

Why Pastors Should Respond to "Fifty Shades of Grey"

By Karen Yates

Written close to Aug 2012 (based on context of article)

Last week a group of baseball moms stood chatting *Fifty. Fifty Shades of Grey*, that is.

Last night, while getting my hair cut, I overheard a salon of women talking *Fifty*.

At the park, some women discussing *Fifty*.

Unless you've been in hiding, you've heard of the phenom that is 'mommy porn.' *Fifty Shades of Grey*, by E. L. James, a BDSM erotic fiction trilogy, is rocking the book industry. Reaching number one on the New York Times Bestseller List and topping it for the last three months (largely by discreet e-book downloads), I walked past it in the grocery store two weeks ago. Even though it's already banned in libraries in 3 states, women are reading it while they fill gas. According to the New York Times, moms ages 30-50 are using it to "revive their libidos."

ABC News provided this plotline summary of the trilogy:

"Anastasia Steele, 21, and a virginal college student, can't say no to dashing 27-year-old Christian Grey, who insists she sign a contract that allows him to submit her to his every sadomasochistic whim. In their first sexual encounter, Grey unveils his silver tie and binds her wrists in knots, and Steele does as she is told. He is also fabulously rich, a telecommunications tycoon, and uses his wealth to take care of her like a pampered princess. "Ana," as he calls her, willingly and excitedly agrees to spanking, whipping and gagging, with props like ice, rope, tape — a repertoire right out of a BDSM [bondage, discipline, dominance and submission] manual. Grey instructs her to call him, "sir," and sets rules on everything from her diet to her most intimate grooming routines."

Until today I chose to keep my head in the sand, cover my eyes with a pillow, and put earmuffs over my ears. I just wanted it to go away. But today it hit me. Friends, it is NOT going anywhere. It will not blow over.

In fact, this is probably the beginning. There's going to be an infiltration. An invasion of this book and its aftermath will soon impact marriages, friendships, communities, and businesses. You will be unable to avoid it. 14 year-olds are going to secretly sneak into their mom's room and read its pages. Pornography downloads and purchases will rise. Misogyny will heap burning coals on your sister, your cousin, and your best friend. Men (not all men) will take advantage of a reader's newfound sexual confidence. Women will believe a loving sexual relationship involves rope, whips, and dominance. 40 somethings will compromise 'a little fantasy doesn't hurt anyone' and perhaps even think, 'this has actually helped my marriage' (aka. I finally want to have sex again). Images will seep into minds for the long haul, waiting until a weak moment where they can creep in and cause dissatisfaction, lust, or carnal selfishness.

Already the book is having an impact. One of the top erotica publishers reported at the end of April a %250 increase in e-book sales. Sales of BDSM accessories and toys are spiking. Now that Universal Pictures has the movie rights we can expect erotic fiction in the form of porn in movie theatres across the country.

I am not trying to be dramatic. I'm simply saying we need to be prepared for what the British magazine, *The Economist*, says is sure to come: "the glut of mommy porn."

From what I've read, people on the other side of the spectrum, people who practice BDSM, watch hard porn, and/or read erotic fiction, they claim this book is supposedly 'not that bad.' I wouldn't know. What I do know is that millions upon millions of women are reading it, and millions more are talking about it.

Millions of dollars are being poured into the erotic fiction industry, and millions of dollars are flooding the explicit sex market. This cart is rolling down the hill, and we don't know how long it's going to fly and all the damage it will do in the process.

As a mother of three children, I'm likely raising my sons to be someone's lover, husband, father, and best friend. My daughter too, is learning how to be her husband's wife. And all around them are compromised, loosened sexual content. It's on the TV, on the radio, in bookstores, on the baseball field and next to the Trident at the grocery store check out. A few months ago when I was face-painting for our city an 11 year-old asked to have 'Sexy and I Know It' etched on her cheek (goodbye unicorns). Turn on a baseball game and you'll enjoy the not-so-pleasant duty of educating your child about Cialis.

Sex sells, and while we can take steps as parents to guard what comes into our homes, we cannot, unfortunately, completely isolate our children from the avid sexual images around them.

Fifty is only going to make this worse. We need to be prepared.

The rulebook that navigates my life as a Jesus follower is that of the Holy Bible. For most of my readers, you too also have that compass. Yet I understand there are many people who do not live their life under that constitution, and I have many amazing friends who are of no faith or of a different faith. I must be ready to take a stand in this conversation. We (you and me) must be wise, educated, and engaged to speak into the movement, and we need to have more than Bible verses under our belt. We need to be able to discuss, dialogue, and challenge our culture as to why we think these books and what they stand for negatively impact our communities. We need to be able to explain why this book is not good for the soul, why it will harm your marriage instead of help it, why a carnal pleasure for a moment is not worth the lasting psychological harm.

To read some secular critiques of the trilogy, check out these articles: Dr. Drew Pinsky: "[Dr. Drew: 50 Shades of Grey Pathological, Poorly Written](#)"; Whitney Frink of Access Hollywood over at MSNBC "[Is 50 Shades of Grey Sending the Wrong Message?](#)"; "Avflox" of Blogger who likes BDSM "[The Troubling Message in Fifty Shades of Grey](#)"; Avital Norman Nathman over at HLN "[Women Deserve Better than 50 Shades of Grey.](#)"

Within the church, we need preparation. We need ...

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