News Story Summary

In December 2018, the Barna Group, in conjunction with Brushfires Foundation, released a study called "Sexual Integrity & the Church in America." The study showed that 80 percent of pastors had been approached by a staff member or church member for help dealing with marital infidelity. Nearly three in four pastors (73%) in the study also said they had also been asked for help related to pornography.

At the same time, just 35% of pastors said they felt "very qualified" to address the issue of marital infidelity, and just 26% of them felt qualified to address pornography usage.

In the report, highlighted in a recent Baptist Press article, researchers concluded that the high percentage of people struggling with sexual issues is partly a result of living in a culture today that promotes sexual promiscuity.

The report also encouraged pastors and lay leaders to get training in how to counsel those who come to them for help in this area.

 (For more on this story, search the Internet using the phrase, "pastors don't feel prepared to address sexual issues in the church.")

Focus Attention

To replace the Guide and Explain ideas under Focus Attention, begin the group time by taking a poll. Ask: *What are some common reasons church members seek counseling or help from the pastor?* Record their answers on a large sheet of paper or board. Lead the group to create a Top 5 List based on the answers provided.

Summarize the news story above and highlight the prevalence of sexual struggles for Christians. Point out whether or not sexual sins were included in the list created. Say: *Temptation is not new problem. Since Adam and Eve, human beings have struggled with it. Today's lesson will highlight one man who faced temptation and who remained faithful to God.*

Challenge

To supplement the Summarize and Challenge idea, begin by reminding the group of the news story. Ask: *Based on today's study, what might you encourage a pastor to share with a person who approaches him about sexual sin?* Point the group to the bulleted points under Apply the Text to start the discussion. After the group has responded, complete the step as written, directing them to privately identify the bulleted point that is most meaningful to them.