

# **“Somebody’s Daughter”-- FAQs**

## **Q: What inspired you to launch this ministry?**

Eighteen years ago, I worked on a musical project to help those who were victims of childhood abuse. I performed a song from that project called “Innocent Child” at the closing ceremonies of a conference for abuse survivors. A woman in her thirties approached me afterwards and said, “People have been telling me I was an innocent child my whole life... but I never believed it until I heard you sing it today.”

I felt then that God was telling me something very important, and that I was supposed to do something about it. Music for the Soul is that something.

I believe God’s creation of music is one of the greatest gifts of communication given to us and has the unique ability to speak to us cognitively and emotionally – to both mind and heart.

When we’re suffering from deep emotional pain, sometimes the guilt, shame, anger or denial can make it almost impossible for us to hear the truth, even when it is spoken in love. Well-meaning words can bounce off the walls of self-defense we build to protect ourselves from pain. Music has a way of finding the cracks in our walls of defense and softening our hearts. Add a lyric and now a message can be laid in that opened heart.

When you add the memory device of melody, this makes the message easier to remember.

Most people feel like no one could possibly understand what they’re going through. If one person who hears our songs can say, “That’s me!,” then maybe they will feel less alone.

We want to bring that kind of hope – the kind of hope that says someone else understands. That God understands.

## **Q: What did you learn during the creative and production process while writing and producing the “Somebody’s Daughter” DVD and CD?**

I’ve learned that even when guilt, shame and betrayal seem insurmountable, God can still bring reconciliation, healing and freedom.

I’ve learned that no matter how hard it is to hear and no matter how dark and unforgiveable it may seem, hope always begins with telling the truth.

I’ve learned what real courage looks like.

I’ve re-learned that music really does open doors like no other form of communication.

I’ve learned that fear and denial only make a problem worse.

## **Q: What do you hope the DVD/CD will accomplish?**

Ultimately, I want “Somebody’s Daughter” to give people real hope that they can live free from the bondage of pornography, and that their relationships can be healed.

By educating and making people more aware, “Somebody’s Daughter” can help all of us respond to the epidemic of pornography addiction with grace, not condemnation. With mercy, not judgment. It is only in

this way that we can empower those struggling with pornography to face their problems honestly and get the help they need.

The truth is that with the advent of the Internet, video I-pods and cell phones with screens, 100 percent of our children are going to be exposed to pornography at some point. In order to mentor and protect them, we must first tell the truth to one another. I hope "Somebody's Daughter" enables more people to do just that.

I want "Somebody's Daughter" to turn on a bright light that will bring the devastation and destructiveness of pornography out into the open where it can be seen for what it is – a destroyer of marriages, families, individuals and communities.

It is often difficult to talk about issues like pornography, because we feel embarrassed, guilty or ashamed. I hope the DVD, with its combination of evocative music videos and honest, vulnerable discussion will give churches and other groups new doorways that will open up awareness and dialogue. We can't win a war we won't fight, and the time is long overdue to break the silence on this issue.

**Q: What is the target audience for the DVD/CD, and how should they use it as a resource?**

I've had four ministry leaders tell me that every man in America should have a copy of "Somebody's Daughter" – one even said every man on the *planet*.

The target audience is:

Men - because they know they are struggling, and it will help them find ways to resist the temptation and support one another.

Dads and granddads – because they need an ice breaker for opening up dialogue on this issue with their sons and grandsons.

Sons - because they need preventive medicine to help them choose the right course before they get too far down the wrong path.

Wives - because, as one woman said, "it helped me realize I am not crazy." It will help them to understand their own feelings and how best to support their spouse in his recovery and at the same time, take care of their own emotional well being.

Pastors - because over half of the men in their congregation are dealing with a serious problem in this area, and most didn't study how to deal with this issue in seminary.

Therapists - because it is a non-threatening way of engaging a very difficult topic; an additional resource in their tool kit to help people do the work of recovery.

**Q: What do you classify as pornography, and how do you define an addiction to pornography?**

This question raises an important issue. There are all sorts of things in our culture which, while they are not technically pornography, contribute to an environment where pornography becomes acceptable.

For example, most would say that the mannequin displays and posters at a certain lingerie store in the mall are not pornography. Most would say that the annual swim suit issue of a certain sports magazine is not pornography. Most would say that the highly sexualized music videos on the cable channels are not pornography. Yet all of these things contribute to a climate where pornography seems less threatening. And by the way, all of the above would have been considered pornographic just 50 years ago.

Sex has doubled on TV since 1998. And we all know *anything* goes on the Internet. One missionary said after being away from America for two years she was horrified at how far our culture had slid in this area. What seems incremental or even unnoticeable when you live in a culture every day apparently looks quite different after some separation.

Having said all of that, let me specifically answer this question. The American Heritage Dictionary defines pornography as “Sexually explicit pictures, writing or other material whose primary purpose is to cause sexual arousal.”

Something is an addiction when it controls you, when it disrupts your life to the point where you can't keep from thinking about it or acting on it. Someone who is looking at pornography at work even though they know that it could get them fired; a husband who is risking his marriage and his family over pixels on a screen – these are signs that one might be addicted.

If someone is regularly using pornography and hiding it, then they are either addicted or on their way to being addicted.

**Q: What are the most common reasons Christians give to justify their viewing of pornography, and how should these topics be addressed?**

Men will tell me, “My wife isn't meeting my needs.” They will say “It's not hurting anyone.” or “It's just entertainment.”

Of course rationalizing sinful behavior is nothing new, and that's all these statements are – rationalizations for something that a Christian already knows is wrong.

When men tell me that their wives aren't meeting their needs, I ask them “When was the last time you took your wife out to a romantic dinner? Do you talk with her? Do you listen to her? When was the last time you gave her a backrub without expecting anything in return or sent her flowers for no reason? Do you take good physical care of yourself and make an effort to look your best at home?

Do you love her as Christ loved the church?”

Usually there is no need to go any further. But even if a husband does all these things, and his wife doesn't meet his needs pornography is still not the answer. Marital counseling is.

As for it not hurting anyone and being “just entertainment,” these are lies from the pit of hell and any morally thinking person knows that in their gut. Pornography is just entertainment like cocaine is just entertainment.

**Q: What do you say to people who believe that their addiction to pornography is not hurting them or others?**

A better question would be who is it not hurting? Pornography degrades and dehumanizes both the viewer and the participant.

For the viewer, it's simple. You can't ingest poison and not get sick. Garbage in, garbage out.

Participants have described it to me as a hollowing out process. Often it results in drug use as a way to anesthetize the pain.

As Shelli Mandeville eloquently states in the DVD, “All any woman truly wants is for one man to think they're beautiful,” a reference of course to a committed relationship with a loving spouse. No one could honestly think a woman would choose to act in pornographic films if she felt she had a choice.

Finally, when someone purchases pornography they are making it profitable and thereby helping create a demand for more, resulting in a more toxic society for all of us. It hurts everyone.

**Q: What are the most damaging side effects of pornography for Christians?**

The most damaging side effect of pornography for a Christian is separation from God, which is closely followed by separation from their spouse, their children and other loved ones. Pornography erodes the ability to maintain healthy intimacy.

**Q: What impact is the rise in pornography having on the church?**

When a man is emotionally and physically drained, that is when he is the most susceptible to pornography. As our spiritual leaders, our pastors are under a tremendous emotional and physical strain and are particularly susceptible to attack in this area.

We're seeing some statistics saying that as many as 50 percent of our pastors are actively struggling with pornography. Compounding the problem is a "shoot our own" response that is often seen in the church. Instead, we need to be giving our leaders the support and help they need to overcome this problem so that they can return to offer guidance to the men in the pews.

I'm not saying we shouldn't hold them accountable. I'm just saying we shouldn't automatically treat this sin as somehow worse than all others and drive good men out of the church because they have struggled with this issue.

I know several great men who have been restored from this problem who are serving the church with tremendous energy, courage and vision.

There is no question that sexual misconduct and pornography use has seriously undermined our ability to speak with any moral authority to the culture.

However, I'm more concerned about how pornography can negatively affect our ability to mentor our young people and love our neighbor as ourselves.

Let me explain. Our teens *know* pornography is a problem. They hear us saying the truth will set you free, but then see us unwilling to tell the truth about issues like pornography. They perceive this as hypocrisy. And nothing will turn off young people to church faster than hypocrisy. This generation of young people is hungry for people to be real. We can't be real in the church without taking on pornography.

The good news is, if we start telling the truth about this then we can start helping one another. There are families in the pew right next to you who are going to lose everything because they think they're the only ones struggling with this. We can't love our neighbor as ourselves in a culture of secrecy.

If we will start telling the truth on this, I believe it will reenergize our churches and help us to reclaim some of the moral authority we have lost in the eyes of the world.

**Q: Why do you think the church has been slow to respond to the increase in viewership of pornography by Christian leaders and laypeople?**

Sex has always been an uncomfortable topic for the church. God made our bodies but there is still a lot of theology out there that says the body is "bad." As a result, it makes a lot of us uncomfortable to talk about it. "What will people think?"

What's strange about this to me is that we profess to believe that God sees what we do in secret already. We might as well talk about what God already knows is happening. I heard that Luther once said, "When the church ceases to tell the truth about where it is being attacked, it has ceased to preach the gospel."

Well, right now, we are being attacked by pornography.

I think the social issue is part of it too. Christians don't want to be seen as party-poopers who never want to have any fun. As a result we let things go even when we know that we should speak up and/or abstain.

**Q: How should the church seek to help members that are struggling with addictions to pornography?**

Churches need to partner with Christian counselors to offer members a safe place to get the help they need. They also need to give members who are hurting assurance that they are still part of the community, no worse or better than any other sinner, and loved by God.

Churches should also have accountability groups or one-on-one partners to help in walking the road to recovery.

Members should know that forgiveness and healing are possible, and that as long as they acknowledge their sin and commit to the work of recovery, they will have a place in the community.

**Q: Do you believe that the government should implement stricter laws and regulations to protect people from pornography?**

Of course I do.

However, censorship is never going to stop people from finding inappropriate things to look at. We have to recondition our minds on this one. Smoking was considered glamorous until everyone realized it caused cancer. Once we educate people to realize the truth about pornography they will see that is a cancer of the heart.

Change the hearts of the people and censorship will happen organically.

**Q: What has been the response to the DVD/CD?**

I do not exaggerate when I say we've been told "Somebody's Daughter" has saved marriages and families, saved careers, restored broken relationships, and even started ministries.

There are several endorsements, both from religious and counseling "professionals" and testimonies from lay people at our web site.

It has fulfilled a great need for a great many people, and we are deeply humbled and thankful for the response.

**Q: How do you talk to children about the dangers of pornography?**

Of course it depends on the age, but I would say in general my response to this question is that we need to tell them the truth.

I think we do our kids a disservice when we say things like “Drugs are bad. Don’t do them.” Or “Pornography is bad. Don’t look at it.”

The truth is, pornography activates pleasure centers in our brain. If it didn’t, we wouldn’t become addicted to it.

We need to talk to our kids honestly about sex -- about what it is, what it is for, and when and where it is appropriate to be shared. Once that context has been set, we can then explain to them that when they see images of people with no clothes on it may excite them or make them feel good.

If they experience something that feels good and all we’ve told them is “This is bad,” then they will think, “My parents lied to me. This is great.”

So a longer discussion is required that helps them understand that just because something feels good doesn’t mean that it’s *good for you*.

The main thing is we need our kids to know that when they see something like this, they should come and talk to us. (And by the way, we need to ask them from time to time if they have seen anything like this whether they come to us or not)

Then we need to ask them how what they saw made them feel. If they have been excited by what they’ve seen or it has made them feel good, we need to assure them that this doesn’t mean they are bad or should feel guilty.

But we should also explain that just because something makes you feel good at first does not mean that it is a safe behavior. For example, I’ve heard addicts say that heroin feels great the first time you take it. We should warn them that pornography is very harmful and take the time to explain why.

By being truthful with our kids, hopefully we can better protect them and have a better chance of keeping the lines of communication open.

The main thing is - talk to them! We don’t let our kids go outside without telling them to look both ways before crossing the street. Accordingly, we shouldn’t let them go on a computer, or have a video i-pod, or cell phone with a screen, without explaining the dangers of pornography.

### **Q: What are some ways that we can protect children from pornography?**

Get the computers out of the kid’s bedrooms. Keep them in a pass-through area where at any moment a parent might be over the shoulder.

There are lots of good internet filters. Make sure all of the computers in the family have one.

Turn off the TV more often. And pay more attention to what your kids are watching, both on TV and at the movies.

My wife used to work as a writer for network television, and she told me the American audience was referred to as “the people we fly over.” Don’t let these folks raise your kids.

And talk, talk, talk to them.

### **Q: What advice do you give to couples that use pornography in their sex lives?**

It might add some spark at first. But eventually it won’t be enough. Then you’ll need harder or kinkier pornography. Or worse.

Study after study has shown that the most satisfying sexual relationships are those between committed, loving, married couples. The swinging single that is finding happiness through sex with multiple partners and frequent pornography use is a myth.

Christians can look at it this way. Essentially what you're doing when you are using pornography to spice up your sex life is having a vicarious orgy. Nowhere in the Bible will you find God approving or encouraging this kind of behavior.

**Q: How has this project impacted your life and the lives of others around you?**

It's made me more aware of the things we don't see and how easily it is to become blind to the world around you. PG-13 is what R was 10 years ago. Vogue now is racier than Playboy used to be. In fact, magazines that would have been in the back of a liquor store behind a curtain when I was a kid are on the supermarket shelves now.

Once you do a project like this, you start really paying attention and you see a lot of areas where we are accepting things that are coarsening our culture and degrading our humanity.

**Q: Coping with addiction can be an arduous journey, what is the first step that someone struggling with pornography should take towards healing?**

Tell someone. The instant the secret is out in the open it becomes easier. Notice I didn't say easy. Big difference. But addiction thrives on darkness. That's why Jesus said we need to live as children of the light. The minute the light is on and the truth is out you're on your way to getting the help you need.