



## Chapter Two

# Temperament & Pornography

## Part One

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Remember the first time someone asked you, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” You might have been 4 or 5 years old. Certainly, in your single digits.

Do you remember your response? I don’t.

Some responses may have been, “A fireman, a doctor, a policeman, an astronaut, a dentist, a teacher, a builder, or maybe a preacher.”

No child ever responded they want to grow up to be the town drunk. No child ever dreamed of living in a cardboard box under a bridge someday. No child thought it would be good to grow up and spend their life in a jail cell.

Children dream of good things. They dream of living in a castle. They dream of being rich. They dream of having a boat, motorcycle, three cars and a truck, and a place to keep their frog. Boys probably don’t think a whole lot about having a family, but somewhere in early teenage years that changes.

Boys grow into young men and young men dream of having a wife, children, a great job, a nice house with all the toys. What they do not dream of is losing all these things. What they do not dream about is having everything they wanted only to have it all taken away.

Young men don't come close to thinking the innocent glimpse of a partially naked girl seen in an ad so many years ago on the internet, a billboard or a magazine, would lead to them losing everything they ever wanted.

Yet, that's what happens over and over and over again.

In this lesson, we will discuss what temperament is and the different ways our temperament leads us to or away from pornography.

First, let's determine what temperament is.

## Temperament

According to the National Christian Counselors Association (NCCA), "temperament is the inborn of a man that determines how he reacts to people, places and things. Temperament is how people interact with their environment and the world around them. Temperament pinpoints our perception of ourselves and the people who love us. It is also the determining factor in how well we handle the stresses and pressures of life. Temperament can best be defined as spiritual genetics or God's imprint upon each one of us."

God spoke to Jeremiah in chapter one, verse five: "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; Before you were born, I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations" (NKJV).

David wrote in Psalm 139:13-14, "You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it" (NLT).

Certainly, God not only designs each of us physically, but also determines the way we process thought, the way we interact with others, the way we make decisions, the way we don't make decisions, our will, and our ability to give and receive affection.

When we are born, we each have a unique temperament, which God instills within us.

As God's crowning creation, we are body, soul and spirit. Humans are the only creation that has a soul. The soul is who we are. It is the part of us that will live for eternity. When we die, our body will go back to the ground, our spirit will go back to God, but the soul... the soul lives forever.

When we dissect the soul, three main parts stand out. Within the soul we find different aspects of the mind, the will and the affections. Let's examine those three areas:

### 1. **The Mind.**

Verbally, we recognize that not everyone thinks the same way. However, many people assume everybody thinks like they do. We know everyone thinks differently but this understanding is a truth that is not always in the forefront of our mind. The fact is that we do not all come to the same conclusion in the same manner.

Some people trust easy, while others do not. Some are deep thinkers, while others spend more time on the surface. Some focus on facts and others think in generalities.

The way we think impacts our disposition towards depression, stress, anxiety, anger, etc. The way we think determines our mood, whether we are feeling happy or sad, whether we are positive or negative.

This area interprets definitive truth differently. One will be exact, while another naturally exaggerates, while each believe they are saying the same thing.

This part of the soul also determines each person's ability or desire to socialize on a surface level. This is where the term 'introvert' or 'extrovert' comes from.

Some people need only a few to associate with. Maybe 2-3 would suffice. These are people that feel more comfortable being alone or with their family.

Then there are those whose sphere of association cannot be numbered. Everyone is their friend. Not just their friend but their best friend. How can someone have more than one 'best' friend? I'm not sure but there are those that say they do.

The reasoning we go through telling ourselves we can quit pornography anytime happens in the mind.

## 2. **The Will.**

This is likely the most dominate part of who we are.

Have you ever thought or told someone, "Ain't nobody gonna tell me what to do!" Okay, maybe you didn't use the word "Ain't," or, "gonna" but you get the idea.

Some people make good and quick decisions, while others need a committee to help make the decision.

There are those that are extremely independent and struggle to submit to anyone, including God. Then there are those that have no problem being controlled or controlling.

You ever have a hard time deciding where you are going to eat after church with your spouse or friend? That struggle finds its roots in this area.

God may dictate truth but He does not dictate our behavior. We own the choices we make. We decide whether we will obey God or not.

Our willful obedience or disobedience and the extent we struggle to obey is found in this area of the will.

Our need to control people and circumstances or be controlled by people and circumstances comes from the will.

Our attempts to control God or be controlled by God each come from our will.

The choices we make regarding the use of pornography happen in the will.

### 3. **The Affections.**

This third major area of our soul determines how we interact with those closest to us; the people in our inner circle. These would include close family members and possibly very close friends.

Every human has a need for affection. If that need is not being met, alternatives will be sought out. These alternatives may be or may not be pleasing to God. The option is ours to choose, thus incorporating our will.

The affection area is different than the other two areas in that it can only happen person to person or person to God. The mind and the will may work one on one but they can also work in a group setting.

To become emotionally involved with another person or with God, you must trust. You must be transparent.

It is easy to see the connection between not trusting and involvement with pornography. Likewise, the same is true with transparency and vulnerability.

When there is no true transparency in a relationship, living a double life is doable.

Let's consider something else. Many times, people will say, "I got stubbornness from my father," or, "I got my need to talk all the time from my mother." There are many other examples that could be given. Likely, you are thinking of some now.

However, the traits listed above are temperament traits. If you were not stubborn at birth, the likelihood of inheriting your father's stubbornness is nil. If you talk all the time, it's not entirely because your mother talked all the time. Don't blame it on her.

Your temperament was placed in you before you were born. Your parents have nothing to do with your temperament.

However, they do have something to do with your character, which does affect your behavior. The first few years of your life is when the majority of your character is developed. Your character is a combination of your temperament (God's input) and your environment (human input).

Although you cannot inherit traits, you can learn traits. That is called learned behavior. The trait, therefore, is not inherited, rather, it is learned. You can learn to be stubborn. You can learn to talk all the time.

The catch is that if being stubborn or talking all the time is not your temperament trait, even though you learned the behavior, the learned behavior could be a cause of stress, anxiety or conflict.

As you continue to age, you will develop your personality. Your personality is something you create to survive in your 'world.' Each person has the ability to create more than one personality. What that means is you can develop one set of behaviors with one group and another set of behaviors with another group.

Sometimes, the personality can be a mask meant to hide the 'real' you. You cannot wear the mask forever. Typically, the place the mask comes off is in the home.

The temperament (God created) doesn't change—the personality (self-created) is fluid. The further away our personality is from what God designed us to be, the more conflicted we will be.