

SUNDAY ARTICLE

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A Letter to My Sons

Liz Wann

My Dear Sons,

The eye beholds much good and evil in this life. Beholding leads to becoming. What we continually put before our eyes and minds will shape and determine who we are.

Images either tell the truth or they lie, but they all speak. On top of this, our natural eyes are lustful things not easily satisfied (1 John 2:16). One lustful look can change us. One look can feed the monster within so that it rears up its ugly head looking for more.

“Feed me,” he says. His appetite is fierce and unsatisfied. One look leads to another, and then to many more.

This is the kingdom of sexual lust – a world of soft porn and free porn – and secrets contained in cleared web browsers.

What you behold, boys, you become. If you steep your tea too long, it becomes bitter. Likewise, if you sit and soak in pornographic fantasies, your life will have a bitter taste. At first the flavours might taste sweet, but bitterness will always be the end result. And the bitterness will be shared someday in your interactions with girls: how you think about girls, talk to girls, treat girls, and pursue girls.

A Wicked Education in Sex

Pornography misshapes your vision of girls, whether you realise it or not. And one day, pornography might affect your future wife.

The women gleaming on the computer screen may not directly feel the effects of your lust, but they will indirectly, as you fuel the industry that enslaves and trafficks them.

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But the images cannot feel the painful grief and loss a wife feels when her husband's hidden sins are inevitably revealed. I plead with you to not let the tea steep that long – to not let one look turn into thousands of looks over the course of years. If this happens, you will taste the bitterness, my sons, and you will want to spit it out.

Lust distorts the glory of both biblical manhood and womanhood; it goes against the divine mandate in the garden of Eden. Men are to care for women – and provide and protect with humble strength – not exploit and dominate. Women are strong, capable, and your equal in dignity and worth, not objects to be used and discarded.

But the porn industry diminishes both men and women, and reduces them all the way down to simple actors of animal lust for pixilation, instead of celebrating them as complex and glorious image

bearers of their Creator. This is the consumer society we live in, devaluing human beings as they're offered up for consumption. The porn industry is lining online aisles with a sexual zoo for viewing pleasure.

A Far Better Place to Look

You, my sons, are called by God to reject sexual consumerism.

You are called by Christ to seek

pleasure *in him*, and to pour out your life in selfless giving to God and to others.

Jesus Christ is the opposite of pornography. Jesus lived a life of denial and sacrifice. No lust, ever. Sex for him was unnecessary, even as he imaged God perfectly. He became the least and the last in order to put us first. Pornography is self-exalting.

What we continually put before our eyes and minds will shape and determine who we are.



It is putting your pleasures and desires first, before the glory of God and the good of others. Since Christ is the opposite of pornography, then look to Christ in your fight against sexual temptation and sin. When you behold Christ, you will become like *him*.

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

Look upon his face, and pornography will begin to look strangely dim.

A Safe Place After Sexual Failure

When Moses asked God to show him his glory (Exodus 33:18), the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ had not yet been fully revealed. How much more glorious is it for you, when you ask God to show you his glory now after the cross and resurrection? You only have to read about this glory in God’s word, and meditate upon it in your hearts and minds. You will be changed. “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word” (Psalm 119:9).

And if you are drawn into the illicit pleasures of the internet, remember the words of Robert Murray McCheyne: “For every look at yourself,



take ten looks at Christ.” One look at your sinful self calls for ten looks at Christ nailed to a cross for you.

Being in Christ is the only qualification we need to behold his glory, even after we have sinned. He alone is the cure and the prevention for your sin.

Be Thou My Vision

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 6:22:

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.”

A healthy eye connotes clear vision, and you will have a spiritually healthy way of looking at things (like the gift of sex). But your eyes can lie to you if you only see with them and not through them. The eye can distort your heart and mind if you are using it only to see what is directly in front of you. When your eyes are filled with the glory of God in Christ, you will clearly see through the distorting lies of lust.

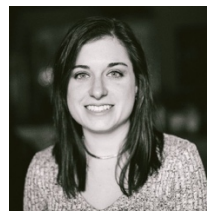
Lust distorts the glory of both biblical manhood and womanhood.”

Before your dad and I had you boys, we planned our wedding. I wanted to play my favourite hymn, “Be Thou My Vision,” before I walked down the aisle. My prayer was that Christ would always be my vision in marriage, but now that prayer surrounds

you both as well. I pray Christ would be your vision in all of life – that your eyes would be filled with glory leading to truth and life and joy. What you put before your eyes will change you. May it fill you with light, and not darkness.

Love,

Mum



Liz Wann has a B.A. in English and writing from Rollins College. She now lives in Philadelphia with her husband and two little boys. Liz is a stay-at-home mom, editor in chief at Morning by Morning, and writes at lizwann.com.

Source: www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-letter-to-my-sons-about-pornography

Liz Wann wrote this letter in anticipation of when her boys will need it when they are older.

The average age of first exposure to explicit pornography today is 11 and some researchers say it is as young as 8. This is often unintentional through the internet. Of course, every child sees countless sexualised images in advertising, entertainment, and contemporary dress styles every day, which grooms them towards this.

Active use of pornography is common by the age of 14, and a third of teenagers have shared photos of themselves naked.

All parents and grandparents can play a key role in praying for and guiding their families like Liz Wann and her husband.

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