

Living to Win

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Personal from. . .

Ronald L. Dart

Controlling Pornography

Is there really such a thing as sexual addiction? Some professional counselors say yes, some say no. I don't know who is right on this issue, but I have a feeling that people are disagreeing on mere semantics; they are talking past one another, where there really is no substantive disagreement.

I will leave arguments on this to the professionals. But I have to admit that there is a real problem in our society with something that looks very much like an addiction to sex. Thanks to the Internet, pornography is out of control. Think about it this way. Of the kids you know between the ages of, say, 11 to 17, how many of them would you say would *accidentally* be exposed to pornography on the Net? Answer? Nine out of 10. *Accidentally.*

If I point out to you that there are 8000 new cases of sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers, *every day*, would you agree that we have a problem? No? How about if I add the hard fact that two out of ten 15-year-old, ninth graders have slept with

four or more partners? Then would you agree that we have a problem?

It is true to say that pornography is out of control in our society – and in the world, for that matter. But when we say that, we raise the specter of “control.” If we are to control it, who is the controller? The government? Someone will argue that it is a parental responsibility. But this thing is too big for parents. Parents can try to do their best with their own kids, but their efforts are simply swept away and drowned by the flood of sexuality that threatens to overwhelm us. Parents lock the doors and it comes in the windows. They lock the windows and it comes down the chimney.

Parents need help. But society is not helping. Far from it. Society is *systematically* rendering parents

powerless. You probably heard of the case recently when a mother was judged, in a court of law, to be invading her daughter's privacy by listening in on her phone calls *with a convicted felon.*

One of the things that is killing us is the way the courts are now interpreting the first amendment. Free speech is coming to mean that we can't control much of anything (except speech critical of homosexual behavior). There are still a few restrictions, but they are becoming fewer by the day.

What is odd about all of this is that for 200 years, we lived under the first amendment and still managed to keep sex away from children. We kept it out of movies, out of radio, off television, and mostly out of print. You could get titillating material, but it had to come under the counter.

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You've Asked . . .

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What do you suppose was the *overriding social need* that allowed us to interpret the first amendment in such a way that we could control pornography, and why can't we do it now? To answer that question, I will have to digress for a moment.

There is a huge battle going on right now over the issue of gay marriage. Taken in a broader context, the whole issue seems completely absurd. Let me explain.

For generations, it was extremely difficult to get a divorce in this country. Some of us are old enough to remember stories of people who fled to Reno to get a divorce because it was easier in Nevada. All the other 47 states made divorce hard. That was before no-fault divorce.

How does no-fault divorce relate to gay marriage? Let me put the question to you this way: What business does the government have in regulating marriage at all? What was the overriding consideration in restricting the freedom of people to divorce and marry again to their hearts' content? Why did the government issue marriage licenses and formalize the relationship?

In other times and places, governments didn't do that. People did their own marriage contracts. What the government has done is simply to impose a standard marriage contract by means of a marriage license. Why did they do that?

The answer to the question seems obvious. If I may paraphrase from a political campaign, "It's the children, stupid." The

government felt justified in restricting our freedom to divorce in the interest of protecting children, who are not usually consulted when we selfishly break up our marriages.

Few laws have been more harmful to *children* than no-fault divorce. But it seemed so logical. Why fight? Just let people split up and go their separate ways. The answer is just as logical. If you marry and bring children into the world, you are required by law to stay married and take care of the children.

No-fault divorce has been a disaster for kids. It would have made more sense for the government simply to bow out of marriage altogether than to have created no-fault divorce. It would have made more sense for the government to say, "You're on your own folks. We are going to treat each of you as individuals, not as families. Weddings and marriages are matters for the church, and the government will just pretend they don't exist."

My point is simply this. We felt for a very long time in this country that, for the sake of the children, we could abridge the freedom of adults to mate like alley cats. We even had laws against adultery, as quaint as that may sound to some of you.

And this is what makes the issue of gay marriage so absurd. The only reason government can use to justify any laws about marriage at all, is to protect children. Since there is no means by which gay couples can generate kids, they are

irrelevant to the marriage question. The government has no reason whatever to recognize gay marriage.

In case you think I am being homophobic when I say that gay marriage is absurd, perhaps you can forgive me when next you observe some of the fertility symbols that festoon marriage celebrations.

I understand, in a way, some of the motivation of gays in pressing for marriage rites. But in the interest of gaining respectability, gays are trivializing one of society's most important institutions – an institution created and protected for the sake of children.

I wonder if you have ever noticed that some of Jesus' most stringent requirements on divorce are followed immediately by the incident of the blessing of little children (see Mark 10:2-16). This is no coincidence. The lives of children are what adultery and divorce destroy.

Now I return to answer my earlier question. If, for 200 years we were justified in *abridging the freedom of adults* to publish pornography, what has changed, really? Why can't we do it now? Here is what the first amendment says: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

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For 200 years, we felt we could interpret this in a way that allowed us to control smut. Now we have decided we were all wrong. We have to turn smut loose. For 200 years, we now think, we were wrong to control pornography and obscenity.

Parents are left trying to control access to the Internet in ways that will never work. Some are designing Internet filters to control what is allowed into the home, and that is probably a good idea. But, like teaching abstinence in the schools, it is attempting to maintain a vacuum.

There has to be a better way. I think there is.

What has happened to us is that sex has replaced love as the central value in human relationships. Nothing could be clearer as you listen to Christian counselors trying to explain sexual addiction. I listened to a panel of these fellows just a few nights ago as they worked over the problem. And while I agree with them on the importance of keeping porn away from their kids, they are like King Canute commanding the tide not to come in.

What they are doing is like trying to head off a deadly virus by quarantine. Sometimes, not always, that works with disease. It won't work here, though, because the ACLU will see to it that we can't quarantine the *carriers*. If we were talking about a virus, what would we do? We would inoculate our kids.

But what is the vaccine? How can we vaccinate our kids against

the wretched pornography virus? That's not going to be easy, not in our society. But the risks are so high, we have to find a way. Warren Throckmorton, a professor of Psychology recently said this: "I am really troubled by the numbers of adolescents that I have counseled who cried for days and hurt for years because they engaged in 'safer sex' within dead end, unfulfilling relationships. Sadly they learned that 'safer sex' can be hazardous to their emotional health."

Schools have been passing out free condoms, teaching all about safer sex, even teaching kids in science lab how to put a condom on a banana. But who is going to tell the kids about the terrible emotional damage that this is going to cause. Who will tell them how destructive it is to their ability to love another person and be loved by them? Who will tell them that it will have destructive effects that will reach into their marriage later in life?

You can cure some cases of sexually transmitted diseases with antibiotics. But they still may leave you sterile. Worse, there will never be a time in your life that you don't remember that sexual encounter. There is no shot that will kill that memory, and it will eat at you for a lifetime.

This also accounts for some of the profound psychological problems that attend abortions. You will never, ever, not have had the abortion. It will be a permanent part of what makes you who you are. You may argue that there could

be severe problems if a woman does not have an abortion as well, but you have only made my point for me. A pregnancy outside of marriage is a disaster, abortion or no abortion. And every casual sexual encounter becomes a part of who you are.

Even if you are lucky in sex, it will affect your marriage and your life for years to come. You will never be the same. Sex is for marriage and marriage is for love. Can that be taught in school? Can it be taught at home when it is being systematically traduced at school?

It isn't easy, but it can be done. It has to be done. Families and churches need desperately to teach their children about love. They teach that by scripture and by example.

By far, the best inoculation is the law of God and the fear of God. And these are things the schools won't teach. Note, I didn't say they couldn't. They won't. Then who must fill the gap? All that is left is family and church.

With deepest concern for our families,

Ronald L. Dart

P.S. For a radio presentation of this subject in greater detail, request a cassette tape of the program titled "Controlling Pornography." The tape is *FREE*. Just check the box on the enclosed card and return it to us in the envelope provided. Any contribution you can make will be put to good use.

Radio Update

WBAP
Ft. Worth, TX
820AM
5:00 a.m. Sunday

WWL
New Orleans, LA
870AM
11:00 p.m. Sunday

KFAQ (previously KVOO)
Tulsa, OK
1170AM
6:30 a.m. Sunday



Calendar of Events

Pasadena, California - You are invited to hear Ronald L. Dart at the Apostolic Christian Church building, 434 N. Altadena Dr., Pasadena, CA, 10:30 a.m., February 19, 2004. Mr. Dart will also conduct a seminar that afternoon. The Church of God Southern California is hosting this event and a noon potluck. For further information call Molly Antion at 626-585-0700 or Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44.

Modesto, California - You are invited to attend a "Meet the Teacher," sponsored by CEM with Ronald L. Dart, the voice of the *Born to Win* radio program, speaking at the Courtyard by Marriott, 1720 Sisk Road (Highway 99 at the Briggsmore-Carpenter exit), Modesto, CA, Saturday, February 26 at 2 p.m. For further information call Jan Oehlman at 408-739-7744 or Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44.

Spring Mini-Feast, Destin Florida - You are invited to attend a Mini-Feast April 22-24, 2005 at the Seascape Resort Conference Center, 100 Seascape Dr., Destin, Florida sponsored by CEM. Ronald L. Dart is scheduled to speak April 22, 7 p.m. at the Passover Service, April 23, 2 p.m. at Sabbath Service, and again at 7 p.m. for the Night to be Much Observed. He will also speak at 2 p.m. April 24 on the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Make plans to join us for inspirational and edifying sermons at the Christian Renewal Mini-Feast. Call Shirley George at 850-837-0485 or check out our website at www.cemnetwork.com for discounted accommodations.

Family Bible Retreat - You are invited to join us for a Family Bible Retreat sponsored by CEM over the Memorial Day weekend at the Bel Arco Resort, Bull Shoals, AR. It begins Friday evening, May 27, and ends at noon May 30, 2005. Bring your entire family for a full schedule of sermons, seminars, YEA classes and seminars, and activities. Ronald Dart will inspire and delight you with God's Word. Other outstanding speakers will be heard as well. Reasonably priced accommodations at the Bel Arco Resort are limited, so call toll free today at 866-235-2726 to reserve your room and tell them you're with CEM. For information on an RV park and other accommodations in the area, call Larry Watkins at 1-888-BIBLE 44 or check out our website at www.cemnetwork.com.

Christian Educational Ministries



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That the man of God may be proficient and equipped for every good work.