

How to Help Boys Become Gentlemen, Not Johns

It all boils down to respect for self, respect for others and compassion.



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The illusion of power and entitlement, revealed in the “right” to buy a woman’s body for a set period of time, is in fact one of the deepest poverties in our culture.

Before a man becomes a “john” — someone who pays a prostitute for sex — he is a little boy who rides a bicycle and builds tree forts. What happens to a boy in his formative years that leads him to believe that objectifying women or paying them for sex is acceptable? How — and more importantly, why — does he first start going to strip clubs or

downloading porn? At what point does he become convinced that “it’s a man’s right, and it’s not harming anyone”?

The culture certainly plays a part. Rap music glorifies the degradation of women, television shows portray girls and women as sexy sirens, and clothing manufacturers think nothing of marketing wholly inappropriate

outfits to girls as young as toddlers. Boys are inundated with the image of girls as sex objects.

The culture also portrays boys as obsessed with sex. Teen movies typically depict boys on a quest to have sex as if it were a rite of passage; they are not men unless they conquer a woman. Looking at porn in magazines, movies and online is commonplace. According to TopTenReviews.com, the average age of first exposure to Internet pornography is 11 years old, and the largest demographic for Internet porn use is 12-17-year-olds.

The lures into the industry are pervasive and enticing, but once ensnared, a boy is on a road to degradation and despair. Encounters in the sex industry — be they at a strip club, on an Internet porn site or with a prostituted or trafficked victim — expose the user to myriad diseases, a calloused heart, fear and insecurity.

So how does Johnny grow up to be a gentleman, “a well-mannered and considerate man with high standards of proper behavior,”¹ instead of a “john”?

Teach boys to respect women, all women, as the Bible instructs. 1 Timothy 4:12 says, “*Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the*

believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.”

Set a Biblical example. God created sex to be between one man and one woman in the bonds of marriage. Monogamous, healthy marriages provide protections of the heart, mind and body. Parents should model this relationship to their children and show them this is the path to respect and pleasure.

Debunk the myths about prostitution and pornography, and expose the reality of the sex industry.

Isn't it a victimless crime?

A john believes prostitution is a victimless crime and that he has a right to purchase women for sex.

Prostitution makes victims of the women and children who are trafficked and sexually exploited by 15-20 men per day. Families of johns are victims due to the violation of their trust, the humiliation of having your son, father, husband or brother arrested for soliciting, and the use of family income to violate another human being. Communities suffer because where there is prostitution there are other crimes such as rape, drug dealing and murder.

¹ “Gentleman.” Def.2. The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third ed. 1996.



Photo Credit: Initiative Against Sexual Trafficking www.iaast.net, "Faces of Prostitution" page.

These are mugshots of the same woman. Her dignity and hope erode on a daily basis. Prostitution hurts women. Period.

A gentleman believes sex outside of marriage and buying human beings is wrong.

They enjoy the sex, don't they?

A john believes the woman or child he paid for wants to be there and enjoys it.

Holding to this belief blocks out the reality that most prostituted persons are, or have been, victims of child sexual assault and are now under the control of a pimp or trafficker. The prostituted woman may have a smile on her face and tell you she is happy, but under that thin veneer is a shattered soul desperate to be free of the oppression that is

prostitution, pornography and trafficking. She views johns as rapists that pay.

A gentleman sees this woman or child and has compassion on her. He seeks her rescue, restoration and rehabilitation and does not contribute to her misery and destruction.

Porn, what's the big deal?

A john believes buying pornography or going to strip clubs is harmless fun.

Pornography use is addictive and it warps the user's perception of reality and of what is acceptable. Many users

of child pornography started out looking at adult pornography, but when that no longer thrilled them, they had to move on to more prurient material. Strip clubs, or “gentlemen’s clubs” as they are called in a pathetic attempt to lend an air of respectability, are where men view women as sex objects meant to be ogled, fondled and humiliated. In a store, the rule is “if you break it, you buy it.” In the world of prostitution, trafficking and pornography, the rule is “if you buy it, you can break it.” The more damaged a victim is, both physically and psychologically, the easier a target they make for predators.

A gentleman believes women are not sex objects and are to be treated with respect and dignity.

What about my needs?

A john believes he has needs and he has a right to have them met.

Of course these needs are sexual, often deviant, and he does not require them in order to survive. The demand created by johns for pornography and prostitution is a major cause of sex trafficking, and it perpetuates the slavery of women and children

worldwide. Those men who say they don’t want the “girlfriend experience” say paying for sex gets them what they want without any strings attached. Well, they may not have the strings of romance, time, attention and commitment that are a part of an adult relationship, but they do have the strings of subjugation, degradation, objectification and the rape of women and children to confront.

A gentleman understands that sexual relationships require marriage, time and commitment.

Surely, given some basic information, our boys would rather grow up to be gentlemen than johns. ■

By Brenda Zurita, Research Fellow for the Beverly LaHaye Institute.

PRAY

For our culture to reject prostitution and pornography.

PRAISE

For the growing awareness about the evil of sex trafficking, prostitution and pornography.

ACT

Talk with the boys in your family about this topic.