



# The truth about sexual lust; Part 15.

## *Romans, chapter 7*

PORN ADDICTION



It is not the purpose of this book to offer a cure for porn addiction, but I'm going to do it anyway. It is really not that complicated. By porn addiction, I'm talking about men who spend many hours a day looking at naked or scantily clad females, then feeling shame over it. Many wives live with this, and are rightly distraught. These wives may be trying to accommodate their husbands' sexual natures by allowing casual porn use, but in many cases there is underlying condemnation. No surprise there. In a so-called Christian society, the man has felt

condemned all his life for his need and desire to behold feminine beauty.

I insist that condemnation and unnatural prohibitions lead to addiction. I am talking about all addictions, not just so-called pornography. If something is unnaturally prohibited, it will only increase one's desire for it. The reason I can be so confident about this is that it is a Scriptural principle. I will be speaking on this principle in a moment. It's from the book of Romans, which I did not write.

Most men will not even recognize a battle until reading, *Every Man's Battle*. A man will be cruising along happily looking at bra ads in the newspaper, thinking, *What could be more natural?* It does not have a hold on his life. It's a simple pleasure making life more bearable. He breathes; he looks. It doesn't matter if it's a newspaper or a computer. To look is to live, and to live is to look; the sun, the moon, a woman in a lacy, black bra—all part of God's wonderful creation.

He loves his wife, but maybe she's shy about sex and feels silly wearing underwear whose function is anything but function. He tries to encourage her, but she hates her body. Or she despises his specific, sexual tastes.

She may even despise the fact that he *has* sexual tastes.

The man living with a condemning wife finds enough small comfort in the newspaper ads, then, to forge through another day. His love for his wife is not in the least diminished. In fact, now he can live more peaceably with her (and she with him), because he no longer looks to her (that is, he no longer pressures her) to be a fancy, sexy, lacy black bra type of woman.

She's glad to have him off her case.

At least he knows, "There is now, therefore, no condemnation" (Romans 8:1).

Oops. Along comes, *Every Man's Battle*. So much for



Romans 8:1—here we are, back beneath the clouds of Sinai, awaiting the return of Moses. Authors Arterburn and Stoeker inform our bra-admiring friend that, if he wants to be a godly husband and stop upsetting Jesus, Moses and his wife, he must completely eliminate any and all images of lacy, black bras—electronic, print, cerebral, dreams—from his sorry life.

If there had been room for one more commandment on that stone tablet, Arterburn and Stoeker would have chiseled it on themselves. It would have said:

THOU SHALT NOT LOOK AT BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN LACY, BLACK BRAS.

What would this latest commandment have produced? The same thing the other commandments produced: *a manic desire for the thing prohibited*. Lacy, black bras would soon be all this poor man would think about. Subsequent to the commandment prohibiting it, the women in the bras would now occupy this poor man's every waking hour, assuming even more daunting proportions in his sleep. The man would say to himself, *I'm in a huge battle!* Once he realized this, the trouble would begin in earnest.

What was at first but a natural hobby, would now become a killing obsession. It doesn't matter if *Every Man's Battle* is saying it, or society is saying it, or the church is saying it, or the man's wife is saying it. As long as there is an unnatural prohibition in the vicinity of a natural inclination—with an added dollop of condemnation—a man, any man, mounts the fast-track to addiction.

There is nothing like an artificial moral battle to make one *a-moral*. This is a Scriptural principle that plays out again and again in human experience, even in religious human experience. No, wait—*especially* in religious human experience.

Here is Clyde Pilkington in *Due Benevolence; A survey of Biblical Sexuality*:

It is said that the French reformer John Calvin was particularly preoccupied with adultery, and made references to it in almost every matter he discussed. G. Rattray Taylor, commenting on the characteristic in *Sex in History*, generalizes that, "Since repression always stimulates what it sets out to repress, one is not surprised to learn that his (Calvin's) sister-in-law was taken in adultery in 1557 and that his daughter suffered a like fate five years later."<sup>1</sup>

### The grace principle

Grace would have been a fine thing to have introduced into *Every Man's Battle*. Somewhere. Anywhere. Unfortunately, grace is conspicuously absent. To the authors of *Every Man's Battle*, Moses is alive and well. In fact, Arterburn and Stoeker have thought of things ("bouncing the eyes," for instance), that never even occurred to that rock-hurling patriarch.

Outward laws with dire consequences attached seem, to the human, likely to work. Law says, "Don't do this particular thing, or else." What chance does grace have against *that*? Grace has the reckless audacity to say, "No matter what you do, all is well; you cannot fall into God's disfavor."

Which is more likely to curb the flesh rather than freak it out?

The answer is: grace.

If only law were designed to work, we could excuse those insisting that we keep attempting it. But it wasn't designed to work, a fact that we learned—or didn't learn—over 2,000 years ago. It was designed to fail. Romans 5:20 (NASB) says:

"The law came in so that the transgression would increase."

Not decrease; *increase*. When I first saw that verse, I thought it was a misprint. Did you even know this verse was in the Bible? Why hasn't anyone ever pointed it out to you? I have not seen a version of the Bible yet that was able to screw up the wording here. God purposely instituted

1. G. Rattray Taylor, *Sex in History: The Story of Society's Changing Attitudes to Sex Throughout the Ages*, New York: The Vanguard Press, Inc. 1970, p. 164



law to teach people this lesson: law never works. “Thou shalt not” fails on application. Not only that, but law upsets people so badly that they end up sinning more. That’s what Romans 5:20 says happens, and it’s what *does* happen.

Here’s how it works: Let’s say that there is a man who never considers coveting. Then the law says, “Thou shalt not covet.” When the man hears the law say, “Thou shalt not covet,” it irritates him to the point of a coveting binge. It’s as though his flesh subconsciously says to God: *How dare you impose a standard on me?*

Sound unlikely? This is the precise testimony of the Apostle Paul in Romans, chapter 7, verses 7-8. Again, from the NASB—

I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.” But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind.

Is this actually in the Bible? Yes. You can verify it in any version you like. Again, not even bad translators have managed to ruin it.

Here’s how it worked in the life of an early Israelite—

**Early Israelite:** We have such a great donkey, Rhonda. I know he’s skinny. But the kids love him. I’ve never felt more content and satisfied in my whole entire life. Please pass me a pomegranate.

**Rhonda:** “Wow! Look at this headline, honey. God has just said that, under no circumstance are we *ever* to covet our neighbor’s donkey.

**Early Israelite:** Covet? Hmm. Covet. Cov-et. Doesn’t that mean to wrongfully desire another’s property?

**Rhonda:** Yes, that’s what my dictionary reads. What are you thinking, sweetheart?

**Early Israelite:** I’m thinking I want Leroy’s donkey. *Bad.*

Note, first, that the law itself is not sin. Lest there be any mistake, Paul writes in verse seven, “What, then, shall we declare? That the law is sin? May it not be coming to that! But sin I knew not except through law.” So there’s nothing wrong with law. According to Romans 8:3, it’s just “infirm through the flesh.” This simply means that flesh cannot do law.

Does Paul take the blame for carrying out the coveting that vexes him? No. He attributes this to Sin, and the translators of the *Concordant Version* have personified it as a power with a capital “S.” It deserves a capital “S.” It’s Sin that carries out coveting. What’s sin’s vehicle? Law. Law



gives sin opportunity. In Scriptural language: “Sin takes opportunity through the commandment.”

Think of law as a playground and sin as a book-weary school boy. The boy’s energy is latent. That is, it’s present but not apparent. But when the boy sees the playground, he runs for the swings. The playground gives his latent energy opportunity. The playground is a field of irresistible temptation for the boy. Energy “takes the field” and carries the boy forward. It’s the same with sin and law. Law inspires sin, and sin takes it from there. Is this a design flaw? No. God meant for it to be this way. Was law a failure? Oh, no. Law did exactly what it was designed to do: make people sin more than they would have without it. Since law did exactly what it was meant to do, God did not sin by bringing it.

This is an eye-opening verse. Rather than letting our personal doctrines color this verse, how much better to let this verse color our personal doctrines.

Where there had been no such coveting before the law, sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in Paul every kind of coveting. It produced coveting like a coveting factory.

The purpose of law, then, is to drive people to Christ and to grace. Not many people have learned this lesson, especially not people who say, “Thou shalt not look at a beautiful woman in a lacy, black bra.”

### Introduction to my friend Josh’s wife

In the next installment, I will tell you about my friend Josh’s wife, who encouraged Josh—on a walk in the park one day—to notice and admire a woman with very nice breasts. I know I’m preempting the story here, but it will give you something to look forward to next week. Following his wife’s encouragement, Josh looked in a passing fashion at the woman and her very nice breasts. In fact, he went so far as to admire the woman *and* her very nice breasts. Then, he kissed his wife because she was such an understanding woman and she loved him so much. Josh thought nothing more about the passing woman and her

passing, very nice breasts.

What if Josh’s wife had told him, “Listen to me, Josh. There is a gorgeous woman coming down the trail with totally amazing breasts. Now, no matter what, you had better not look at either the woman, or her totally amazing breasts. If you do, you are in *deep* hot water with me, Mister.”

I guarantee you that Josh, being a good man and a loving husband, would have mightily diverted his eye for the sake of his wife. But I can also tell you that, for the rest of the walk, Josh would have thought about nothing but those “totally amazing breasts” that he had missed. Josh would have complied with his wife’s demand, but he would have resented it. If he was anything like the apostle Paul, the prohibition would have caused him to look—or want to look—even more. Later, he would have thought and thought about why he *didn’t* look.

Let’s plug the “really nice breasts” scenario into Romans 7:7-8 and see how it reads—

I would not have come to stare so hard at female breasts, except that my wife always makes a huge deal about me not looking at female breasts. Because, honestly, my attraction to female breasts was healthy and normal until my wife Stephanie





started saying every day, “THOU SHALT NOT LOOK AT FEMALE BREASTS.” My normal desires became irritated at this constant prohibition and turned me into a breast fiend who thinks about nothing *but* female breasts.

This is how it works. Prohibitions birth rabid excitations. Rabid excitations birth addictions. But when men and women allow themselves to accept and even celebrate their God-given bents, and to realize God smiles upon them no matter what, it calms them down and actually keeps them from freakhood.

This is the key; the key is allowing yourself to do a thing. On the other hand, by prohibiting this, that, and the other thing, those straining to follow Arterburn’s and Stoeker’s prescription will *become* freaks. When men and women and husbands and wives recognize and even celebrate what God made them to like and to want—instead of ignorantly and unnecessarily fighting these God-given tendencies—they honor God and, most surprisingly, lead a more normal, more godly life.

Here is A.E. Knoch from the *Concordant Commentary to the Concordant Literal New Testament*—

The law said, “Accursed is everyone who is not remaining in all things written in the Scroll of the Law, to do them.” Grace says, Blessed are you, whatever you may do, for Christ has justified you and not one dare bring anything against you. *The fallacious logic of the old humanity immediately imagines that this gives license and encouragement to sin. But its actual effect is quite the opposite.* Grace, not law, has power to deter us from sinning. No one who has an actual experience of grace, reasons that, because there is immunity, therefore he will sin. The offender against law flies in the face of law. Its austere threats to not hinder him. But the offender against grace feels the heinousness of his offense, and flies from it.

This is why Josh hugged Stephanie after their walk in the park that day, rather than walking ten feet in front of her, sulking, and going home to view Internet porn.

If it is a more godly life that Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker want for men, they unwittingly work against this goal rather than toward it with their freaky, law-hurling book.

### The Amish Guy

I will never forget reading a so-called spiritual book by an Amish guy trying to cure his readers of sin. When I picked up this book, I was unaware of the sexual wonderland I was about to enter. I wish I still had that darned book, because

I’d quote directly from it. I don’t know the author’s full name, although I’m pretty sure his last name was (and probably still is) “Yoder.”

This is a true story. I was nearly a quarter of the way through the book when the following statement stirred my sleeping sacs. The following is a paraphrase, but it’s darned close—

It is shameful the way women gallivant around in public nowadays, in their long legs, their short skirts, and their spiky, high heels. They should walk and talk and dress befitting women of God, but instead they swing their hips and mince along the highways and byways. They also walk around with unbuttoned blouses, showing the tops of their breasts to anyone caring to gaze at them.

Now folks, before reading the preceding paragraph, I was minding my own business. A small, sleepy collection of semen pooled lazily in my calmly reclining sacs. I’d picked up the book to gain insight into Chris-



tian living. I was thinking not a whit about long, female legs, short skirts, high heels (*spiky* high heels), and the marvels of intersecting female breasts. *After* reading this paragraph, however, I could think of nothing *but* long legs, high heels (*spiky* high heels), short skirts, and the marvels of intersecting female breasts.

Naturally, I had to do something about it.

Thanks, Mr. Yoder. *No, really. Thanks.*

I'm glad you didn't condemn Pop Tarts, Mr. Yoder, ("Some people actually *eat* these warm, soft, toaster-heated pastries stuffed with incredibly delicious jellies and jams"), because I'm trying to lose weight.



### A great way to eat shrimp

I have three sons. When they got old enough to appreciate such things (age twelve or so), I would take them out on what I called our Annual Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue Expedition And Shrimpfest. Each February, I would drive my boys to the mall (at first I only took one, then two of them, then all

three), buy the magazine, hand it over to them, then drive to Red Lobster while they took turns perusing the pages and not saying much.

The Annual Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue Expedition And Shrimpfest embarked upon by my sons and me, raises the eyebrows of embarrassed/horrified people who studiously avoid any discussions about sex. I'm sorry, but I'm just a little upset with people who treat sex as though it's a three-letter word. So many seemingly smart people are ashamed of the natural functions of their bodies. They don't like to talk about it; they start squirming at the mere mention of it; they instantly begin scratching the backs of their necks, shifting their stance and darting their eyes. Honestly, I believe that many of them despise sex itself, and wish it didn't exist. It's just so embarrassing. It's so *out there*. Why did God have to make something so *out there*?

A lot of the people who are condemning sex, I notice, aren't getting much of it.

My theory was (and is) that it is stupid for my fellow testosteroneians and me (in this case my sons and I) to pretend, among ourselves, that we could take or leave the bikini and its inhabitant. Who is kidding whom? To refuse to acknowledge feminine beauty—to look the other way at it, to banish it to the shadows, to blush in its pres-

ence—is to spit in the face of a loving God. It is to slap away a reasonably-priced escape ladder from the pressures and miseries of life (the Sports Illustrated Swimsuit Issue) dangled by the Deity's celestial helicopter. I will have no awkward moments with my sons. I refused to allow into my home the time-tested "ignore sex/screw up your kids" syndrome. I refused to slip on the divine banana peel (the bikini and its inhabitant) and then pretend I didn't. My boys were looking anyway, so why not accompany them, foot the bill, and get shrimp out of it? The more normal I made it (and it is *so* that way), the less maniacal would be its pull.



The bikini and its inhabitant will always pull, but one can diffuse the freak side of this power. Religious people habitually make normal things freakish by silently (or vocally) condemning God-imposed inclinations. This is a recipe for jail time. The criminal starts and will probably finish his sordid career in the closet of condemnation. Someone, somewhere, made sex wrong and/or dirty in the mind of the criminal. It was evil; forbidden; a sin.

Today, my three sons are well-adjusted men. They're *normal*. They respect *women*. They're not in *jail*. None of this is an *accident*.

### Here's how to make matters worse

Paul himself declares that unnatural, self-imposed laws



only worsen fleshly trials—eventually. A man may be able to nail up a fair-looking Hollywood wall of pure sexual holiness (as religion defines it) for five minutes, five days, or five years, but the first contrary wind will turn his home-made structure into a pile of toothpicks.

Consider Colossians 2: 20-23, from the J.B. Phillips paraphrase—

So if, through your faith in Christ, you are dead to the principles of this world's life, why, as if you were still part and parcel of this world-wide system, do you take the slightest notice of these purely human prohibitions—"Don't touch this," "Don't taste that" and "Don't handle the other?" "This," "that," and "the other" will all pass away after use! I know that these regulations look wise with their self-inspired efforts at piety, their policy of self-humbling, and their studied neglect of the body. But in actual practice they are of no moral value, but simply pamper the flesh.

Why suffer beneath human prohibitions (which not only increase sin, but actually *pamper* the flesh by making it look and feel pious), when you can enjoy the simple, legal pleasures of life, while collaterally avoiding the snare of religious self-righteousness and hypocrisy?

My book—*The Lie of Every Man's Battle*—emphasizes grace, not law. If you're spiritual enough to try it, you will find that grace has much more power than law. Plus, it's a lot more fun. Not only this, but grace, once understood, will improve your relationship with God (from your end), with your family, and with your spouse.

There is no battle; why strive to invent one?

### The key to enjoying life

The law-keeper cannot imagine how the free person can enjoy life's simple pleasures, guilt-free, without "losing it." Thus, the average, fun-type believer possesses more of God's spirit than the religious believer constantly burdened by self-analysis and unnatural discipline. (And look who ends up "losing it.") Due to the presence of the *spirit* of self-control, the average, fun-type believer trusts God more deeply than the performance-oriented believer, and is therefore much freer to enjoy life and, ironically, to walk in a manner pleasing to God. The *spirit* of self-control (self-control is one of the fruits of the spirit—Galatians 5:23) is much different than religious self-control. Whereas the *spirit* of self control comes from God, the religious version arises from a provably undependable well of human will-

power. Because it is of God and therefore reliable, the *spirit* of self-control allows a person to enjoy natural pleasures. On the flip side, because he or she is constantly working to *resist* natural pleasures, the religious person cannot *enjoy* natural pleasures; he or she will inevitably hate seeing other people enjoy these pleasures. Rather than enjoyment, these kinds of people (religious people) live with the constant fear that their vaunted self-control will crumble, as it inevitably does.



Ever hear the saying, "Walk by faith, not perception"? That's 2 Corinthians 5:7. The religious person can't do it. Without the monitoring of their own efforts, religious people are lost. They need to see their own works, admire charts of their own accomplishments, and then impose their "perfection" upon other, happier souls. Misery loves company, I guess

The *spirit* of self-control is invisible, requiring faith. The human version can be plotted on a graph with a No. 2 lead pencil.

Human self-control, therefore, is faithless.

What am I telling you? That you're supposed to allow a little erotica into your lives without condemning one another for it?

Yep. —MZ (*To be continued.*)

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