

**Bible Verses:**

1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Timothy 2:22, Romans 13:13-14, Philippians 4:8, James 1:27

Resources:

www.iempathize.org

Every Man's Battle (Authors-Stephen Arterburn & Fred Stoeker)

Podcast 04: Sexual Integrity: A Sex Trafficking Story

We all grew up wanting to be one thing only to have life level us out and land us where we are today. None of us ever dreamed about getting into porn, but the reality is the demand has driven the supply to crazy proportions becoming more accessible than ever. And in turn, the supply has fed into more demand. It is a dangerous cycle that has made porn the battle we face every day.

As we learned last week, porn will destroy a man's life and the lives of the people closest to him. What is commonly misunderstood, though, is that it also destroys the lives of the people being exploited by the industry. The culture we live in would like us to believe that porn is harmless, that it is no big deal. We tell ourselves, "*At least this isn't harming anyone else*". Yet there is a direct link between Internet porn and the degradation and devastation of women. What many men don't realize is that the images they view may be images of women who are being exploited. Many of these women desperately want to be somewhere else but are being forcefully violated. Porn is not just harmful to the viewer; it is also extremely harmful to the people in the pictures and videos.

This is a sobering reality for men who have viewed pornography. The shame becomes even more overwhelming when we realize that what we thought was only affecting us is actually deeply wounding others. The guilt may seem too much to bear when we realize that the women we have seen are actually the daughters of the God who made them. They are women who bare the image of God and they have value and worth as human beings.

But take heart, men, our past does not define our future. John 1:29 reads, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.*" May we turn our eyes to Jesus who died for our sin, shame, and regret and who has given us new life. May the Spirit of the Living God be at work within us making us the men we were always meant to be: defenders and protectors of women and the most vulnerable in this world.

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- What one issue in this broken world—that you have seen firsthand—tugs at your heart the most? What can you do to join in the fight to stop it?
 - Mark Brende has a crazy story, but God has taken those hard things and used them to fuel Mark's passion for fighting human sex trafficking. Looking back through the hard parts of your life, have you seen where God has redeemed them today?
 - Being honest with yourself, how has porn had a negative impact in your life? How has your use of pornography affected other people?
 - Look back at the first question. If we, as men, don't stand up and fight for what we are passionate about, who will? What can you do this week to start fighting for the broken and most vulnerable?