trap of pornography as a Christian woman. Yes, I have struggled with pornography.

It is not something that I am proud of, and to be honest, it is something that I wish never happened, but God is using this dark season from my past for His good.

You see, I travel and speak across the United States to both teens and adults. Once God prompted me to start sharing my testimony of how He freed me from the grips of pornography, teen girls and women began to confide in me their struggles with pornography.

You Are Not Alone If You Struggle with Porn

In fact, pornography is a fast growing problem, even among Christian women. Our goal is to offer hope and resources to help you overcome this trap of the enemy.

Pornography is something that many women are addicted to but not talking about, especially in the church. It is impacting families and marriages and controlling many peoples' lives. For many people, myself included at one time, all they can think about is the next time they will be able to access their computer or the next thrill they will get.

Some get hooked innocently through another person showing it to them or through an ad while surfing the Internet. Others are bored and get drawn into chat rooms or webcams that eventually lead them down the path of getting trapped into a pornography addiction.

Although men are the ones typically drawn to porn due to their visual nature, women are also getting hooked. Even Christian women in good marriages, who are active in ministry, are getting trapped into this sin.

We pray that if you or someone you know is struggling with an addiction to pornography, you will find hope and help within these pages. Ultimately, our hope comes from Jesus Christ, but it also comes from knowing we are not alone and that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Freedom from pornography is possible!

Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

~Shelley Hitz

por·nog·ra·phy

noun

obscene writings, drawings, photographs, or the like, especially those having little or no artistic merit. (www.dictionary.com)

the depiction of erotic behavior (as in pictures or writing)
intended to cause sexual excitement (www.merriam-webster.com)

PART ONE:

THE REALITY OF PORNOGRAPHY

S'ambrosia Curtis

The night I publicly confessed the secret that I had hidden for over ten years, I must have gone back and forth in my mind dozens of times. I wanted to be free from the sin that so easily entangled me, but I could not stand the thought of my close Christian friends looking down on me. What if my dirty laundry became my “outfit of the day” every time they saw me, or what if they no longer wanted to associate with me once they knew the truth?

Shortly after my confession, when I began to speak one-on-one with others about my struggle with masturbation, I found it difficult to even vocalize the word at all. I would frequently substitute *self-pleasure* for masturbation, because it sounded less repulsive. After all, the connotation of that word is not only negative in the Christian perspective, but it is considered to be straight up dirty, and the fear of being stigmatized and seen as *dirty* was enough to keep me from being completely open about my hidden sin.

The Underlying Issue

Unfortunately, many women find themselves in a similar predicament. They desire to have clean hands and a pure heart before God, which is required to ascend His holy hill, but fear of a tainted reputation causes them to hold onto that which makes them unclean, so they silently slip further into the ever-widening cavern of sexual sin. But how can we be lifted from a pit, if no one knows we are in it? Cloaking our sins may conceal them from the prying eyes of others, but they remain entirely visible to God, and until we learn to view our lives from His perspective, we will not fully comprehend the reality of our spiritual state.

Gaining New Perspective

We all have the propensity to not only lie to others about the state of our hearts, but to lie to ourselves as well. Some of us may refuse to accept the reality of who we have become, because we are afraid of what we will find once we allow the Light to expose our darkest crevices, while others may convince themselves that there are no crevices to be searched. Meanwhile, the sin that we meant to temporarily hide in the closet, ends up taking complete residence in our hearts and turns us into “whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside, but on the inside are full of dead men's bones and everything unclean” (Matthew 23:27).

Most of us do not realize that this transition has taken place until we discover that communicating with God seems to be more

difficult than usual. I counsel quite a few girls regarding sexual addiction, and one commonality I find in every story is that the further they get into their addiction, the less connected they feel to God. 1 John 1:5-9 gives us some perspective on why we feel this way:

God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Facing the Reality of Pornography

At some point in our lives, the fear of losing fellowship with God has got to outweigh the fear of losing face in front of others. Currently, that may seem like an impossible task for you, but reread the last verse in 1 John and be comforted.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

The One who gave this promise will also be faithful to complete the good work He started in you. Yes, there is a harsh reality

concerning the subversive nature of pornography, but the even greater reality is that nothing is too difficult for God.

Chapter 1: Pornography and Women

Part of the challenge we face, when it comes to bringing sexual sin into the light, is the assumption that pornography is a man's problem. Since men are more vocal about their attraction to sexually explicit material, it is easy to see how this misconception has been reinforced. Nevertheless, it is a misconception.

Not Just a Guy's Problem

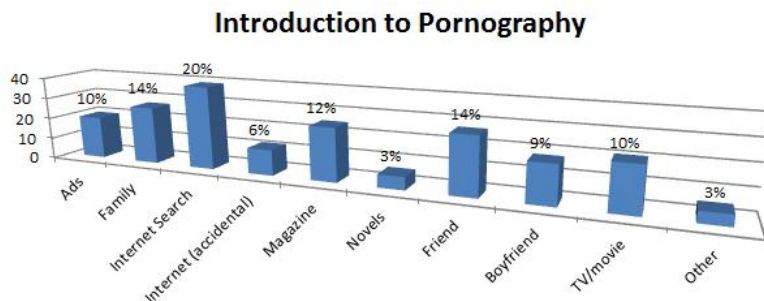
According to statistics published by Education Database Online in 2011, of the 40 million Americans who regularly visit porn sites, 33% are women. That means that of every three visitors to pornographic websites, one is a woman. Sociologist Michael Kimmel, who studies pornography and teaches sexuality at the State University of New York at Stony Brook says,

Twenty years ago, my female students would say, 'Ugh, that's disgusting,' when I brought up pornography in class. The men would guiltily say, 'Yeah, I have used it.' Today, men are much more open about saying they use pornography all the time and do not feel any guilt. The women now resemble the old male attitude: they'll sheepishly admit to using it themselves.¹

How is it that the perception towards pornography among females has changed so significantly? Well, in a 2006 Internet Filter Review study, 70% of women admitted to keeping their cyber activities a secret, and secret activities go hand in hand with hidden sin, one of the enemy's best strategies. The longer we give our sin a dark comfortable environment to grow in, the more uncontrollable it becomes. I would even liken it to the evil alien plant in the musical *Little Shop of Horrors*. The main character Seymour stumbles upon the plant and at first finds it to be harmless, even cute. After a while, he realizes that the plant may not be so cute anymore, as its demands to be fed begins to consume his life. Ultimately, the plant eats not only Seymour, but also his friends. We may believe that we are saving ourselves trouble by hiding what we are doing from others, but in the long run, we are only causing more trouble for ourselves.

The Beginning of a Downward Spiral

To gain a better understanding of pornography's current influence on Christian women, Shelley conducted a survey on her website (www.FindYourTrueBeauty.com) and received responses from 241 Christian girls and women (the full survey can be found in the back of this book). Of the given sample size, 73% of the women had been introduced to pornography. 71% of those who were introduced to pornography had their first encounter with it before the age of 15. On the following page, we have provided a chart that displays the various ways these women were first introduced to pornography.



The progression into pornography usually begins with what seems to be a harmless experience. A friend tells you she found a movie or a magazine under her parents' bed, or maybe you do an Internet search for porn out of curiosity, or you stumble across a sexually explicit scene in a novel you are reading or a movie you are watching. Regardless of which scenario you can claim as your own, the subsequent progression is generally the same for us all.

Dr. Mark R. Laaser, an addictionologist and author of *Healing the Wounds of Sexual Addiction*, suggests that “just looking at porn can never be done without consequences.... Internet porn is the crack cocaine of sexual addiction.”² All it often takes is just a taste to get the image burned into your memory, and the next thing you know, you find yourself looking for “the hard stuff.”

Hard-core vs. Soft-core Pornography

Soft-core pornography is not as graphic or explicit, but it maintains the goal of seeking to arouse the viewer. Generally considered to be the gateway to hard-core pornography, it often leaves more to be desired for the viewer. Examples may include simulated sex scenes, nude photos with strategic cover-ups, or even written descriptions of intimate encounters. Without question, soft-core pornography has infiltrated every aspect of entertainment. Sometimes it can be so blatant that we instinctively feel the need to shield our eyes, but most often it is presented in such a subtle manner that we are completely unaware of the effect it has on us until we realize that our appetite for it has markedly increased. Internet, television, movies, music, magazines, and books have become the primary mediums for soft-core pornography.

The Internet

The largest contributor to the pornography industry, the Internet gives the easiest access to porn, while granting the viewer virtual anonymity. “Studies have shown that women find it easier to click a few buttons on the Internet to search for sexually alluring material. In the absence of a social context, pornography is more appealing to women because there are no social repercussions for using it.”³ Marketers in the pornographic industry are taking advantage of this fact and have boiled their gateway strategy down to a science. Cheryl Wetzstein’s *Washington Times* article, “Porn on the web exploding,” sheds some light on one particular marketing method.

If you spend any amount of time on the Internet, it’s difficult not to find yourself in the midst of a hard-

core porn site – and if you do, you cannot easily leave. A practice called “mouse trapping” means that by clicking out of the site, you’ll be hit with a virtually endless series of pop-up ads for other porn sites, and the only way to stop the flood of pornography is to shut the window or turn off the web browser.⁴

This is a genius tactic considering the fact that according to the Sexual Recovery Institute, *sex* and *porn* are among the top five search terms for kids under 18. *Sex* is actually the number one topic for Internet searches, and more than 1.3 million porn sites will pop up at the user’s request.³

Chat Rooms

Another Internet trap worth mentioning is the chat room. The Internet Filter Review reports that women actually favor chat rooms two times more than men.⁵ Mark B. Kastleman, author of *The Drug of the New Millennium: The Science of How Internet Pornography Radically Alters the Brain and Body*, explains that “knowing what we do about the female brain, the chat room is the perfect model to attract women to the Internet.” He goes on to share that Internet pornographers have two methods for luring women into chat room relationships:

[First], the woman starts out with friendly conversation, which eventually leads to romantic talk, then to sexual conversation and hard-core sexual dialogue... the man on the other end will often lead her to the viewing of Internet porn. Exposed to such graphic images right off the bat, most women would

reject them, but in the context of a relationship...the woman is slowly coaxed into the world of Internet porn. [Secondly], out of curiosity, a woman may experiment with Internet porn to see what it is all about. This will often lead her to sexually oriented chat rooms, where she will undergo the process of desensitization as described above, and become immersed in the porn viewing/sex addiction cycle.⁶

The Center for Online Addiction also reports that “as men tend to look more for cybersex, women tend to look more for romance in cyberspace. In virtual chat areas... a woman can meet men to form intimate relationships, but like a soap opera, tender moments with a romantic stranger can lead to a passion and progress into sexual dialogue.”⁷

Television and Movies

It is almost a given that if you watch any current television show, there will be numerous sexual innuendos floating around. If you happen to miss them in the show, you are almost sure to catch one or two during the commercials. Gary Rose, CEO of The Medical Institute, shared on Focus on the Family (July 8, 2005), that the average teenager spent three to four hours per day watching television, and 83% of the programming most frequently watched by adolescents contained some sexual content. Seven years later, sexual content shows no signs of relinquishing its prominence in television or movies.

Psychological scientists at Dartmouth University recently conducted a study, “Greater Exposure to Sexual Content in Popular Movies Predicts Earlier Sexual Debut and Increased Risk-Taking,” to determine the influence of feature films with sexual content on children aged 12-14. Sometimes we tend to believe that sexual content is limited to R-rated films, but after reviewing 684 movies for scenes of activity ranging from passionate kissing to intercourse, they discovered that 68% of G films, 82% of PG, and 85% of PG-13 films contained sexual situations.⁸ When combined with the fluctuations of hormones that go hand in hand with puberty, sexual content encourages adolescents to seek sensation.

Personally, movies have always been my weak point. When I was in high school, I would watch R-rated movies and fantasize about casual sex with real and imagined people. By my senior year, my curiosity even led me to sneak out of my parents’ house in the middle of the night to meet a boy I met in a chat room. We had been chatting online for a few weeks, when he graciously offered to show me how to make out. I should have known that he was up to no good when he sent me a nude picture of himself and asked me for one, but curiosity got the best of me. With the images of passionate kissing sessions from movies running through my head and the expectation that I would experience something similar, I met this complete stranger in the park. Thankfully, I did not allow things to go as far as he would have liked, but I did do some things that I am ashamed of. The notion of successful casual affairs was cruelly

dashed when this particular boy refused to have anything to do with me after that night.

Music

Focus on the Family reported in July 2005 that 42% of the songs on the ten top-selling CDs in 1999 contained sexual content, 41% of which were "very explicit" or "pretty explicit." The analysis of a 2007 study presented in the *Official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics* stated that of the content of television shows, movies, magazines, newspapers, and music popular among teens, sexual content was much more prevalent in popular music lyrics than in any other medium.⁹

Think of some of the music you hear on the radio today. Name any song from some of the most popular artists like Lady Gaga, Usher, or Nicki Minaj, and you will find an abundance of sexually explicit lyrics. The problem is not that the lyrics are dirty, but that we are gradually being indoctrinated with messages contrary to the teachings of Christ. The same pediatric study reports that "from music, adolescents gain information about society, social and gender roles, and expected behavior, and they use music to facilitate friendships and social interactions and to help them create a personal identity. It is reasonable to expect, therefore, that the messages conveyed in popular music have significant implications for adolescent socialization behavior."¹⁰

Worship music is a conduit through which messages can be shared from our heart to God's and vice versa. We sing of our love and devotion to Him, yet we also receive His love as He illustrates His eternal devotion to complete the good work He started within us. Through worship music, I often receive new revelation of the nature of God and His feelings toward me. What messages are we getting from some of the secular songs we listen to? Most songs with sexually explicit lyrics teach women about who they should be and what is expected of them from society. In September 2011, Researchers from Brigham Young University shared that "for girls in particular, [sexually explicit lyrics] can lead them to judge their personal worth on a sexual level only, leading to poor body image, depression, eating disorders, and substance abuse." They go on to conclude that "popular music can teach young men to be sexually aggressive and treat women as objects while often teaching young women that their value to society is to provide sexual pleasure for others."¹¹ Some studies even go so far as to say that early sexual behavior can be triggered by lyrics of this nature.

Magazines

Ben Shapiro wrote in his book, *Porn Generation: How Social Liberalism is Corrupting our Future*, that the magazines millions of girls subscribe to function as gateway products both for "porn lite" publications like *Cosmopolitan*. When I was in high school, I had a subscription to *Cosmo Girl!* magazine. Upon reading the articles, I began to learn new things about sex and my body, and I became highly fascinated.

As embarrassing as it is to admit, I would even take notes and save them in a box for later. The box has long since been trashed, but I can only imagine how girls, who are not as conservative as I was at that age, would respond. Maybe instead of saving reminders for later, they would impulsively act out their newfound wisdom. This is a hard reality to shrug off, when “most of the teen magazines nowadays revolve around sexual activity,” and as Ana Garner of the College of Communications at Marquette University says, “they’re training manuals for sex.” Regrettably, these are training manuals that three-quarters of adolescent females report reading at least once per month.¹²

Books

Another one of my weaknesses in high school was the mystery novel. Not any mystery novel, but the kind that involved lots of sex, also known as *erotica*. To tell the truth, when choosing a new novel, I would even flip through it first to ensure that it had sexual content before I decided to read it.

In Shelley’s survey, 41% of the women said that they read romance novels that contain sexually explicit scenes. Within the 14-18 year old age bracket, over half of the girls (53%) claimed to read these kinds of novels. Some would say that these books are considered female-tailored porn, since they appeal to what women like, whereas most pornography is geared toward men. The key to grabbing a man’s attention is to visually stimulate

him, but the key to grabbing a women's attention is to stimulate her imagination. Fantasizing goes hand in hand with erotica. With fantasy we do not need to watch hardcore pornography on the screen, because we can easily produce what we want to see in our heads. For this reason, some women would much rather read erotica than watch pornography, but we must be careful not to explain away the pornographic nature of these books. According to the definitions given at the beginning of this book, these types of literature fit the bill for pornography. They are meant to arouse the reader, and that is exactly what they do. Whether you are watching it on the screen or playing it out in your mind's eye, you are engaging in pornography.

Triggering a Response

All of these components of media seem to serve the same purpose: to trigger a response from you. You may have already been aware of some of the influence they had in your life, or you may not have noticed how they affected your life before at all. One thing we are mostly unaware of is how these pornographic images affect our brains and condition us to want more. The next chapter will explain more of what happens in your brain as you are exposed to pornography.

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Appendix 1: Resources

There are resources to get help for pornography, but always remember that the most important part is to have the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Books on Pornography

Free eBooks and Resources from Covenant Eyes:

<http://www.bodyandsoulpublishing.com/freepornbooks>

[Dirty Girls Come Clean](#) by Crystal Renaud

“[Autobiography in Five Short Chapters](#)” is a poem by Portia Nelson – This poem, also known as “Hole in My Sidewalk” has become widely known in many addiction recovery circles. I love the simple and yet powerful way that Portia describes recovery. Take a moment to read her poem now [here](#).

Christian Books on Emotional Healing

[Healing the Wounded Heart](#) by Thom Gardner

[My Healing Journey](#): An Interactive Guide to Spiritual Wholeness by Thom Gardner

[Biblical Healing and Deliverance](#) by Chester & Betsy Kylstra

Get Your Copy: www.christianwomenandporn.com/book

[Waking the Dead](#) by John Eldredge

Online Resources

Setting Captives Free: Setting captives free has a free 60 day Bible study for adults who struggle with pornography called, "Way of Purity: Freedom from the Bondage of Pornography (they have a course specifically for teens as well). You are assigned an accountability partner, so that is a great plus in getting help. I personally went through this course and recommend it. You can sign up for free here:

<http://www.bodyandsoulpublishing.com/wayofpurity>

X3pure.com: The ministry of XXXchurch.com has started a 30-day online program for women struggling with pornography. You can get more information about this program here:

www.bodyandsoulpublishing.com/x3pure

Covenant Eyes Free Webinars:

<http://www.bodyandsoulpublishing.com/pornwebinars>

Dirty girls community signup:

<http://www.bodyandsoulpublishing.com/dirtygirlscommunity>

About The Authors

Shelley Hitz



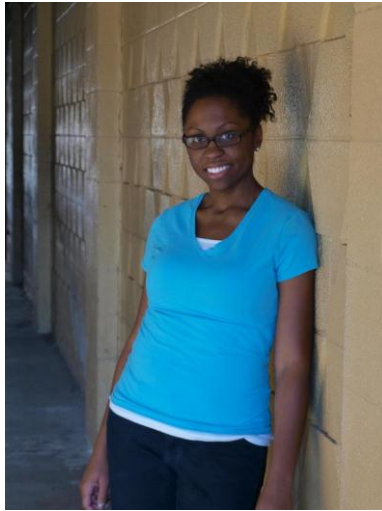
Shelley Hitz has been writing and publishing books since 2008. She is also the author of the website, FindYourTrueBeauty.com, that reaches thousands of girls each month around the world. Her openness and vulnerability, as she shares her own story of hope and healing, will inspire and encourage you.

Shelley has been ministering to teens since 1998 alongside her husband, CJ. They currently travel and speak to teens and adults around the country. Shelley's main passion is to share God's truth and the freedom in Christ she has found with others. She does this through her books, websites and speaking engagements.

You can find more about Shelley at www.BodyandSoulPublishing.com or invite her to speak at your event here: www.ChristianSpeakers.tv

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S'ambrosia Curtis



As an English and sociology teacher at Salina Christian Academy, singer/songwriter/worship leader, and Online Ministry Coordinator for Shelley's website, S'ambrosia keeps fairly busy. Her main objective for whatever she puts her hand to, is to bring glory to the name of Christ, that He may receive the reward of His suffering. Prayerfully, this project does exactly that.

Special Thanks:

S'ambrosia would like to give a special thanks to Dana Dill for taking time out of her schedule to read and edit the manuscript. You've been incredibly influential in this process, Dana, and I'm looking forward to the next step God has for us!

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