

Is porn a Gardner-Webb problem?

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Pilot staff

Underneath the surface of the Christian environment of Gardner-Webb—with its religion classes and student-led worship services—lurks a habit that can slip into a person's life, take over and ruin relationships in the process.

Being a Baptist-affiliated university does not protect Gardner-Webb students from the temptation of pornography.

Danny Davis, director of Information Services stated that in previous years, "Investigations of slow Internet access on campus have typically shown that porn sites are being accessed on a daily basis."

Students at Gardner-Webb and schools like it verify that pornography is definitely a problem on campus.

"The majority of guys' rooms I've been to have had some type of porn in them—it's like I've gotten used to it," said a junior female.

"I think about 90 percent—if not more—of guys here struggle with pornography. It's a normal part of our American culture," said a junior male.

Some students believe that pornography may actually be more common at Christian universities that have stricter rules regarding sexual exploration.

"Use of porn here is probably higher than at state schools because gratification from actual sexual encounters are not as common because the mission of the school is against it. Students get a cheap substitution from pornography," said a senior male.

However, he was quick to add that, though pornography can serve as a substitute for actual sex for a short period, it does not satisfy sexual desires for long.

"Porn doesn't suffice the urge to have sex. Watching it doesn't give satisfaction—it only beckons one's curiosity," he said.

A senior female agreed, "I don't necessarily approve of casual sex; however, I think strict moral values increase the prevalence of porn and the desire to watch it."

Belief vs. Action

"I Know What You Did Last Night," an article by Steve Watters that appeared in a January 2001 issue of *Boundless* web magazine, included results of a recent survey that researched pornography use of students at Christian colleges.

The survey, conducted by the National Coalition for the Protection of Children and Families, found that most students at Christian universities agree that pornography "can be addictive and hurts relationships." It also revealed that

"It's addicting—like smoking or drinking—once you start looking, it's hard to quit."

~Junior Male

these students think viewing pornography "is a sin that damages relationships with God."

However, of those surveyed, 68 percent of male students said they had purposely looked for pornographic material on the Internet. Ten percent admitted to looking at porn on a regular basis, and 5 percent acknowledged that they had a

"It makes my heart sad when I find out students are looking at porn. It's confusing to me, I wonder, 'Why? Why do they do it?'"

~Senior Female

problem with pornography use.

As Watters noted in the article that this means, "A lot of Christian students have a gap between their beliefs about pornography and their behavior."

According to the Gardner-Webb Student Handbook, students will be disciplined for the "use, display, possession or exhibition of pornographic movies, video tapes, records, cassettes, posters, magazines, CDs or other media. [This] includes use of computer-access to pornographic sites."

The handbook also states that "inappropriate pictures or posters (nudity, etc.) are not tasteful and the student will have to remove them."

Pornography Definition

But what do GWU students consider to be pornographic?

A senior male considers pornography to be "anything that excites or arouses a guy or girl to the point that they are tempted to masturbate."

A junior understands pornography to be "people that are naked—either on the computer, television or in magazines—doing sexual acts."

As clarified in "Pornography Definitions," by the Family Research Council, pornography can range anywhere from "mere nudity" to the displayed sexual acts of "masturbation, excretory functions, lewd exhibition of the genitals, or sadomasochistic sexual abuse" of hard-core porn.

A Christian Definition

Most Christian universities base their principles regarding pornography and sexual activity on the Bible. According to 1 Corinthians 6:18-19, the Bible portrays sexual sin as a sin against the image of God within Christians. Philippians 4:8 states that a Christian's mind should be on the pure things of God instead of the immoral things of this world.

Since Gardner-Webb is a Christian university, many believe that it should adhere to these Biblical principles.

"GWU is different and we make no apologies for that," said Dean and Residence Life director Doug Searcy.

"Other institutions may allow it [pornography], but if we come across it, we appropriately address it following the handbook and mission statement of the university," he said.

Searcy stated that, though Residence Life has not had to deal much with pornography violations, this does not mean it is not an issue here.

"There is only so much that others can do to fix the problem—ultimately, there must be a change of heart."

~Male Student

A Problem on Campus

"We see this type of violation every once in a while, but this is the type of material that people don't readily put out in the open, so it's hard to catch," he said.

Students admit that other students and staff would be surprised to discover who views porn at Gardner-Webb. According to students, many involved in pornography are also active in the Christian activities of GWU.

"These people won't have sex because of their [Christian] faith, yet they will indulge themselves in lustful pornography," said a senior male student.

Despite acknowledgments that pornography is a problem on the GWU campus, students do not recognize that not everyone is succumbing to this temptation.

"I think that porn is a problem on campus, but I think it's a gross overestimation to say that everyone on campus is involved in it," said a senior male.

Some students agree that hard-core porn is inappropriate, but believe that there is nothing wrong with viewing softer porn.

A senior male said he enjoyed viewing some pornography, but "rape, child porn and defecation on partners is disgusting."

According to students, peer pressure and curiosity often lead people to look at porn.

"I think some people wouldn't look at it when they first got here, but they do so now because of pressure from their friends," said a junior female.

Students also admit that pornography can be addicting.

"It's addicting—like smoking or drinking—once you start looking, it's hard to quit," said a junior male.

A male student quoted in Watters' "In Your Face, In Your Mind: Resisting the Power of Pornography" verified the addicting lure of pornography when he said, "I have heard that allowing a boy to look at pornography just one time can be as addictive as crack cocaine. I have to agree. It is a rush. A young boy with the most innocent of intentions can be drawn in to the trap of sexual addiction. I strongly believe that is what happened to me. I had my first 'hit' of porn, and I was hooked."

No stereotypes

Those who struggle with pornography addictions fit no stereotype. It does not only affect men—women also battle with this issue. In her article "Women and Sex Addiction," Marnie C. Ferree disclosed her own struggle with pornography and sex addiction.

"I am a woman who for years was actively consumed with sex addiction. I know what it's like to be powerless over out-of-control sexual behavior and to have my life become totally unmanageable," she said.

Gardner-Webb counselor Trish Murray agreed that women can also struggle with pornography.

"Where men look at pictures of porn on the internet, women often read romantic stories and fantasize about the sexual acts being described," she said.

Upon discovering that some of their peers have addictions to pornography, many students become discouraged.

"It amazes me how guys on my hall can go to strip clubs on Friday and Saturday nights, then go to church on Sunday mornings," said a male student.

"It makes my heart sad when I find

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