

CORRECTING KIDS

WHO USE PORNOGRAPHY

BY PASTOR PAUL KRUEGER

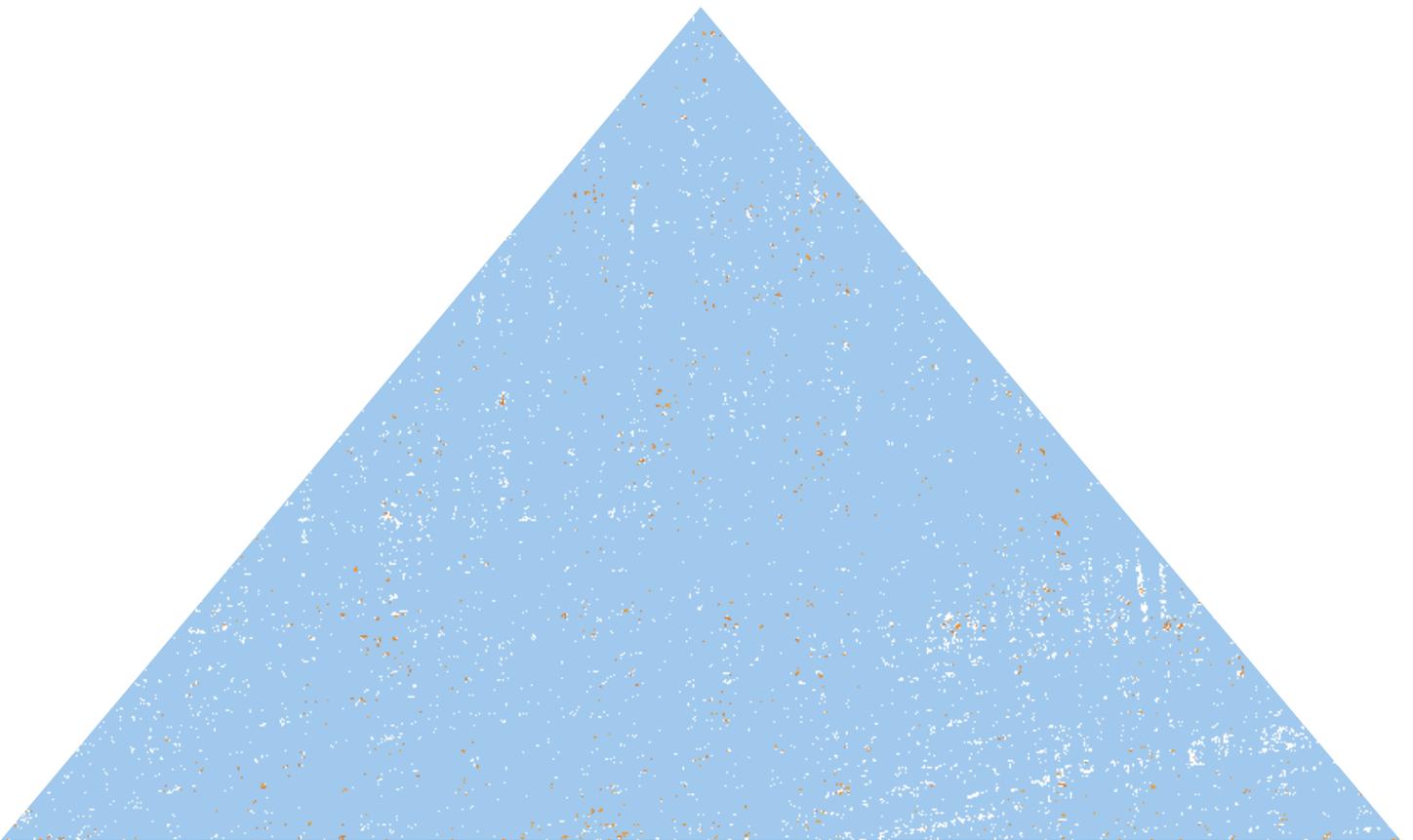
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INTRODUCTION: **SEE THE FUTURE**



SEE THE FUTURE

Think about your child's reaction to your correction.

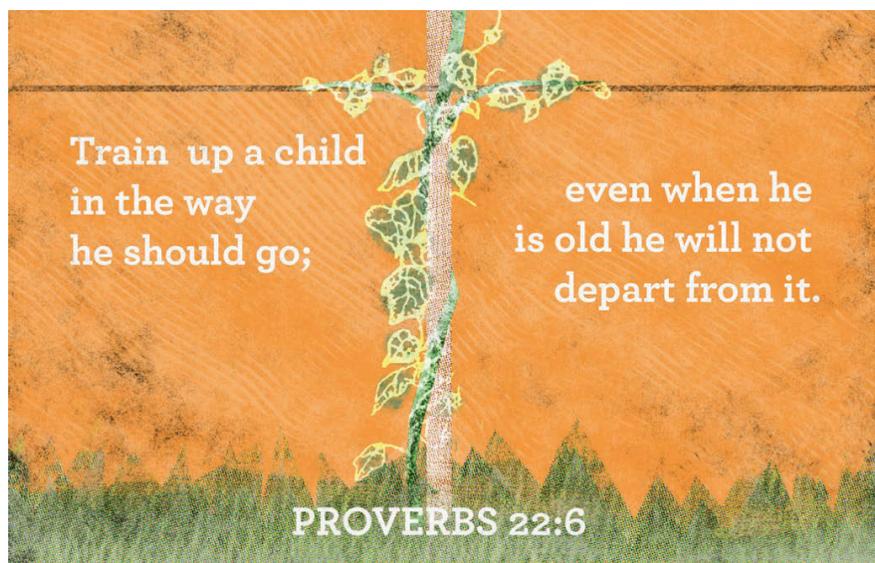
As proactive as parents may be in teaching their child

1. about the dangers of pornography
2. and the goodness of God's will for their bodies and sexuality

the day may come when they discover that their child has been looking at pornography.

Depending on how the situation is handled, it could either become a traumatic experience for both parents and child, or it could lead to a wonderful process of healing and growth.

Obviously, the latter option is preferred. So how should parents react if they discover their child has been viewing pornography, and what steps need to be taken?



PART ONE:
DON'T BE HASTY

DON'T BE HASTY

Your child is acting on impulse - don't do the same.

Take a deep breath.

Ok. Here we go.

Parents who discover that their children have been looking at pornography can be assaulted by a myriad of different emotions. *The temptation to immediately act on those emotions may be strong but probably would not be healthy.*

The **ultimate goal** of the conversations that must follow will not be to make the child feel guilty about what they have done, but rather to show the child

1. that what he or she has done is wrong
2. that there is forgiveness for what they have done
3. and that God has a plan for them which does not include pornography.

Acting out on impulses may make it difficult for parents to keep their minds focused. To help prevent this it is best to **take some time** to collect one's thoughts, do a little homework, and find as much as possible what the situation entails. **It may be wise to wait as much as two days** to allow for emotions to cool down and proper information to be gathered.

DON'T BE HASTY

As they prepare to confront their child, **both parents** will want to talk to each other in order to identify what they plan to do and how they plan to go about it. Maintaining common ground with each other will assist in keeping the conversations with the child controlled and productive. Parents may also wish to seek advice from a counselor or a friend who has gone through a similar situation before talking to the child.

Gathering information will likely begin with a *thorough inspection* of the browser histories on the computers and devices the child has access too. If an accountability software has already been put in place it would be wise to check the logs in order to determine what kinds of activity have been taking place. Knowing what kind of situation they are facing will help parents determine what course of action to take and will help them competently lead the discussion with their child.

As they make their inspection, parents may find no evidence at all of past viewing of pornography. It may be that their child accidentally clicked on a link, opened a spam email, or simply visited the wrong website. If this is the case, a conversation with the child would still be prudent as it would allow them to remind their child that they should always let a parent know when they are exposed to pornography. **They could also take the opportunity to go through the steps outlined above in the plan for how to react to pornography.**

Lack of evidence, however, does not necessarily mean it was a one-time accident. It is possible that the child has been taking steps to conceal their online activity. Histories can be modified or deleted and online activity concealed through concealed browsing.

DON'T BE HASTY

For these reasons, even if parents assume their child is more or less innocent, a conversation could reveal that pornography has been an issue for some time. In either case, whether it was an accident or not, the conversations which follow can and should be a blessing for both the child and the parents.





PART TWO:
L.O.V.E.
THE CHILD

L.O.V.E. THE CHILD

Be your child's spiritual leader.

When parents confront a child about pornography they do it as a part of **their role as that child's spiritual leaders**. It is important to remember that the issue at hand is not pornography. It is the spiritual welfare of the child. In his handbook for youth counseling, ***Help! My Kids are Hurting***, Marv Penner suggests that parents use the acronym L.O.V.E. to help direct them as they help their child.

Each letter represents an essential skill that will assist parents in leading the child to repentance for the use of pornography and to a proper understanding and treatment of God's gift of sex. Using L.O.V.E. as the framework for their counseling will also help parents remember what their core mission is: to lovingly lead their child to repentance for what they have done, and to reassure them with the love and forgiveness of their Father in heaven and their earthly parents as well.

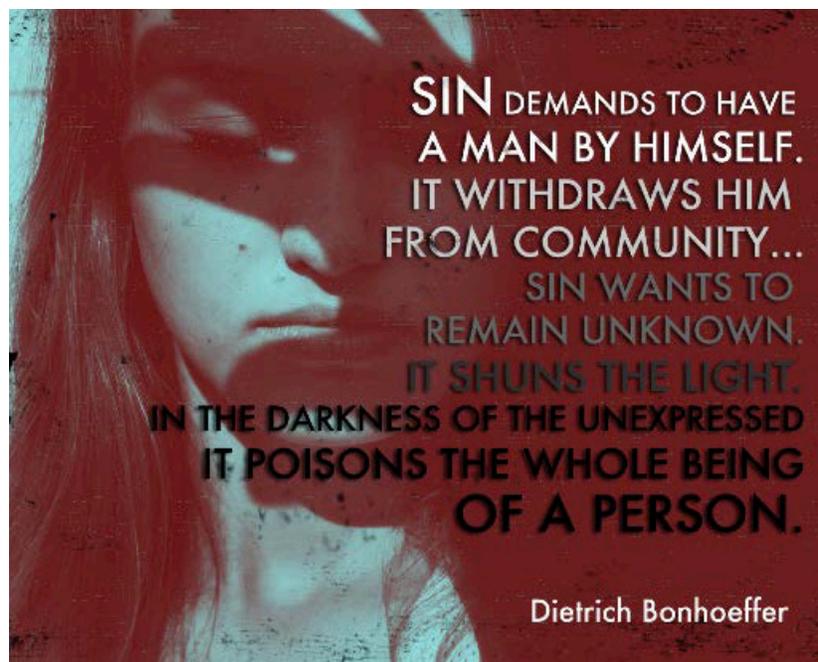
The first skill, ***listening***, is without a doubt the most important. Especially as the age of the child increases, if parents intend to dominate the conversation, or even do so accidentally, they will shut the child down and any further communication on the subject will be made almost entirely impossible. The next skill involves what parents are able to ***offer*** their child. This is not limited to forgiveness; it will also include support and a plan to help the child in the future. The final two skills involve ***validating*** what the child is going through and ***eliminating*** any dangers the child is facing.

LISTEN

Patient parents gain crucial knowledge.

The parents will need to **initiate the conversation and get it flowing**. The information gathered ahead of time will assist in doing this. One or both parents can sit down and tell the child what they have discovered or observed and then **open the floor to the child** to see if there is anything they would like to say.

The response the child gives may vary from situation to situation but the one constant is that **it is imperative that the parents patiently listen** to whatever the child has to say. That doesn't mean the parents simply hear the words coming out of their son or daughter's mouth, but that they completely shift their priorities so that the thoughts, experiences, and emotions of their child come before whatever points they may want to express.



LISTEN

Patient parents gain crucial knowledge.

As parents listen to their child it is also important that they maintain a spirit of empathy. There are a number of different ways parents can show a child that they care about what they are saying **without even saying anything in response.**

1. Body language is crucial.
2. The conversation should take place in an open atmosphere. Talking over a desk or table will automatically place the child in a compromising position.
3. If a parent wants the child to be open with them then they need to communicate that they too are open. Lack of eye contact, crossed arms, angry looks, etc. are all things to avoid as they will not encourage the child to continue talking.
4. Affirmation by nodding or leaning forward to listen as the child speaks will show that what they have to say is important and that their worth and input are valued.

LISTEN

Patient parents gain crucial knowledge.

On the other hand, **what a parent does say** while listening can also have a tremendous impact.

Body language is crucial.

1. Repeating key phrases that the child has stated,
2. praising him or her for traits such as honesty and forwardness,
3. and affirming that what they are saying is not easy or comfortable to talk about will all communicate that the parents truly care about the child and what they have to say.
4. In addition to affirmation, parents can also help steer the direction of the talk by asking for more information about certain points or by checking to see if their perceptions of what the child is saying are accurate.

Another word that could fit the first slot of Penner's framework would be *learning*. As parents listen to their children, the prime objective is learn about their child. What the child says, what he or she doesn't say, and how they choose to say what they do say will all help the parents to better understand the underlying motivations, temptations, fears, lusts and other feelings that their child is dealing with.

LISTEN

Patient parents gain crucial knowledge.

There will undoubtedly be periods of silence as the child tries to gather his or her own thoughts. Patience during those periods is crucial in encouraging the child to continue speaking and will present yet another opportunity for the parents to observe the child and tune in to their feelings.

As they listen, the main items parents will want to determine are

1. how the struggle with pornography began,
2. how far the problem has progressed,
3. and what factors or reasons led it to progress to that point.

Listening to the child will help the parents **learn** whether the child was viewing pornography out of curiosity or as a calculated means for physical gratification. It will also clarify what level of dependency or addiction the child may already have been subjected to which will be helpful in determining what kind of reaction would be appropriate.

Respond with a heart for your child.

One useful illustration is to **compare sexual drive to a fire**. When fire is used in the right circumstances, like at a bonfire or in a fireplace in a home, it is a wonderful thing that blesses those who use it. But when fire is used under the wrong circumstances, like when a house catches fire, it can be very destructive.

Sexual drive is similar to fire, the urges themselves are not a sin, and in fact, they can be a wonderful blessing when they are properly applied. When they are acted on wrongly, though - particularly outside the confines of marriage - they can be harmful.

It may still be necessary to offer some insight into God's law, by walking through the portions of Scripture that show pornography is unnatural and that looking at pornography is sinful. **More than likely, however, the law will already have accomplished its purpose.** The guilt and shame of what they are doing is what keeps most children from confessing that they are looking at pornography in the first place. Talking through their experiences and struggles with it will probably result in feelings of hopelessness, despair, and disgust.

Respond with a heart for your child.

While the child may be feeling a certain degree of guilt and shame for their sin **that is not necessarily tantamount to repentance.** Parents will want to lovingly guide the child to truly repent for what they have done so that they can then offer them the forgiveness and hope that is theirs through Jesus. As consuming and daunting as pornography can seem, especially if the child has developed an addiction to it, **parents will want to stress the totality of God's forgiveness.** There is no sin so great that God cannot forgive it.

Coupled with forgiveness of sins, Jesus has also given us a new life, empowering us to combat evil and to do what is pleasing in our Father's sight by the power of the Holy Spirit. Parents can offer their own love, support, and encouragement to their child as he or she seeks to live a sanctified, pornography-free life, reminding them that when God says "no" to pornography it is because He is saying "yes" to something much better.

“ *There is no sin so great
that God cannot forgive it.* ”

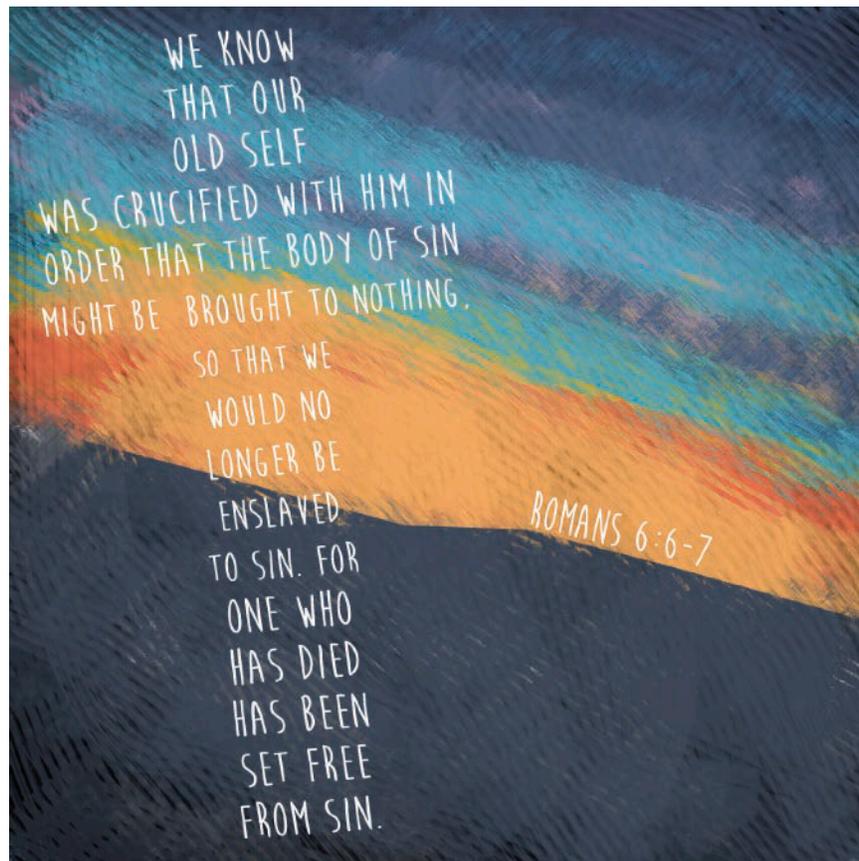
Pastor Paul Krueger

VALIDATE

Help them know you understand.

The **validation** step really goes hand in hand with the first two steps. As parents listen to their child and offer forgiveness, hope, and support they will be validating the worth of their child.

The child will see that **he or she is important** both to their parents and to God. They will also grow in **appreciation of their strengths and weaknesses**. They will grow in an understanding of what they can do differently in the future.



ELIMINATE

Stop the relapses.

Once a child is

1. convinced of his or her forgiveness
2. and has resolved to change their life and act differently in the future,

parents can help guide them in eliminating the dangers of pornography and in discovering how to better address and counter their urges.

Chief amongst a child's defenses against pornography will be their relationship and fellowship with God. God tells us that when we walk by the Spirit, we will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). Helping a child develop a regular habit of devoting time to reading the Bible will greatly assist them in combatting temptations to sinfully act on their sexual urges. Another useful tool would be to equip them with a list of Bible passages to be memorized that they can meditate on or recite out loud when tempted to look at pornography.

ELIMINATE

Stop the relapses.

This would also be an important time to review the steps of the family's plan for dealing with pornography and to reassure the child that they can always come to their parents for help and support. Parents will want to increase accountability with the child. Establishing a plan that facilitates weekly meetings between parent and child will provide support for the child and opportunity for the parents to assist their daughter or son in their battle against pornography. If the family is not already using an accountability software this would be as good a time as any to implement the use of such a program. Reviewing the contents of accountability reports with the child will help to identify triggers and increase the child's safety as they use the internet.

If the initial conversation with the child or future accountability check-ins reveal that the child is struggling with an addiction to pornography parents should seek additional help. Pastors and other spiritual leaders may be able to offer a certain amount of advice but they are not trained in addiction counseling. If a child is addicted to pornography, they need professional care. Most parents would have no qualms sending their son or daughter to a specialist if they discovered they were addicted to cocaine or heroin. As seen above, pornography addiction is just as damaging and powerful as addictions to hard drugs.

ELIMINATE

Stop the relapses.

Parents need not feel ashamed if they decide to enlist aid in helping their child. A psychologist or psychiatrist with training in addictions will be able to provide support and advice to parents and direct assistance to the child. Utilizing such resources does not indicate failure on the part of the parents. Addiction powerfully impacts the child's brain in ways that parents are not equipped to help with.

It is important when searching for a mental health professional to do some research ahead of time. This is where the family's pastor may be of assistance. The pastor may have dealt with similar issues in the past and may be able to quickly refer parents to a specialist in the area. If not, he can assist in finding a professional who will address both the child's physical and spiritual needs.

MEMORY PASSAGES

Regarding The Temptations of Pornography

Job 31:1

I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.

Psalm 51:10

Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 119:9-11

How can a young person stay on the path of purity? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Romans 12:1-2

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1 Corinthians 10:13

No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Philippians 4:13

I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

Colossians 3:1-3

Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God.