

“The Things That They Do in Secret”

“...*For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret*” (Ephesians 4:11,12, ESV).

For those of you who are not “computer literate,” let me explain: Within some websites, there are “chatrooms”—virtual spaces where computer conversations can take place. It can be fascinating to “chat” with someone, in real time, who may be hundreds of miles away. Children and adolescents especially enjoy the experience. The problem is that not every “kid” is what they say they are. There are some men (for now, it seems to be predominately men) who pretend to be the same age, or who take advantage of situations, and lure the young people into relationships which can lead to meeting the person and to sexual relations with that person.

Recently, **NBC’s Dateline** has run “sting operations” in which they set up a decoy to pose online as a young person (sometimes as a boy, sometimes as a girl). The predators began conversations with those decoys and eventually “took the bait” and tried to meet the “kid.” When the men showed up for the meeting a reporter confronted them with their illicit activity (suggestive talk, pictures, etc.). They were also arrested. What followed were revelations of men, from virtually every walk of life, who were sexual predators.

I know it is disgusting, and I know Paul writes that it is shameful even to speak of the things they do in secret. However, just as surely as we know that there are places our children should not go *physically* we need to know there are places they should not go *virtually* (online). **Please**, take precautions: 1) Have filtering software installed on your computer. 2) Have the computer set up in a place in your house where you can see the activity of your child (and they can know you are watching). 3) If you know how, check the “history” of your child’s computer use—if you don’t know how, get someone to show you. 4) Talk to your child about their online activities and make sure that you know to whom they are talking. 5) Allow only minimal personal information (if any at all) to be given out by your children. 6) Keep *your* activities online pure. The internet provides many opportunities for perverted minds to be fed and to extend their perverted activities. Though it has been said before, let me say again: The internet has some of the greatest potential for good (because of the wholesome activities that can be done through it); but it is also has great potential for evil (because of the opportunities for perversion). Finally, please pray that this deplorable activity will be stopped.

—Lance Cordle