



**Reflect:** My name is Derek Higgs, I'm a psychotherapist in Sydney providing counselling for couples and individuals. The larger percentage of my work concerns men of different ages struggling with pornography. More and more people are struggling because pornography is not accountable, it's anonymous and it's so accessible.

Sadly, by the time the men I speak to come to me, they've often developed a pattern of addictive behaviour, their marriages are damaged and they're under a burden of immense shame, guilt and depression. Some are even considering suicide.

The Bible has plenty to say about pornography. Put simply, it is wrong and unfaithful to cultivate lustful thoughts. At the very least, the following verse teaches us that there will be consequences for those who watch pornography:

“Can a man walk on hot coals and his feet not be scorched?” Proverbs 6:28

Treading the path of pornography is like climbing down a wet and slippery embankment. At first you think you're ok. “I'm in control of this”. But all of a sudden you're dazed and bewildered, lying at the bottom of a muddy pit, uncertain how you got there so quickly. It is a choice that will take you further than you ever intended to go.

Why, oh why, do we let the media and society set our expectations about sex and relationships? Magazines, the Internet, Billboards and TV are so obsessed with body image and sexuality.

Men are portrayed as conquerors whose performance determines their manhood. And women must be flawless and 'on' all the time. But no real relationship is like this. The world of pornography is a fantasy place of no commitment and unrealistic expectations.

Meanwhile, in the real world there is disappointment and disillusionment as the bond between couples is strained by feelings of inadequacy and resentment. Sexual wounding strikes at the very core of our identity.

Yet sex is a wonderful gift from God. In the Bible the inventor of sex endorses his handiwork. Isn't that great news? In Genesis, Proverbs, Song of Songs and many other places, we see that sex is good and to be celebrated. Importantly, in 1Corinthians 7:2-5 we learn that sex is designed exclusively for marriage and is intended to be for fun and mutual pleasure, motivated by love and commitment.

If you're despairing, remember, God offers hope and a way out. Jesus forgives! But you must speak to someone, it's too hard to solve this alone.

“If therefore the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” John 8:38

**Prayer:** Dear God, please help me to walk tall, without shame, free from thoughts and actions that don't honour you. Amen

**Verse:** “If therefore the son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:38)