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Viewpoints

Observing events in our modern world from the viewpoint of our ascended Savior.

Sensual Extortion ~ May 25, 2016

Everyone who tries to sin “safely” eventually becomes owned.

[Online Version & Archive](#)

There’s a new epidemic of digital stalkers who troll the internet to obtain your personal information, and then they blackmail you. Although it sounds familiar, it’s a new phenomenon called sextortion.

Sextortion is a crime in which the hacker demands money in exchange for not releasing sexually explicit images or sexually explicit information that the hacker has illicitly obtained.

On behalf of their tweens and teens, parents need to be vigilant against sextortion. There’s an alarming trend with youth who use social media becoming entrapped by the crafty lies of a hacker. Outwitted, these youth are shamed into hiding the entrapment while being coerced into shameful behaviors (i.e., to serve the evil desires of online pedophiles).*

Adults also make themselves targets if they’re using the internet in a sexually sinful way. In an article cautioning adults, Vivienne Mitchell sarcastically warns about the dangers of sextortion:

The good news (*sarcasm!*) for cyber stalkers is modern dating websites and apps are designed in such a way that online predators can quickly sort through thousands of profiles to single out the people who do have something to hide.

In other words, hackers look for adults who use the internet in a way that you don’t want your parents or spouse, or your teachers or employer, or your pastor and congregation to know about. Dropping the sarcasm, Ms. Mitchell offers a quick list of rules for guarding yourself against sextortion.

Use a different profile picture for every online account.

Use Google’s image search to search your profile pictures before you put them up.

Don’t try to conceal your identity by simply blurring your photograph.

Don’t rely on a fake name to protect your identity.

Don’t set your accounts to public access.

Unbelievable! Isn’t that list appalling because of what it lacks? The biggest and best common-sense item is missing: “Stop sinning and you won’t make yourself a target for sextortion in the first place!” Instead of encouraging obedience to God, Ms. Mitchell unwittingly coaches us how to keep on sinning, but in a more “safe” manner.

After overcoming the shock of her omission, this Bible verse suddenly came to my mind: “Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools” (Romans 1:22, KJV). What the apostle wrote especially applies to those who wish to use Ms. Mitchell’s suggestions to “protect” themselves from sextortion, and yet continue their sinful practices. What God wants instead is that we recognize our sin, repent of it, turn to Jesus for forgiveness, and then in the joy of Christ’s forgiveness lead a life that pleases him.

While you and I don’t have secret behaviors that expose us to sextortion, we each do have our own unique temptations. Are we being wise by running away from them, or are we being fools by trying to sin in a more “safe” manner? God warns about the person who doesn’t run away from temptation, but begins to walk by it. This eventually turns into standing and lingering near it. As such a person feels that he’s outmaneuvered and mastered the sin, he then finally sits down... in the cross hairs of Satan’s sniper scope. Everyone who tries to sin “safely” eventually becomes owned.

The threat of becoming a victim of sextortion, however, is not enough motivation to turn from sinful desires. No, the highest and best motivation is always God’s undeserved mercy.

- This is the mercy God showered on us from the cross, when Jesus forgave us.
- It’s the same mercy God is using to protect you and me from the consequences of our fooling around with sinful temptations.
- And it might even be the same mercy that God deploys by allowing our sin to erupt into an earthly disaster, but only because God is keeping us from eternally fatal consequences. In other words, sometimes he lets our sin explode in our faces, but only because he desires to work spiritual repentance and faith in Christ. Yes, sometimes erring Christians need to hit bottom before finally seeing life from God’s perspective. **

And what might it look like to see life from God’s vantage point? Well we don’t have to guess, because God tells us. **1Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. 2But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. 3He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.** (Psalm 1:1-3, NIV84) †

Source Material (Links may become inactive over time.)

*Parents with strong stomachs may email me for a link to a report published by the Brookings Institute. It graphically details how sextortion entraps tweens and teens and coerces them into devastating behaviors, sometimes right under the nose of a parent. Parents who worship frequently with their tweens and teens, and who have regular Bible-oriented discussions and devotions with them, are the parents best equipped to help youth avoid this entrapment, or to be rescued quickly if it strikes.

** For further discussion on how God mercifully “leverages our lusts into life lessons” check out the sermon of [March 6, 2016 \(click for the Sermon Page with instructions, then scroll to March 6 “God’s Foolish Forgiveness” to select a listening or viewing option\).](#) [“Sextortion 101: How Tinder Introduced Me To Your Wife”](#) by Vivienne Mitchell @ www.news.au.com

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Blessings to you and your loved ones, Pastor Mike Nitz

