

Women Caring for Women: Pornography & Infidelity

CBC Sunday School

February 15, 2026

Discussion question: What's your go-to for dealing with an awkward conversation?

Sobering Stats and a Note of Hope

64% of Christian men admit to using pornography

40% of Christian women admit to using pornography (many of them are viewing it with a partner)

This includes: sexually explicit images, videos, erotica literature, "steamy" shows like Bridgerton, etc

20% of men admit to sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse (adultery)

13% of women admit to sexual intercourse with someone other than their spouse (adultery)

For the purposes of this class, we will focus on a husband's pornography use or infidelity and its impact on his wife. However, we want to acknowledge that many wives are also consuming pornography and committing adultery. **This is not a "male problem."** It is a sin problem for men and women. Pornography use and adultery by either spouse damages (or in some cases, breaks) the marriage covenant and the same biblical principles apply to both.

Sexual sin is pervasive, secretive, destructive, and enslaving. When we look at the statistics, it can feel overwhelming. It can feel hopeless. But there is hope.

God is convicting men and women of sexual sin. He is granting repentance. He is restoring integrity. There are husbands and wives fighting for faithfulness. This is why Jesus came — to set captives free from the sin that destroys them.

He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners...to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. Is 61:1-3

An Important Question: Is Pornography Use the Same as Adultery?

The short answer:

Pornography use is not identical to adultery — but it is sexual immorality that betrays the marriage covenant.

The long answer:

Pornography use betrays the marriage covenant

1. Porn is a sexual experience that excludes a spouse
 - a. A marriage covenant says that sexual experiences and expressions of a married couple are meant to happen together — exclusively.
 - b. Pornography violates this exclusivity because a spouse is seeking sexual arousal and gratification outside the exclusive "guest list" of the marriage —in secret without their spouse.

- c. Pornography invites others into what was meant to be exclusive, corrupts shared sexual knowledge, introduces comparison and creates divided intimacy.
 - i. “He’s seen things and knows things about her that no one else has seen or known. And he has desecrated them. He has seen them and mingled them with the images, sounds, and desires of other women, virtual or not.” Elyse Fitzpatrick
- 2. Pornography is sexual immorality
 - a. Pornography use begins with lust and is fueled by it. Jesus addresses lust directly: “But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Matt 5:28
 - b. It falls under the biblical category of sexual immorality and heart-level adultery.
 - c. It is not morally neutral. It is not harmless. It is not “just a struggle.”
- 3. Pornography is destructive to marriage
 - a. Porn severs unity
 - i. Sexual desire becomes self-focused and self-gratifying. It trains the brain toward isolation, not union.
 - b. Porn rejects
 - i. By secretly engaging with imaginary sexual partners, a husband is withholding himself, redirecting desire, forsaking his wife in the realm of sexual intimacy.
 - c. Porn twists sexual union
 - i. Sex — one of God’s greatest gifts to a married couple — can begin to feel lonely, unsafe, comparative, embarrassing, contaminated.
 - ii. For many wives, this is not theoretical. It changes how they experience their own bodies.

Pornography Is Not Identical to Adultery

Jenny Solomon gives these insights:

“Pornography falls under the umbrella of sexual immorality, but it is different from an affair. It lacks the emotional connection or physical contact of an adulterous relationship, which is a mutual exchange.”

“There is a spectrum of sexual sin that moves from lustful thoughts to adulterous relationships. Pornography use lands somewhere between those two sins.”

“The idea that pornography use is identical to adultery is faulty. Jesus does not say that lust and the act of adultery are identical sins and thus incur the same human/legal consequences.”

Jesus identifies lust as adultery of the heart — but He does not equate it with the covenant-breaking act itself.

Adultery breaks the marriage covenant

Adultery is a physical sexual relationship outside the marriage covenant.

- 1. While adultery shares many destructive effects with pornography, it intensifies them.
 - a. It moves lust beyond internal desire into embodied action with another person.
 - b. It typically involves sustained deception — lying, hiding, and manipulation — which creates a deeper shattering of reality.
 - c. The “other woman” is not imagined; she is real.
 - d. The wife has not only been replaced in fantasy, but in physical reality.
- 2. Because the other person is real, the betrayal often feels more personal:
 - a. She may compare herself to an actual woman — possibly a friend, colleague, or acquaintance.
 - b. The violation can feel more acute than comparison to a screen-based or filtered image.

3. There may also be tangible consequences:
 - a. Risk of sexually transmitted infections
 - b. Financial deception (hotel rooms, gifts, shared expenses, etc.)
4. Jesus names adultery as one of the explicit grounds for divorce (Matthew 19). Adultery is serious enough that it can end a marriage.

What we need to hold clearly

1. Pornography is grievous sexual sin.
2. Adultery is covenant-breaking sexual sin.
3. Both wound deeply, but they are not identical.

We do not want to minimize pornography and thereby harm a betrayed wife by minimizing her pain. We also do not want to equate pornography and adultery without nuance, which can create confusion and sometimes unnecessary escalation.

Regardless of category, **the wife experiences betrayal**. Her body and brain may respond similarly in both situations. Our task is not to debate severity. Our task is to support the wounded spouse wisely.

What Has a Wife Lost?

Discovery of pornography use or adultery is not just the discovery of sin. It is the loss of something she believed was secure.

1. Trust: The man she thought she knew feels unfamiliar.
 - a. "If he hid this, what else is he hiding?"
 - b. She must now question the integrity of shared history.
 - c. *"Trying to reconcile who your husband actually is with whom you once believed he was is one of the most painful aspects of discovering that your spouse partakes of pornography."*
Jenny Solomon
 - d. Alex says *"One of the most painful aspects of my ex-fiancé's pornography addiction was discovering that he had hidden it from me and lied about it for the two years we were together. That deception shattered my ability to trust him, not only in that area but throughout our entire relationship. It also made it difficult for me to trust men in general."*
2. Identity: Her sense of worth, desirability, and chosen-ness may feel shattered.
 - a. She may feel she must rewrite the story of their marriage. *"What was real?"*
 - b. Happy memories can feel tainted — wondering what he was hiding or who he was thinking about in those moments.
 - c. She may feel inadequate:
 - i. *"Am I not attractive enough?"*
 - ii. *"Was sex with me so unsatisfying that he had to look elsewhere?"*
3. Security: The life she thought she had may feel unstable.
 - a. Home may no longer feel safe — especially if sexual activity occurred there.
 - b. Financial stability may feel threatened (job loss, fallout, hidden spending).
 - c. The future she assumed — growing old together, welcoming grandchildren, retiring side by side — now feels uncertain. She may be unsure if their marriage will last.
4. Health: Her body may now feel vulnerable in ways it did not before.
 - a. There may be risk of STIs or other physical consequences. Seeking medical testing can feel humiliating and invasive.

- b. Janna says *“Chronic stress disrupted everyday life and manifested physically through headaches, jaw clenching, and severe sleep disturbances. Life felt unpredictable and unsafe.”*
- 5. Relationships: The grief of betrayal is often minimized.
 - a. She may be told to “get over it.”
 - b. It is a grief that is hidden or invalidated by society. The mantra of “It doesn’t hurt anybody” is both a lie and deeply hurtful to the spouse who is told she can’t mourn.
 - i. Alex says *“Some people made me feel like I was being ridiculous and overreacting. They said things like, ‘All men look at pornography!’”*
 - ii. There are no public rituals for this kind of loss. (Have you ever seen a meal train for a betrayed spouse?)
 - c. Additional relational wounds may include:
 - i. Friends who knew and did not tell her
 - ii. Awkward friends or family who pull away
 - iii. Isolation chosen to protect her husband’s reputation
 - iv. Fear of judgment from church, family, or community
- 6. Connection to Her Spouse
 - a. Emotions stemming from the deception and betrayal may make it hard for her to even be in the same room with him.
 - b. Emotional and physical disconnection
 - i. A spouse who has had an affair has become accustomed to not considering his wife’s feelings. This won’t magically go away and can inflict further hurt.
 - c. There is often a painful timeline mismatch:
 - i. When a husband confesses, he may feel relief — as though a heavy burden has lifted. For him, healing may feel like it has begun.
 - ii. For her, the weight has just dropped. It is the beginning of the storm.
 - iii. He may be ready to fix things and move forward. She may still be trying to understand what just happened.

Discussion question: Which loss feels most significant to you, and how might recognizing that loss shape the way you offer care and support?

Where is God in the pain?

God himself has been deeply hurt by betrayal and adultery.

Ezekiel 16 contains a graphic and uncomfortable picture of God’s experience of betrayal by Israel. The intensity of the language reveals something important: Betrayal deeply wounds the heart of God.

In the metaphor, Israel is an unwanted newborn baby, left to die in a field. God saw her, cleaned her up, raised her and she became his queen, lavished with gifts and blessings. They were happy. They had children together. But she grows discontent and strays. She seeks other lovers (idolatry), pursuing sinful desires even though she is fully loved and cared for by her faithful Husband.

- 1. God Understands Betrayal Personally. God has been hurt by spiritual adultery.
 - a. He knows what betrayal feels like — and perfectly so — because He is completely sinless and perfectly loving.
 - b. A betrayed spouse is never alone in her pain.
- 2. God Does Not Minimize the Pain. God does not gloss over betrayal or pretend it is small.
 - a. He names the offense. He describes the hurt. He acknowledges the cost.

- b. Ezekiel 16 speaks plainly: *“At every street corner you built your lofty shrines and degraded your beauty, spreading your legs with increasing promiscuity to anyone who passed by. You engaged in prostitution with the Egyptians, your neighbors with large genitals, and aroused my anger with your increasing promiscuity... You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers to your own husband! All prostitutes receive gifts, but you give gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from everywhere for your illicit favors.”* (Ez 16:25-33)
- 3. The story ends in redemption. Even in the face of profound unfaithfulness, God’s story does not end in abandonment. He redeems His people.
 - a. The imagery of Scripture moves from betrayal to restoration — from shame to purity:
 - i. *“I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”* Rev 21:2

What does healing look like?

Healing is not quick. It is not linear. It is not pretending. It is honest, anchored, and slow.

- 1. Talk to someone. Do not spiritualize silence.
 - a. Don’t fall for the lie that pretending everything is fine is a Christlike response.
 - i. *“I know from experience that there’s nothing more isolating than putting on a phony smile and speaking a sappy platitude in the face of real pain and loss. Don’t tell God you are ok when you are bleeding to death. Don’t smile and fake it with trustworthy friends when you are hanging on by an unraveling string.”* Jenny Solomon
 - ii. Processing things alone can lead to faulty thinking and believing lies. Find a mature person to talk to and be honest with her. She can help you think rightly. Avoiding faulty thinking will help with healing.
 - b. It matters who you talk to.
 - i. If your best friends or family members are too biased to listen well and it turns into a husband bashing session (which is gossip), you may need to look elsewhere.
 - c. Lament is a gift. It is the healthy outlet for pain. Finding consolation in sin makes things worse.
 - i. **Lament** is a faithful form of prayer. It moves toward God.
 - 1. Lament voices the tension between deep pain and trust in God’s goodness. *“I know that your Word says you’re good, but you’ve let this awful thing happen and now I feel abandoned. Where are you? Help me.”*
 - ii. **Sinful consolation** seeks relief apart from God. It moves away from God.
 - 1. Gripping to friends, excessive shopping, binge eating or drinking, bitterly replaying conversations, stewing in resentment
- 2. Make Jesus your Rock: If her husband was her rock, and that rock has been pulled away, she needs a Rock that cannot fail.
 - a. *“Your spouse’s adultery will devastate you to the same extent that he or she has functioned as your primary relationship in life. Their infidelity will crush you to the same extent that your status as a married person has primarily defined you.”* Robert D. Jones
 - b. Jesus is the only perfectly faithful Bridegroom. *“Jesus wasn’t like other men. He never once looked at a woman with lust in his heart... He’s the one man among all men who loved unselfishly, unreservedly... And it’s to you, to the women who are his that he now says, ‘Cast your burden on me. I will sustain you. You feel like you’re drowning, but I’ve got you. And I understand.’”* Elyse Fitzpatrick
- 3. Give Yourself Time
 - a. Time to grieve, time to think, time to not think, time to confide in safe people, time to rest

- b. Do not rush decisions. Do not let others rush you. Consider everything carefully and biblically.
- 4. **Know that your body is not to blame:**
 - a. Nothing a wife does or does not do **causes** her husband's porn use or infidelity.
 - i. Lots of husbands with gorgeous, sexually available wives sin sexually. Sexual sin is rooted in discontentment with God. It affects you, but **it is not ultimately about you.**
 - ii. Sin is a deep heart issue. More sex will not fix it. Better sex will not fix it. Weight loss will not fix it. Becoming "more attractive" will not fix it.
 - b. If a husband is **actively pursuing repentance and integrity in the area of porn**, a wife can be an enormous help.
 - i. Being open about sexual wants, needs & temptations, being sexually available, working together to reorient marital sex as a pure, joyful, precious God-given gift.
 - ii. Encouraging accountability and transparency
 - 1. A wife can be a powerful ally to her husband in the fight against sin by helping with safeguards and accountability.
 - 2. She should not become the investigator, monitor, or probation officer. Carrying the role of "police" will exhaust and embitter her.
 - 3. You need a team! Wise Christian friends, pastors, counselors can come alongside and help.
 - 4. **Support is different from responsibility.**
 - c. If a husband is excusing, minimizing, hiding, or continuing in sexual sin, there is nothing she can do to force change.
 - i. You cannot out-love, out-sex, or out-manage unrepentant sexual addiction.
 - ii. Do not take responsibility for managing his repentance. Repentance must be self-driven. Let him show whether he wants to change.
- 5. Hope for redemption: God can rebuild what has been ripped apart.
 - a. God does beautiful things with our pain.
 - i. Janna says *"David's sexual addiction and the resulting betrayal trauma became the very means God used to soften my heart, draw me to Himself, and ultimately form the core of my testimony."*
 - ii. Many couples describe their restored relationship as a "second marriage" — often stronger and more honest than the first.

What Can Comforters Do?

- 1. Don't offer a quick fix: Betrayal carries deep emotional, relational, and spiritual consequences. Healing cannot be rushed.
 - a. False Quick Fix #1: Stuff the Emotions
 - i. Encouraging her to do any of the following may deeply stunt healing.
 - 1. Minimize the hurt
 - 2. Keep it quiet
 - 3. Avoid processing it with a trusted person
 - 4. "Just move on"
 - ii. Silencing pain can also unintentionally enable ongoing sin.
 - b. False Quick Fix #2: Forgive too quickly
 - i. Forgiveness is not pretending nothing happened. True forgiveness requires honesty about the damage.

- ii. Forgiveness is handing over the debt of someone's sin to God. To hand over a debt, you must first assess its cost.
 - iii. If forgiveness is rushed, it may simply be a desire to stop feeling pain. Resentment and bitterness can quietly grow under the guise of "I forgave him."
- c. False Quick Fix #3: Immediately choosing divorce
 - i. Divorce is biblically permitted in cases of adultery but divorce is not a cure-all.
 - 1. Janna says: *"I wish our culture better understood that divorce is not always the best or wisest answer... What is rarely acknowledged is that the baggage and unresolved pain of infidelity are frequently carried into the next relationship. When both spouses are willing to do the hard work and when the marriage is truly safe, healing and restoration are possible."*
 - ii. Scripture names adultery as grounds for divorce. It also leaves room for repentance, forgiveness, and restoration when both spouses are willing.
- 2. Be a friend: Often, what she needs most is simple, steady friendship. Comfort often looks like courageously staying present.
 - a. Listen. Let her talk..Let her cry.
 - i. Jill says *"Be a kind listener. Allow your friend to say whatever she needs to say without fear of being criticized. It's better to listen to your friend who is hurting and ask questions."*
 - ii. Ask thoughtful questions that help her process rather than shut down: "How are you processing this?" "What are your feelings telling you right now?" "What is God showing you?" "When did this begin?" "What can I do to support you?" "Are you seeking wise counsel?"
 - b. Include her. She is not a social outcast.
 - i. Jill says *"Treat her with dignity. There are so many lies the devil is going to speak to your friend. Be the friend that treats her like a real and worthy person because she is made in the image of God. Still invite her to coffee, lunch, workout, crafts, etc.. She may say no but keep inviting her."*
 - ii. Sexual sin brings a lot of shame and shame isolates. Friendship pulls her back into community.
 - c. Speak God's truth to her – not "your" truth
 - i. No husband bashing sessions
 - ii. Truth **does not** minimize damage, say "forgive and forget" or rush the pain away
 - iii. Truth **does** affirm God's ability to redeem and remind her that healing is possible.
 - iv. Jill says *"Truth doesn't brush over the pain and damage that has been done but it does affirm the Gospel and the story of redemption."*
 - d. Empathize plainly. "That really does hurt." "That makes sense." "That's awful."
 - e. Show up and Encourage
 - i. Don't offer trite encouragement like 'God is going to work this all out for your good. Instead say "I'm here. I'm not going anywhere. I will walk through this with you."
 - ii. Jill says *"Let her know the hurt, questions, and broken trust are normal. Let her know healing will take time — lots of time. This isn't a quick fix in a few short months. The deepest level of trust has been shattered. That kind of trust takes a very long time to rebuild."*
 - iii. Reassure her that taking a long time to heal does not make her a bad wife. It does not make her unforgiving. It makes her human and deeply hurt.
 - 1. She is not simply repairing a crack. She is rebuilding a marriage while learning to trust someone who wounded her.
 - f. Pray for her and with her

- g. Don't flinch. Be willing to talk openly about adultery and pornography without discomfort or avoidance. (Practice saying the words if needed!)
 - i. Alex says: *"I really just needed friendship... They listened to me... asked thoughtful questions and never seemed uncomfortable with the topic of pornography... They validated my feelings and convictions."*
- 3. Address the temptation of revenge. Betrayal tempts the heart toward retaliation.
 - a. Revenge can take many forms. Sexual revenge (having an affair), emotional withdrawal, rage and eruptions, cold, loveless interactions, refusal to engage in meaningful dialogue
 - i. As Jenny Solomon notes, combative interactions and affectionless silence can both function as retaliation.
 - b. Gently invite her to share when revenge feels tempting and bring those impulses into the light.
- 4. Be on "Team Marriage" — When it is safe
 - a. Many marriages damaged by infidelity and pornography can be reconciled. *It should be noted, though, that not every marriage should be preserved at all costs — especially where there is ongoing unrepentant adultery, escalating or illegal pornography use, sexual acting out (strip clubs, prostitutes, affairs), or abuse.*
 - b. When reconciliation is possible, it can become a powerful testimony of God's grace.
 - c. True marital healing requires
 - i. A sexually sinful spouse who is humble and repentant
 - ii. A wounded spouse who, over time, is willing to extend grace and forgiveness
- 5. Pray for sexual purity: We desperately need God's help to be a sexually faithful people.
 - a. Pray for her purity
 - b. Pray for her husband's repentance
 - c. Pray for your own integrity
 - d. Pray for the church
- 6. Welcome the Repentant Sinner
 - a. Do not treat a repentant husband as a second-class Christian. With Jesus there is great hope and abundant mercy for repentant sexual sinners. Sexual sin is serious. So is Christ's mercy.

If you've been hurt by your husband's sexual sin, will you consider bringing that into the light with a trusted woman? Just reading one of the books below with another mature believer can bring you out of isolation and move you along the path of healing. If you're unsure who to ask, let us know!

Freedom Fight is happening at CBC! Pastor Aaron is trained in leading men from sexual addiction to freedom. If your husband is looking to fight, this is a trustworthy, free, confidential way for him to get help.

Recommended Resources:

-*Reclaim Your Marriage: Grace for Wives Who Have been Hurt by Pornography* by Jenny Solomon

-*My Spouse Was Unfaithful: Finding Strength in God's Presence* by Robert A. Jones

-Podcast: Hope + Help for After an Affair

<https://christinemchappell.com/hope-help-podcast/after-affair-michael-gembola/>

-Podcast: Hope + Help for Pornography and Marriage

<https://christinemchappell.com/hope-help-podcast/porn-marriage-curtis-jenny-solomon/>

-Podcast: Counseling Talk by 9Marks has several great episodes on porn and infidelity

For parents:

-*Good Pictures Bad Pictures: Porn Proofing Today's Kids* by Kristen A Jensen