

Bamboo is a Lot Like Porn

I have got a problem with bamboo. Just picture a thick stand of lushly green bamboo that is over 30' feet tall. It is too dense to walk through. Underground roots are pushing out in all directions. It has killed five large trees and is choking the life out of at least ten others. In one direction its roots are encroaching on a field line and in another direction the roots are getting under the foundation of our workshop. This bamboo dominates its part of the yard. It is a giant, tangled mess that left alone will eventually take over everything in its path.

Seventeen years ago when we bought our house the bamboo was just a little exotic patch of green. I knew that it was an invasive plant, but it was so different that I actually liked it. Over the years I've worked at controlling its spread by hacking at it with a machete. I've also used a lawn mower to run over the new sprouts. Despite my efforts it has continued to grow until it is ten times bigger than when we moved in. I have always assumed I could just knock it all down at anytime.

So I decided to cut it down this spring. Tolerating this bamboo has resulted in too much damage. After six weeks of hacking, cutting, stacking and burning – I have made only a tiny dent in the problem. Despite an impressive amount of labor and bleeding, the progress is almost unnoticeable. I have underestimated the size of this job and of the problem. As I have been doing battle with the bamboo I have come to realize that I am not really going to eradicate it all. Even if I cut it all down to the ground, the roots will still be there. Without digging up the roots, the bamboo is coming back.

I guess that the title of this article points to the parallels between my bamboo problem and the problem of pornography. Porn is one of the most invasive and destructive problems ever unleashed on God's family. My experience has led me to see that nearly every pew has a man in an ongoing struggle with lust and pornography. It is a secret epidemic. It affects every level of God's men reaching young and old, rich and poor, layman and pastor. Pornography is easy to find, easy to hide, and it easily addicts. It very quietly chokes the life out of men, marriages, families and churches.

Porn really is a below-the-surface sin. No one wants to openly talk about it. No man wants to confess a problem with it. But the signs of a porn addiction are not underground. It is seen in the men whose eyes involuntarily stay where they should not stay. It is revealed in casual conversation because the mouth reveals what is in the heart. You see it in the inability of men to achieve any level of Christ-like intimacy in their lives. A porn addiction subtly destroys a man's ability to see any woman (including his wife and daughters) in their true, glorious reflection of Christ. It builds a wall between God and man and between husband and wife. Pornography destroys everything in its path.

When my bamboo became a problem too big to ignore, I decided to deal with it. When the destruction of porn becomes too big to ignore, Christian men often decide to deal with it "once and for all". Like my bamboo forest, the struggle to remove pornography

from a life is a big job. That struggle to become free often involves cycles of indulging and repenting. Complete victory over the pornography stronghold can seem impossible to achieve. Like my machete, the conventional tools used to gain victory never seem to completely cure the desires that drive the behavior.

You can seek accountability, put locks on your computer, cancel the cable, and memorize hundreds of scripture verses. Those things can be effective tools to combat the behavior. However, if you do not dig up the roots, you will still be demonized by your desires and by shame. Thankfully Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil and set the captives free. Jesus Christ has all the tools to destroy the hold of pornography in your life.

At Growing in Grace Ministries we have seen men successfully deal with all types of addictions including pornography. Complete freedom is available. You do not have to live with shame. You do not have to struggle. You can be whole and pure again. The images from which you think you can never be free can leave your mind forever. I want you to know that we have seen freedom come into life after life. This same freedom can be yours.

If you desire help in overcoming a pornography problem, consider sending me an email at jeffdean@iggm.org In absolute confidentiality we are willing to come alongside you. We will never condemn you. Jesus does not condemn you and neither will we. Instead we want to see you walk in complete spiritual freedom and in the fullness of your spiritual inheritance. We want you to be the man God made you to be. Step up. Confidential help is available. Freedom can be yours.