

Looking for Love in the Wrong Places The True Story of a Young Girl's Struggle (Discipleship Lesson 23)

Read the entire lesson and then answer the questions that follow.

I committed my life to Christ at the age of nine, and I attended a Christian school; but from the ages of twelve to eighteen, I was addicted to pornography. I was hooked on romance novels.

Like most addictions, it began harmlessly enough. I moved from light, non-sexual romances to books that my mother, if she'd known, would've burned. I had no idea I was getting hooked. No one told me books could be dangerous. They were just stories. They weren't drugs—no one ever talked about being a "romance junkie." Sure, there were times where I felt dirty and guilty, but it was never enough to make me stop.

The stories themselves weren't addictive; in fact, most were rather average. What I craved was how they made me feel. Emotions and feelings of all sorts were stirred up in me: passion, lust, longing, desire, and even loneliness. I wanted to experience everything those authors wrote about. Since I couldn't do that in real life, I just read as many books as I could, and let my imagination do the rest. My life, in reality, may have been rather boring, but my fantasy life was worse than an adult film!

I would go to the library on a weekly basis, and take home an armful of books that I devoured during the week—sometimes reading the books twice before returning them. I must have read hundreds of books between the ages of twelve to eighteen. During those six years, it never once occurred to me that I was addicted to pornography. Like most addicts, I told myself that I could quit whenever I wanted to—I just didn't want to. And those books? They weren't pornography. They were just romance novels; all sorts of people read them.

The truth finally dawned on me when I was eighteen. The books I was reading by the dozens, the ones I'd passed off as "harmless romances," were indeed pornography. In pornography, casual and unlawful sex outside of marriage is portrayed as exciting and desirable. Personal gratification with no regard for the other person is highlighted. People exist only for their sexual gratification. Beauty is measured by the size of one's body parts. Instead of love, pornography cultivates self-centered, selfish desires that dehumanize people. These desires can become powerful obsessions that, in turn, can have a powerful effect on the way we behave. Consider Ted Bundy, the infamous serial killer, who stated that there was a strong connection between pornography and the rape and forms of violence that he committed.

Of course, being confronted with the truth, I immediately felt ashamed, but God is not a God of condemnation. I knew the moment I repented and asked, I was forgiven. It's taken me much longer to forgive myself, but God's love and forgiveness came the instant I asked for them. The Bible realistically points out that sin is temporarily pleasurable, but in the end, it will lead to death and destruction (Hebrews 11:25 *"Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season,"* and Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord"*).

I cut myself off from all my “harmless” romance novels. Satan has tried a few times to drag me back, tempting me with memories of that one book that was really good (“you can just skip the sex scenes”), but with God’s help, I’ve stood firm. God has given me plenty of other things to read, including His Word, which I’d barely glanced at since being born again.

I was enslaved to lust and pornography, but God set me free. God’s grace doesn’t give us the license to sin—it gives us the ability to live above sin. Have you called upon God’s grace to save you from your sins? If not, call on Christ today.

Looking for Love in the Wrong Places **The True Story of a Young Girl’s Struggle** **(Discipleship Questions)**

Answer the following by reading the corresponding discipleship lesson and using your Bible.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18. *“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”* When sexual temptations come our way, what should we do?
_____.

2. Read Mark 7:21. *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.”* What proceeds or comes out of men’s hearts?
_____.

3. Read Ephesians 3:17. *“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love.”* What or who should proceed from our hearts?
_____.

Statement: Vine’s Expository Dictionary states, “The heart is the source of all action and the center of all thought and feeling. The heart is also described as receptive to the influences both from the outer world and from God Himself.” In other words, the heart can be influenced by the world or by God Himself.

4. Read Acts 8:21-22. *“Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. [22] Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”* What should we do when we find that our hearts are not right? _____.

5. Read Hebrews 13:4. *“Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”* Sex is a good thing if it is used the way God intended it to be used. In what setting is the sexual act to be expressed?
_____.

6. Read Genesis 2:24-25. *“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. [25] And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.”* And Leviticus 18:8. *“The nakedness of thy father’s wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father’s nakedness.”* Pornography is wrong because you are looking upon someone’s nakedness that does not belong to you. In marriage, your husband or wife is your n_____.

7. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 in the New Living Translation states, *“Yes, it is good to live a celibate life. But because there is so much sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman should have her own husband. The husband should not deprive his wife of sexual intimacy, which is her right as a married woman, nor should the wife deprive her husband. The wife gives authority over her body to her husband, and the husband also gives authority over his body to his wife. So do not deprive each other of sexual relations. The only exception to this rule would be the agreement of both husband and wife to refrain from sexual intimacy for a limited time, so they can give themselves more completely to prayer. Afterward they should come together again so that Satan won’t be able to tempt them because of their lack of self-control.”* Sexual intimacy was designed to strengthen the _____ covenant for a lifetime.

8. Read Ezekiel 16:8. *“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”* God likens marriage to a relationship that He wants with His people. What phrase in Ezekiel 16:8 brings out the fact that marital love is exclusive between two people? _____.

9. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20. *“For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* We are to glorify God in our _____ and in our _____, which are God’s.

10. Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-16. *“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. [16] What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.”* As Christians we have become the body of Christ (His church or called out people). If we then misuse our bodies by having sex with a prostitute, we bring Christ into that sin and sin against Christ.

True or False.

11. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. *“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, [10] Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. [11] And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*

Some of us used to be immoral, idol worshipers, unfaithful in marriage, perverts, homosexuals, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers.

True or False.

Through Jesus' blood, we now have been: (underline one)

- a. Washed.
- b. Sanctified (set apart to God).
- c. Justified (made righteous before God).
- d. All of the above.

12. Read Matthew 16:24; *"Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."* And Romans 6:13. *"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."* As Christians we are to: (underline one)

- a. Deny self.
- b. Yield ourselves unto God.
- c. Yield our member as instruments of righteousness (right doing).
- d. All of the above.

13. Read Romans 6:16. *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* You become a slave to what you yield to. If you yield to sin it produces _____. If you yield in obedience to God it produces _____.

14. Read 1 Peter 1:14. *"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance."* We are to be like _____ children. We are not to fashion ourselves or conform ourselves to our _____ when we lived in ignorance.

15. Read Romans 8:2. *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."* How is a person set free from the law of sin and death?
_____.

16. Read Romans 8:13. *"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* It's not you and it's not the Spirit alone that will put to death the deeds of your body. It is you (cooperating with) the Spirit and His power, that will put to death the evil deeds of the body.

True or False.

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(Discipleship Answer Key)

Do not look at the answer key until you have completed the questions.
Compare your answers with the following answers.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 6:18. When sexual temptations come our way, what should we do?
Flee and run away from sexual immorality and temptations.
2. Read Mark 7:21. What proceeds or comes out of men's hearts?
Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and murders.
3. Read Ephesians 3:17. What or who should proceed from our hearts? **Christ.**

Statement: Vine's Expository Dictionary states, "The heart is the source of all action and the center of all thought and feeling. The heart is also described as receptive to the influences both from the outer world and from God Himself." In other words, the heart can be influenced by the world or by God Himself.

4. Read Acts 8:21-22. What should we do when we find that our hearts are not right?
Repent, turn away from our sin and pray to God for forgiveness. Also invite Christ into those areas of our weakness (Ephesians 3:17).
5. Read Hebrews 13:4. Sex is a good thing if it is used the way God intended it to be used. In what setting is the sexual act to be expressed? **In marriage.**
6. Read Genesis 2:24-25, and Leviticus 18:8. Pornography is wrong because you are looking upon someone's nakedness that does not belong to you. In marriage, your husband or wife is your **nakedness.**
7. 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 in the New Living Translation. Sexual intimacy was designed to strengthen the **marriage** covenant for a lifetime.
8. Read Ezekiel 16:8. God likens marriage to a relationship that He wants with His people. What phrase in Ezekiel 16:8 brings out the fact that marital love is exclusive between two people? **The phrase "thou becamest mine."**
9. Read 1 Corinthians 6:20. We are to glorify God in our **bodies** and in our **spirits**, which are God's.
10. Read 1 Corinthians 6:15-16. As Christians we have become the body of Christ (His church or called out people). If we then misuse our bodies by having sex with a prostitute, we bring Christ into that sin and sin against Christ.

True or False.

11. Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Some of us used to be immoral, idol worshipers, unfaithful in marriage, perverts, homosexuals, thieves, greedy, drunkards, slanderers, and swindlers.

True or False.

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- a. Deny self.
 - b. Yield ourselves unto God.
 - c. Yield our member as instruments of righteousness (right doing).
 - d. **All of the above.**
13. Read Romans 6:16. You become a slave to what you yield to. If you yield to sin it produces **Death.** If you yield in obedience to God it produces **Righteousness.**
14. Read 1 Peter 1:14. We are to be like **obedient** children. We are not to fashion ourselves or conform ourselves to our **former lusts** when we lived in ignorance.
15. Read Romans 8:2. How is a person set free from the law of sin and death?
By the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus. We must focus on and depend upon Christ and His Spirit for the deliverance.
16. Read Romans 8:13. It's not you and it's not the Spirit alone that will put to death the deeds of your body. It is you (cooperating with) the Spirit and His power, that will put to death the evil deeds of the body.

True or False.

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