“How Do I Handle My Husband’s Porn Addiction?”

For the past year or so, I have been recording and watching where my husband visits hardcore porn sites. This has been extremely painful for me. What is wrong with me? He never seems interested in me, I have provided a good sexual relationship for us. He tries to hide this, I have confronted him twice, each time to be told “they aren’t real people”—YES they are! He stays up until 3 or 4 a.m. each night and views this stuff. He sleeps until 2 or 3 in the afternoon. We have a daughter who is four, I wish he would spend more time with us. I have also viewed conversations he has had with coworkers regarding women he works with. I have viewed emails he has sent to online “whores” including pics and descriptions on what he wold like to do with them. I am tired and starting to feel a little numb to all this. My doctors have told me to “learn to accept it or just leave.” This is a little more complicated than that. I have asked for counselling once – he is TOTALLY against it. I am about to give up and ask him to leave, do you think this is too excessive and that I should give him another chance? I am tired and don’t want to deal with it anymore. I hate that porn has ruined our marriage. Thank God for my closest friends and for the occasional comment from other men. Help me, please.

I am so very, very sorry that you have to deal with your husband’s addiction. PLEASE KNOW—this is not about you. There is nothing wrong with you. This is about him. You could be as gorgeous as a supermodel with the world’s most perfect body and he would still have the addiction, because it’s doing something for him that is completely separate from you.

I want to suggest some excellent resources for you to help you cope with a situation you can’t change AND to bring glory to God in the process.

Porn-Free.org has a helpful essay, “Help for Christian Spouses of Sex Addicts” at www.porn-free.org/spousehelp_christian.htm

The Covenant Eyes blog has a helpful article, 7 Questions Wives of Porn Addicts Often Ask.

Spouse Healing article from the Sex Addiction Lifeline Foundation.

The very wise, very experienced Renee Dallas has an excellent website called “Wifeboat” with a section for wives of men with porn addiction.

There are several articles on CafeMom.com. Do a search for “wives of porn addicts”: thestir.cafemom.com/search.php?keyword=wives+of+porn+addicts.

Henry Rogers, a dear friend of Probe, has written a wonderful book on this called *The Silent War*. Having researched this difficult topic thoroughly, he says the first thing wives need to know is that IT’S NOT YOUR FAULT. IT’S NOT ABOUT YOU.

In fact, in a chapter called “The Wounded Wife,” he reprints “Emily’s Story”:

> “I write this out of love. Love for the porn addict, love for his wife, and most of all for the children. I pray this chapter is used for God’s glory and honor, that it might somehow prevent families from being destroyed.
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> “I remember listening to a panel of women James Dobson had on his radio program. They talked about being married for over 20 years and discovering their husbands were involved in pornography. It seemed so unfathomable to me that someone could be deceived for so long. I remember thinking how stupid those women were. Little did I realize I would be one of those women less than a month later.
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> “It was like a birth process. Pain, agony, sweat, tears, hours of intense hurt, and finally truth. My husband is a

porn addict. I heard it. I reacted. For two weeks I was numb. Numb to after 20+ years knowing something was wrong, but not knowing what. A relief to finally know the truth. A relief to now live in reality in light and truth rather than the unreality of darkness and deception. My husband would never tell me the secrets of his past before our marriage. I always thought if I loved him enough some day he would tell me. If I loved him enough. . . .

“We always had a difficult marriage. My husband was always withdrawn and quiet. I thought I could help him. I was outgoing, attractive, and spontaneous. In our marriage I could never do anything good enough. I was constantly criticized and put down. I thought it was me so I started a self-improvement program, more counseling, more semi nars. I learned more was never enough. My world stopped, knowing something had died in me.

“My husband always seemed to be “tuned out” in another world. He worked long hours and often fell into bed at 2 a.m. I missed him. I begged him to come home. I raised the kids as he pursued his career. I told myself I needed to help him. I poured my heart and soul into his endeavor supporting and encouraging. There were still problems. When he was home he would go into his office and read his books, newspapers, and reports, and again I would cry myself to sleep. I had others confront him. I gave this man every chance to tell me about his pornography addiction. Lies weave other lies. Secrets kill. Comparisons kill. I feel every time he looked at an image and masturbated he took away a part of me that God intended to be mine. I remember seeing him masturbate and he was in his own world, set on his own pleasure, stimulated and excited by images of women he didn’t know. It was a feeling of betrayal and heart-wrenching emptiness that a woman feels when she learns that her husband is living a lie.

“Pornography tears at the very thread of a woman and her

femininity. My heart was ripped and uprooted thrown somewhere into a desert with no place to find refuge. It's as if I wasn't enough. Not sexy enough. Not beautiful enough. Not thin enough. Not exciting enough. Women get significance from their relationships with their husbands and when he turns to another for satisfaction it cuts her deeply at the core.

"I started buying sexy nighties, acting sexier, and suddenly I realized I was bowing down to an idol. It hurt that he chose not to tell me … to not allow me to come alongside him as his helper. To this day he refuses to see the pain that he caused. It amazes me as a wife how we are involved in every other area of a man's life his profit margin, his ability to manage, everything but when it comes to pornography, it's hidden in deception. A man's way seems right to a man. Porn addiction is very selfish. It takes and takes and doesn't give back. It's all for the user's pleasure.

"Another lie is that porn does not hurt anyone. Such a web of deception. 'And they, having become callous, have given themselves over to sensuality, for the practice of every kind of impurity with greediness' (Eph. 4:19). There are consequences and the stakes get higher. It takes one lie to cover another. It saddens me how men can compartmentalize this sin. He has the little wife over here with precious children and this nasty sin over here for his private time, justifying it because he still loves his wife and children. You can't walk simultaneously in the darkness and the light.

"I'm a wife. I'm a wife of a porn addict. I'm relieved to know what it is, though I always knew something was wrong. Tears. Pain. Disgust. Betrayal. To face the death of a husband would be better than this. A widow has the support of the church. A porn addict leaves shame and divorce. It would be easier if he were dead. We wouldn't have to face the public humiliation and shame.

> “Today is a new day. It’s early morning and I must get breakfast for my children. I take each day as it comes now. Just for today. My husband still chooses his sin and refuses to take responsibility for it. I have to let him go and let the Lord deal with him. I can no longer be his excuse, his enabler. It’s a new day and I’m moving on and my Deliverer is by my side. He is faithful. He will never leave me nor forsake me. He will never break His promise. To a woman who has been betrayed, this is my comfort. Hear my cry.”

The Lord bless you as you seek Him on this. Again, I am so sorry.

Sue Bohlin