

7/24/2020

# marri *Findings*

FAITH & FAMILY

## “The Tension between Pornography Viewing and the Worship of God”

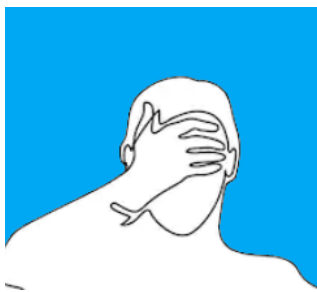
“A person’s rightful due is to be treated as an object of love, not as an object for use.” (Karol Wojtyla / John Paul II)

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Today we present three studies in the effects of pornography by [Samuel Perry](#), of Department of Sociology, University of Oklahoma. He has an MA in theology summa cum laude, from Dallas Theological Seminary, and master’s and doctoral degrees in sociology from the University of Chicago.

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### Pornography Use and the Quality of the Parent-Child Relationship is Modified by Religious Practice

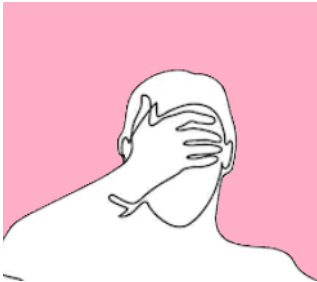


A [2017 study](#) examined how religious service attendance affected the link between parents’ pornography consumption and parent-child relationship quality among 2,610 participants of the Portraits of American Life Survey (PALS), a nationally representative panel survey of the adult, civilian, non-institutionalized, household population in the continental U.S. This study found that as pornography consumption increased, parents who attended religious services more frequently showed the steepest decline in their frequency of communicating with their children, frequency of eating with their children, the greatest increase

in their tendency to yell at their children, and the greatest decrease in feelings of closeness to their children.

These associations were particularly salient for fathers. For mothers who attended religious services more often, their decline was “only” a decline in communication with their children when they also had an increase in their consumption of pornography.

### **Pornography Use Leads to Marital Instability and Divorce**



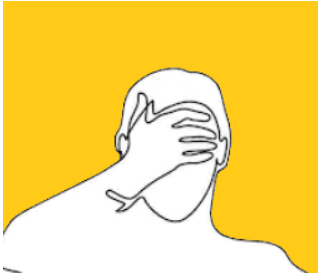
A [2018 longitudinal study](#) examined the relationship between pornography use and marital stability using data from 2,120 non-institutionalized English- or Spanish-speaking adult participants of the General Social Survey (GSS). This study looked at 3 waves of data in 2006, 2008, and 2010 (Wave 1), in 2008, 2010, and 2012 (Wave 2), and in 2010, 2012, and 2014 (Wave 3). Results indicated that married people at Wave 1 who began watching pornography were more than twice as likely to be divorced by Wave 2 as those who did not watch pornography, regardless of sex.

It further found that women who quit pornography between waves were significantly less likely to get a divorce compared to men. Of those women who continue to watch porn at Wave 1, 18 percent were more likely to get a divorce at Wave 2 compared to only 6 percent of women who stopped viewing porn altogether.

It also found that the positive association between pornography use and divorce declined with age and was statistically significant only for those who did not attend religious services weekly and who reported greater initial happiness with their marriage.

### **Pornography Leads to Diminished Religiosity (... Mainly!)**

In one of his many studies on the link between religious practice and pornography use [Samuel Perry](#) of Department of Sociology, University of Oklahoma used the nationally representative Portraits of American Life Study (PALS) that included 2,610 adult participants. The first wave was conducted in



2006, while the second wave was conducted in 2012. He sums up his findings in the [abstract](#):

Research consistently shows a negative association between religiosity and viewing pornography. While scholars typically assume that greater religiosity leads to less frequent pornography use, none have empirically examined whether the reverse could be true: that greater pornography use may lead to lower levels of religiosity over time.

I tested for this possibility using two waves of the nationally representative [Portraits of American Life Study \(PALS\)](#). Persons who viewed pornography at all at Wave 1 reported more religious doubt, lower religious salience, and lower prayer frequency at Wave 2 compared to those who never viewed porn. Considering the effect of porn-viewing frequency, viewing porn more often at Wave 1 corresponded to increases in religious doubt and declining religious salience at Wave 2. However, the effect of earlier pornography use on later religious service attendance and prayer was curvilinear: Religious service attendance and prayer decline to a point and then increase at higher levels of pornography viewing. Testing for interactions revealed that all effects appear to hold regardless of gender. Findings suggest that viewing pornography may lead to declines in some dimensions of religiosity but at more extreme levels may actually stimulate, or at least be conducive to, greater religiosity along other dimensions. [Comment: This would explain why sins of pornography-viewing seem to be frequent matter for confession among Catholics among whom only the more devout go to confession regularly].

Further comment: The finding that “Persons who viewed pornography at all at Wave 1 reported more religious doubt, lower religious salience, and lower prayer frequency at Wave 2” is highly significant for understanding the [decrease in religious attendance in the US over the last decades](#). It seems that pornography viewing is a significant cause. The cost to the nation is (without hyperbole) astronomical. The work of Brian Grim’s [Religious Freedom and Business Foundation](#) documents just the marketplace impact. Every major institution is similarly affected.

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