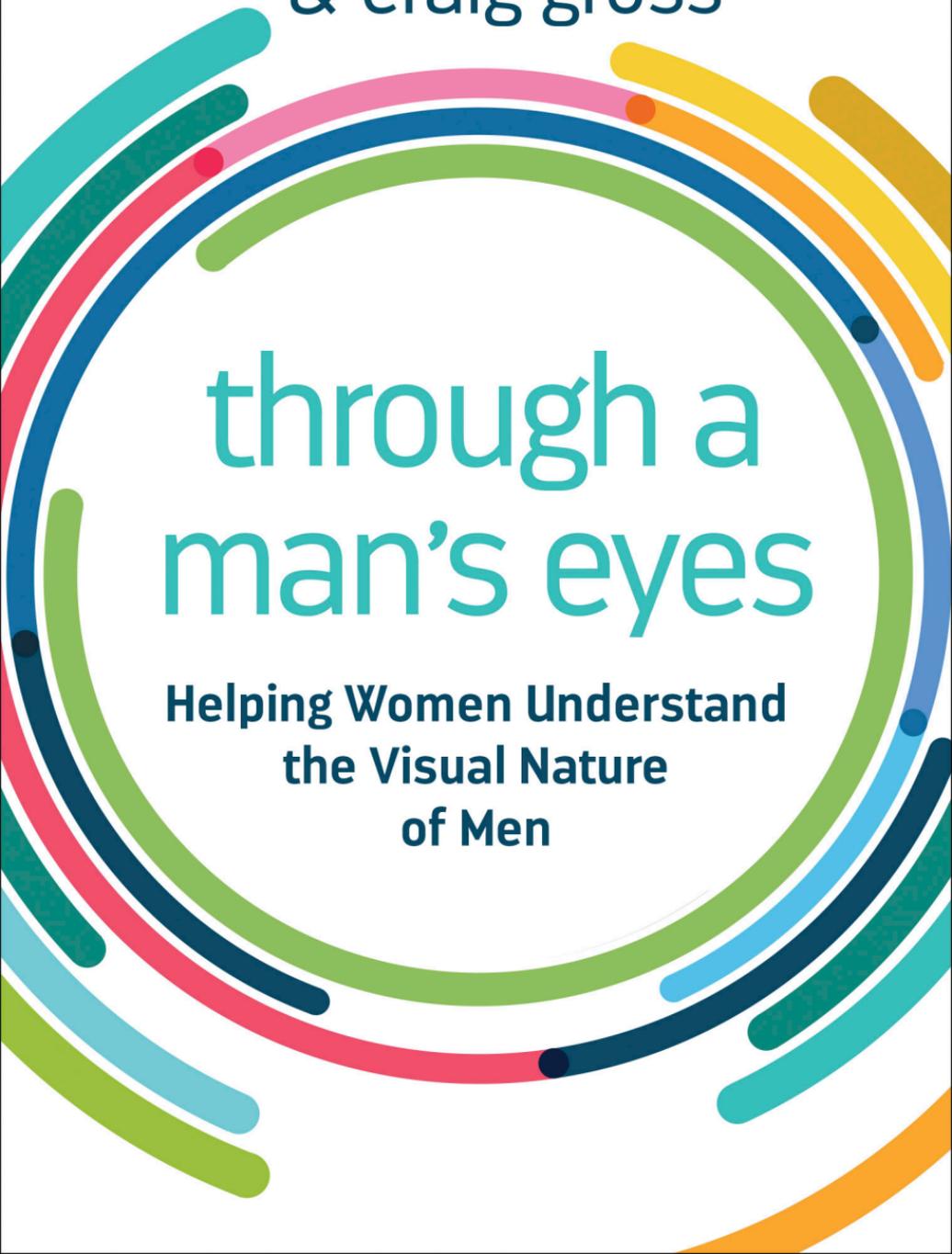


Best-Selling Author of *For Women Only*

shaunti feldhahn
& craig gross



through a
man's eyes

**Helping Women Understand
the Visual Nature
of Men**

Praise for
Through a Man's Eyes

“I’ve spoken at hundreds of events for women on the topic of marriage, and I can honestly not think of a more needed book. Is it possible (please!) that we can finally have an honest conversation in the church about the visual nature of men without guys being called creeps and women being called frigid? My deepest prayer is that couples will read this book and be able to talk without judgment about this reality for men in our modern society and for their marriages. For many couples, this will be the most important book they read this year—and maybe in their entire relationship.”

—KATHI LIPP, author of *The Husband Project*, *Happy Habits for Every Couple*, and the Hot Mama series

“Women, be brave. This is all the stuff your man has been trying to tell you about how he’s wired, but didn’t know how to say. This is the stuff every mom of a boy needs to know. Whether you have an issue you need to address, are curious about how to support a man or guide a son, or simply need reassurance that the male wiring was intended to be a good thing, this resource will help. This eye-opening book is *the* go-to resource for a whole new generation of women who care about men.”

—SHANNON ETHRIDGE, MA, relationship coach, speaker, and author of many books including the best-selling Every Woman’s Battle series, *The Sexually Confident Wife*, and *The Passion Principles*

“The visual nature of men is an unchangeable reality of life, love, and marriage. And it is an issue few women understand. That lack of knowledge creates a lot of relational problems and barriers to

experiencing intimacy. Finally, here is a book that will empower women with the truth about how God made men and how to relate to them with understanding. I love this book and am so thankful to Craig and Shaunti for writing it.”

—JIMMY AND KAREN EVANS, co-hosts of the syndicated television program *MarriageToday with Jimmy and Karen*

“Finally a book to help women understand what even the most honorable man or boy faces today! Many wives personalize a man’s visual nature as evidence that her good-willed husband does not love her. Of course, all he can say is ‘Well, I do love you’ as he battles to avoid the swimming areas and the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit edition, or to stay accountable with his Internet viewing. And when men have given in to those temptations, and don’t understand the pain they inflict on their wives, their wives don’t know how to handle it. In *Through a Man’s Eyes*, every wife, mom, counselor, and pastor has the resource we’ve been waiting for.”

—EMERSON EGGERICHS, best-selling author of *Love and Respect*

“This is a home-run title on such a desperately needed topic! *Through a Man’s Eyes* opened my eyes to so many things that men struggle with and served as the springboard for some very helpful and healthy conversations with my husband. I appreciate the courage Shaunti and Craig had to address this subject and the grace with which they did so. Highly recommended for any woman who wants to understand her husband, son, boyfriend, or other men in her life better.”

—CRYSTAL PAINE, founder of MoneySavingMom.com
and *New York Times* best-selling author

“Oh, how I wish I’d had this resource thirty-two years ago when I was a new wife. Even though I’ve been married for many years, I

learned so much on the pages of this book. If you have a man in your life, you need this resource! Thank you, Shaunti and Craig, for giving women the gift of understanding.”

—JILL SAVAGE, CEO of Hearts at Home and author
of *No More Perfect Moms*

“Reading this book made me think Craig and Shaunti had somehow installed a hidden camera in my brain! Their insights into the male thought process are incredibly accurate. This book will help women develop a deeper understanding of men, and consequently will create deeper levels of intimacy in their relationships.”

—DAVE WILLIS, founder of StrongerMarriages.org and author
of *iVow: Secrets to a Stronger Marriage*

“*Through a Man’s Eyes* picks up where *For Women Only* left off, in giving me (Barb) insight into understanding the visual nature of men. For years we’ve told couples around the world to make sure they buy a copy of the book. This new book is excellent! So compelling we couldn’t put it down. Thank you, Shaunti and Craig, for writing more on these crucial differences between men and women. It gives couples everywhere the capacity to talk about them.”

—DR. GARY AND BARB ROSBERG, America’s Family Coaches

“Any woman (or man!) who reads this book will have a much better understanding of the visual nature of men and boys. As I read this book, words like *refreshing*, *challenging*, *insightful*, *grace*, *practical*, and *helpful* kept popping into my head. Shaunti and Craig are two of my favorite authors, researchers, and friends, and I respect and admire both of them. Putting these two people together to write this book makes it not only a stroke of genius but a resource that will bring health and understanding to thousands of women who need to

comprehend how men think and react to visual stimulation. The answers to the questions about the effect of pornography on men and boys could save many a relationship.”

—JIM BURNS, PHD, president of HomeWord and author
of *Teaching Your Kids Healthy Sexuality* and *The Purity Code* (for teens and preteens)

“Men have long needed their hidden sexual wiring exposed along with the challenges it brings. And women have long needed this enlightenment and the compassion for their men that surely comes with it. Clearly, a must-read!”

—DR. ROBERT LEWIS, founder of Men’s Fraternity
and producer of *Marriage Oneness*

“This is a book that all husbands should want their wives to read. *Through a Man’s Eyes* takes women on a journey into the minds of men and shows them how even nice guys struggle with the onslaught of visual temptation they face every day. Thankfully, it also shows women how to be compassionate, wise, and encouraging in dealing with this aspect of their husbands’ lives.”

—MARK AND SUSAN MERRILL, founders of Family First,
All Pro Dad, and iMOM

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BOOKS

THROUGH A MAN'S EYES
PUBLISHED BY MULTNOMAH BOOKS
12265 Oracle Boulevard, Suite 200
Colorado Springs, Colorado 80921

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Details in some anecdotes and stories have been changed to protect the identities of the persons involved.

Trade Paperback ISBN 978-1-60142-511-9
eBook ISBN 978-1-60142-512-6

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Cover design by Lucy Iloenyosi, Neatworks Inc.

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Published in the United States by WaterBrook Multnomah, an imprint of the Crown Publishing Group, a division of Penguin Random House LLC, New York.

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Feldhahn, Shaunti.

Through a man's eyes : helping women understand the visual nature of men / Shaunti Feldhahn and Craig Gross. — First Edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-60142-511-9 — ISBN 978-1-60142-512-6 (electronic) 1. Sex—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Sex. 3. Men—Sexual behavior. 4. Sexual attraction. 5. Sexual excitement. I. Title.

BT708.F455 2015

248.8'43—dc23

2015008752

Printed in the United States of America
2015—First Edition

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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From Shaunti:

To the men and boys who work to take every thought captive in a challenging culture. On behalf of wives and moms everywhere, we honor you.



From Craig:

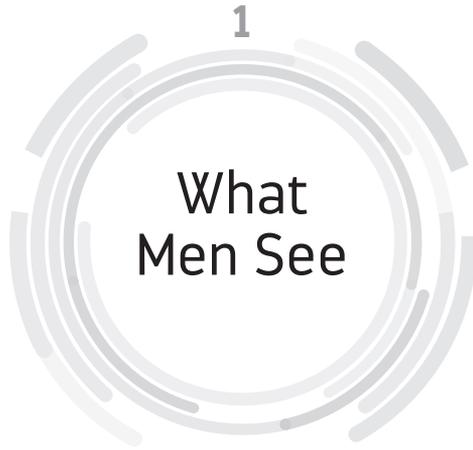
To all wives and mothers. Thank you for taking the time to understand the inner lives of the males in your life. We are very grateful for you.

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1

What Men See



Just for a moment, we want you to step with us into a pair of shoes that, in real life, you will never wear: those of a man in your life. Maybe those shoes belong to your husband or boyfriend. Maybe your son. Maybe your brother or father or close friend.

We want to take you on a tour of what life looks like to men, from the inside.

Why would you want or need this tour?

Because you're not a guy. And as a result, you're missing a huge part of the life experienced by your husband, boyfriend, or son—or any other man in your life (your boss, your pastor, your neighbor). He faces some major challenges. They are in his face. Every. Single. Day. These challenges often come with consequences for him, for you, and for your relationship—yet you might be completely unaware that they even exist.

Even for the most noble, honorable men, they exist.

Yet once your eyes are opened to these challenges, the potential

consequences, and how to handle them, everything changes. You will understand how men see life in certain ways—and *why*. You will understand the impact—both the negative and the positive—that it could have on their relationships with you and others. And you will know what you can do to provide support, prevent problems, and address any issues that have arisen.

But that comes later. For now, set it all aside, and come with us on that tour of what life looks like for men.

Literally *looks* like. We are going to experience a summer day in the life of a fairly typical guy whom we will call Jack. Jack is thirty years old, and he is a good guy who takes his faith seriously. He has been married for two years, doesn't have kids yet, and works in commercial real estate in a midsized city. He went to bed late the night before and has a full day ahead . . .

6:30 a.m.—BEEP! BEEP! BEEP!

After silencing his alarm, Jack reluctantly opens his bleary eyes and lies in bed for a minute, trying to wake up. He hears the shower running in the master bathroom a few feet away and the watery sounds of his wife humming happily. An image of what she looks like right now, standing there in the spray, jumps to his mind, and he feels his body respond. He smiles as he remembers what she looked like in this bedroom late last night, and he savors a few mental images. Yes, they went to sleep a bit later than anticipated . . . but it was worth it!

The sound of the shower shutting off snaps him out of his reverie. Jack swings out of bed and heads toward the bathroom. As he pushes open the door, he sees his wife hastily wrapping a towel around herself—*What a shame*—and smiles at her as he says good

morning. He gives her a sweet kiss on top of her wet head. She always looks embarrassed to be seen with no clothes on (“My butt is too big, and my boobs are too small,” she always says), but he loves stealing glances at her when he can. He savors every image of her he has, from their wedding night onward.

His brain starts to imagine what she looks like under that towel, but he shuts down that train of thought. No sense making himself crazy; she’s running to work and so is he.

Shaking the thought out of his head, he steps into the shower and resolutely forces himself to think about the tasks of the busy day ahead.

8:30 a.m.—Downtown

“Morning.” Jack and his colleagues greet each other as they enter the office building. As the elevator doors open onto the third floor, he notes which colleagues are already there and which cubes are empty.

He’ll be leaving shortly for the big review meeting at the De-Marco Hotel site and, given the tension with the client, he needs some paperwork from each of his colleagues. But he doesn’t see . . .

Cole, where is Cole? I need his numbers before I leave. He said he’d have them to me by now!

For the next hour, he finds it hard to concentrate as his eyes continually flick between the clock and the elevator bank. Then an elevator door opens and his colleague Abbie comes striding down the corridor.

In a nanosecond, it is as if a spotlight is shining on her well-endowed figure and her crisp white blouse. As usual, she seems to have missed doing up those top two buttons. A giant invisible magnet

instantly draws Jack's eyes to the top of her lacy bra and the perfect form inside.

And as usual, in that nanosecond he has two powerful forces wrestling within him. He feels a tightening in his gut and a temptation to consume that pleasurable image for as long as he can before Abbie sees him. But he also wants to honor his wife (and God) in his thought life and to respect Abbie as a person and colleague.

Jack wrenches his head away. Knowing Abbie is about to walk directly past his cubicle, he turns his chair slightly so his back faces the door. That way she is less likely to stop for some polite morning chitchat. For a few moments, he stares blankly at the DeMarco Hotel paperwork on his desk, extremely aware of the fact that Abbie is walking past him *right now*. He fights a desire to turn around and take a look at her back view, which is usually interesting too. He breathes a sigh of relief when the sound of her heels fades from earshot.

Now the only problem is that he has to fight several attempts made by *other* images of Abbie—other outfits, other glimpses—to intrude on the screen of his mind. Each time another unbidden image appears, he resolutely refocuses on the DeMarco numbers.

He's having trouble concentrating on them. What else can he think about to distract himself? What's his next task again?

Oh right! Cole's numbers! He looks back to the elevator just as Cole rushes in. Jack quickly intercepts his colleague to get his report, then heads out the door.

9:47 a.m.—Somewhere on the highway

Jack hates this stretch of road. In order to get to the new resort hotel site, he has to drive fifty miles outside the city. And at least ten bill-

boards along the way advertise so-called gentlemen's clubs. He has never been to one, but multiple television shows and movies have shown girls dancing around stripper poles, which sends his memory back to those images whenever a new billboard appears.

On each billboard, the smoldering eyes of the fifteen-foot-high seductive woman try to draw his gaze—eyes that say *I want you*. Since Jack can't look the other direction for too long without crashing the car, he does what his dad once taught him to do. He keeps his eyes resolutely on the road and prays for the young women who are trapped in those professions.

And a few miles on, he does that again.

And again.

And again.

10:30 a.m.—The new resort hotel site, outside the city

As Jack steps out of his car and begins walking down the path between the new hotel and the one next door, he hears some boisterous young voices. About ten yards ahead of him, he sees five or six teenage girls come out of the hotel next door and head toward the pool. All are wearing bikinis and have clearly been in and out of the pool a few times already.

Jack again feels that desire to look. Because he's behind the girls, he could look with impunity and feel the pleasure of consuming all those exhilarating images.

But thankfully, he has ammunition. He looks away from the girls and calls to mind instead that other intoxicating image. That one of his wife last night. He savors it like a delicious drink for a moment, allowing his mind to view it in slow motion. By the time the

path reaches the doors of the hotel, the girls are no longer in sight—he lost track of where they went—and he is grinning to himself and feeling a great rush of affection for his wife.

11:15 a.m.—Halfway through the meeting

Jack is trying to sort through the contradictory numbers and differing stories shared by his on-site manager and the hotel manager. Were the cost overruns actually authorized by the client, or weren't they?

His client pauses the meeting for a second to send a quick text message to someone. He tells Jack, "I've just asked Dionne, our financial officer, to come in and share her paper trail so you see that we simply never approved these additional expenditures."

A moment later, the door opens, and Jack does a double take, then relaxes.

Dionne is a beautiful woman with flowing dark hair, chocolate-brown eyes, and an eye-catching white suit. And even in that split second Jack can tell that she probably has a great figure. But Dionne is polished and professional without being provocative. Her suit is pretty, but it isn't tight. Her top doesn't show a thing. And when she sits down next to Jack to work through a series of spreadsheets, her skirt is long enough that it doesn't ride up.

Jack breathes a sigh of relief and then focuses on the complex numbers as she takes him through the client's version of the paper trail.

Thirty minutes later he isn't fully convinced, but it is clear Dionne has done her homework and she has made a good case. He stands up, shakes her hand, and tells her so.

"I can't promise we will come down on your side, but we're

going to take a much harder look at some of these numbers,” he says as he takes his leave.

1:00 p.m.—Back at the downtown office

The next few hours are tough. Back at the office, he has trouble concentrating on what Abbie is saying as she and Cole walk him through the other side of the DeMarco numbers. And later, when images of Abbie’s form pop up in his mind, he resolutely tears them down by thinking about his wife, the DeMarco numbers, or getting the car transmission serviced. And then during his break, he has to deal with the sidebar pop-ups on various social media sites during the few moments he spends online.

Next there’s the after-work trip through the auto shop where the magazines in the waiting room include old copies of *Maxim*. Jack stands up and walks around for a while . . . until he realizes that the pictures on the walls include pinups. And during the drive home, the news radio station airs a commercial for “the little pill . . . when the time is right”—and images of when the time *was* right begin to play in his brain.

By the time Jack pulls into the driveway, it is nearly 8:00 p.m., and he’s hungry for more than just food. After dinner, as he helps clean up the kitchen, he comes up behind his wife and gives her a big hug and his hands begin to wander. She playfully slaps his hand and chuckles, “You only have one thing on your mind, don’t you? Hey, I was going to tell you, Scott and Josie are interested in looking at the bikes this weekend if you really do want to sell them . . .”

Jack smiles ruefully to himself and drags his mind back to what his wife is saying, and away from where it wants to go.

But maybe tomorrow night . . .

A Normal Guy in an Abnormal Situation

Jack is not a sex addict, not a pervert, and he doesn't have any unusual problems with his thought life. He is a normal man in an abnormal situation. He is living with a visually wired and stimulated brain in a culture filled with very public images that were only meant to be seen in private.

The reason we wanted to give you this peek (so to speak) into a day in Jack's life is that because men and women are wired so differently, women often don't realize how the opposite sex sees the world.



Men are living with visually wired and stimulated brains in a culture filled with very public images that were only meant to be seen in private.

Most women simply aren't aware of what *man's visual nature* even means, or how much it impacts literally every area of most men's lives and relationships. And ironically, because men often aren't aware that women aren't aware of this part of their lives, they may not ever talk about it, or know how to explain it if they do.

It is vital to fill in this blind spot so that we can grasp the challenges men face every day in this culture, why they see the world this way, and the amount of work it takes to keep their thought lives pure.

And once we see what they see, we can begin to understand what to do about it: how to support the man or boy we love, how to prevent problems from starting, and what to do if someone we care about has fallen into some of the common traps of our modern culture.

Unfortunately, I (Shaunti) have seen that most of us have absolutely no idea just how crucial this understanding is. Both in my work as a social researcher and speaker, and in Craig's work as the

founder of XXXchurch.com, we have noticed this irony: men are visual . . . and women are blind to it. All too often, we simply don't see—or we completely misunderstand—a man's visual nature. Just when we need the most thorough possible understanding of men, we are the most clueless.

This disconnect would be merely amusing if the consequences weren't so serious. Consequences like a ten-year-old boy (an age where intervention is the easiest) being drawn to search for “boobs” on Google Images . . . but because his mom doesn't know how to handle it, she does nothing. Consequences like that same ten-year-old boy, six years later, wanting to try certain things with his girlfriend that he never would have thought of on his own—and his girlfriend, in her confusion, assuming it must be normal and going along with it.

Consequences like a twenty-three-year-old woman breaking up with the man she thought she would marry, because he confessed he had looked at *Maxim* magazine a few times. Or the forty-year-old husband with a deep need for more intimacy whose wife is offended and pulls away when he tries clumsily to explain just how much he wants more thoughts of *her* in his mind, rather than all the other images he sees around him.

Consequences like the woman who, after discovering that her husband struggles with porn, spirals into depression or considers divorce because she blames herself or thinks he doesn't love her. Or even conse-

quences like the business leader, pastor, or schoolteacher who desperately wants his female staff members or audience to understand



Learning how to be an active support and partner is one of the greatest gifts you can give the man or boy in your life today.

issues with certain attire . . . but gives up because he has no idea how to explain it in a way that doesn't make him sound like a creep.

In today's culture, *a man's visual nature impacts every area of his life*. Home, work, school, church, sports, leisure activities, marriage, dating, parenting, prayer, friendships—nothing is exempt. And because it impacts every area of his life, it impacts our life as well.

Learning how to be an active support and partner is one of the greatest gifts you can give the man or boy in your life today. It can be life-changing in a way we never would have imagined. And that is why we wanted to write this book.

A Bit About Us

Both of us writing this book come at life and this subject from a Christian perspective. All the information here is based on the best and most rigorous scientific, psychological, and practical resources available—including some of our own research that is used widely in the general market—but our approach in this book has a clear faith-based thread. It will include our best effort to discern the callings and responsibilities of those who not only want to honor each other but also want to honor God.

So here's a bit about us.

I (Shaunti) am a wife, mom of two (ages twelve and fifteen), and social researcher who is probably best known for a book called *For Women Only: What You Need to Know About the Inner Lives of Men* and other research-based books about men, women, teens, the workplace, and relationships. Today, in addition to researching and writing, I speak at women's conferences, churches, marriage seminars, corporate conventions, and other events. I love seeing the life

change that comes when people get something simple but important that they just didn't know before.

And I (Craig) am a husband, a father of two children (ages ten and twelve), and the founder of a ministry called XXXchurch that helps men and women all over the world who struggle with pornography and sexual sin. I have a lot of experience in helping people who are caught up in that world, and I spend a good amount of my time speaking at churches, conferences, and colleges talking about pornography, sex addictions, and temptations. Later in this book I'll be addressing a series of questions that we get asked frequently at XXXchurch.com—questions from women just like you. I tend to be pretty blunt and don't sugarcoat the truth, but I don't mean to offend, upset, or shock you by that. I'm really glad you're reading this book, and I'm delighted to take part in helping you understand where the man in your life is coming from.

How We Got Here—and Why We Are Writing This Book

When I (Shaunti) first stumbled into this field of social research, I was realizing just how much I as a woman didn't understand about men. What it means when we say "Men are visual" was at the top of the list.

My journey started years ago when I was writing a novel and didn't know how to articulate the thoughts of my main male character in a scene similar to the one involving Jack and Abbie. I asked some men I trusted what they would be thinking in such a situation, purely so I could make sure I accurately described the thoughts of a man . . . and I found myself shocked by their answers. These godly

men described thoughts, feelings, and—most important—images that were completely foreign to me. And a bit alarming! Yet I trusted this group of men, which included my husband.

Once I set out to understand this reality much more thoroughly, it snowballed. I ended up with a comprehensive look not only into the visual nature of men but also into all the vital things that we women tend not to get about men—things men wish we knew and, in many cases, think we already *do* know! And the research has continued. I've interviewed and commissioned nationally representative surveys of more than six thousand men over twelve years for various books.

This male visual wiring was just one of the eight truths I explored in *For Women Only*. But it is by far the topic that leads to the most e-mails, blog posts, online comments, and questions during my speaking events or radio interviews. The same has been true for Craig as he speaks at churches and universities and is regularly interviewed as an expert on news outlets like CNN.

The reactions from women readers and listeners range from deep thankfulness at finally understanding their man's wiring to worrisome misunderstandings. They run the gamut from stunned curiosity (like mine) or relief that their man is normal, all the way to anger that “you are telling men it's okay to look” (which we are *not*, by the way!) or overwrought tears with the question “How can I ever trust him again now that I know he's tempted to look at other women?”

And along with those reactions is a clear need, not just to more specifically understand this aspect of a husband, boyfriend, or son, but for more specific guidance on how to be a better wife, girlfriend, or mom in this area and how to head off certain challenges and address others once they have arisen.

That is what we will be giving you in the pages ahead. And that

is why this is a book that is written for women. It is fine for men to take a look, to see what we are telling their wives or girlfriends, but the goal of this book is to educate, equip, and where necessary, exhort women to understanding and action.

We'll be taking you on a very specific journey . . . not simply to awareness and action, but also to encouragement and hope. God specifically created men to be visual. Despite the challenges this poses for men in this fallen world and our sexualized culture, the gift of this wiring is ultimately intended to be a good thing, not a bad one.

It is also something that is as diverse and individual as every man, every boy, and every marriage. We will be largely focusing on those things that affect the majority of men and/or cause the most significant issues, but there will be many exceptions. And it is vital to use this information as a *starting point* for understanding the men and boys in your life—including the unique way each of them is wired as an individual.¹ It is also vital to realize that because this is a starting point, there are certain things we simply won't be able to cover in detail. Some are touched on in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section at the end of the book; we will provide resources for others at our website, MenAreVisual.com.

We know that this subject can be awkward to talk about and even read about. We will do our best to address it matter-of-factly but with sensitivity and respect for men and for you.

Who Should Read This Book

If any of the following statements describe you, we think the knowledge in this book is important and has the potential to be life changing for how you relate to and support your husband, boyfriend, or son in a difficult culture:

- You want to have your eyes opened to these sometimes-awkward truths.
- You are curious and want to know the real deal about men before you start dating.
- You are willing and able to look at the positives of how God created men.
- You have learned that the man or boy in your life has a problem and you want to understand why and how this happened, and what to do now.
- You can handle any challenging things you learn.

That last statement brings us to an important point. Before we get started, we want to ask you to do one thing: make sure you are ready or able to read this book. If you are feeling ultra-vulnerable, very scared, or are already resentful at the idea of learning what it means that men are visual . . . please don't read this book right now. Come back to it another time.

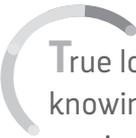
Both of us have seen that when we explain these truths, some listeners or readers get extremely angry or are devastated because they think we are saying things that, in fact, we would *never* say. Some believe that we are making excuses for men, that we are saying "boys will be boys"; others claim we are blaming women, putting the onus on women to change, or even implying that men are not responsible for their actions. Several have told us, "I'm never going to be able to trust my husband again, now that I know how visual he is," and more than a few devastated husbands have told us that their wives stopped being intimate with them altogether once they learned the truth about how men are wired.

All of those reactions indicate a misunderstanding of our message and our hearts in this book. But we do understand that sometimes a reader might be misreading our words because she is simply

in a particularly vulnerable place. If so, it would be wiser for her to wait and learn this information once she can do so without causing herself and her relationships pain.

So please pray before you start reading. Examine your heart to see if you are open to seeing the wonderful ways God created men, even those things that might be hard to hear. And pray about how to support the men—husband, brother, son, father, coworker, pastor—in your life.

If, at any point, you start to freak out a bit as you read, stop and pray before you continue. Remind yourself that your husband, boyfriend, or son is the same person he was five minutes ago, but now you know something he's been dealing with all along—something he didn't know how to explain, didn't want to explain, or was afraid to explain. We think true love means knowing and supporting each other, and our prayer is that this book will help you do that in a wonderful way that will bring you closer.



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So if you are ready, let's jump in. Let's start by looking at why men are so visual and the amazing way God has created their brains to be so different from ours.



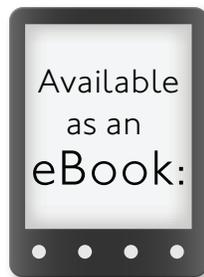
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