



# 4 Avoiding Traps

**Main Goal:** Students will become aware of the specific triggers that lead them to stumble in their struggle with pornography.

**Prep & Prayer:** Pray for openness and honesty in today's meeting. Pinpointing and acknowledging triggers is a practical step that will help your student take meaningful steps towards wholeness and healing. Try to have three different coloured markers or highlighters on hand (green, orange and red ideally).

## Review

Don't rush this time. If this section takes a bit longer than typical weeks that's okay we've planned for it. :)

What we talked about last week: Repentance Experience

- Repentance - Turning away from sin and towards God
- Repentance is to be a FREEING experience, not one that brings more guilt and shame. Our God is a God of HOPE, FORGIVENESS, JOY and FREEDOM.

Take Home Follow Up:

- How did writing down and confessing your sin to God go?
- What was it like crossing each one out and writing "forgiven"?
- Did you have an opportunity to read the story of the prodigal son? If you did what stood out to you?

## Intro

Make sure to share an example or two as well!

**Warm Up Question: What are some habits you have that have to do with places, activities or feelings?** Here are some examples:

- Every day on my way home from soccer practice, I stop and get a milkshake.
- Each summer I take a roadtrip to a little town called Irving and visit the little old bookstore.
- When I'm feeling stressed, I go for a run and it helps me feel calmer and think more clearly.

*Good habits are not made on birthdays, nor Christian character at the new year. The workshop of character is everyday life. The uneventful and commonplace hour is where the battle is lost or won.*

- Maltbie Davenport Babcock

**TRIGGER = something that causes something else to happen**

Note: This is a pretty lengthy guide. It may be wise to take two sessions to complete this guide.

## Self-Assessment

Take a few minutes and think through your week. Use a highlighter (or just write out the colour) and mark how intense your struggle with pornography is on average. Use red for times you're most likely to be tempted /give in, orange for times you are sometimes tempted/give in, and green for times in the week when you're least likely to experience temptation or engage with pornography.

Take note of when your student marks off orange and red zones. Be intentional and take opportunities to send them a text during these times to encourage them, send them a verse, etc.

Evaluate the boxes where your student feels most tempted. What is happening physically, emotionally, relationally or spiritually? Look for any patterns that may indicate why they feel more tempted during those times.

SAY: Get what's happening here? Now we're going to take some time, look at this and see if we can figure out what some of your 'triggers' are.

If you're breaking this up into 2 sessions, this might be a good place to pause. Make sure you still pray to wrap up your time, and point them ahead to the Fighter Verse to look at between now and when you meet next.

Example	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
orange Morning 6am-12pm	Morning 6am-12pm						
green Afternoon 12pm-6pm	Afternoon 12pm-6pm						
green Evening 6pm-11pm	Evening 6pm-11pm						
red Late/Overnight 11pm-6am	Late/Overnight 11pm-6am						

There is no secret formula to this. There's no 'grading' system and it's not meant to be a guilt trip. It's simply to give you a visual for when you're most likely to feel tempted to look at/engage with porn.

If days your week look like the example, it could mean....

- You're often tempted first thing in the morning or late at night. Think about it. This is likely when you're alone in your room, with your computer or phone with privacy and total access.
- You're usually pretty good during afternoons and evenings. Why's that? Well you're either in school or at basketball practice so that keeps you busy and preoccupied. Saturday afternoons get into a more 'orange' zone though you're usually fine if you're busy with plans, but if you've got a chill day at home... that's when temptation strikes.
- Sunday mornings are green. Why's that? Well, you're often up early getting to church in good time to serve on the tech team. Plus, it's Sunday and you try and 'start fresh' and get the week off to a good start.

## Self-Assessment

**Remember, triggers can be times and they can be places. Triggers can also be emotions.**

Circle all that apply. Talk about them. Add your own.

- My car
- Bathroom/shower
- My room
  - Door closed?
- Phone
  - Specific apps?
  - Internet browser?
- Computer
  - Internet browser?
  - Specific websites?
  - Chat rooms?
  - A secret hidden folder of things you've saved?
- TV
  - Are there certain shows? Ones you always watch? Or stumble upon?
  - DVDs?
  - Netflix? Scenes in shows or movies?
  - YouTube/Internet browser via your smart TV?
- Magazines
  - They don't have to be porn magazines either. Let's be real what used to be viewed as pornography, now sits in plain view on many 'mainstream' magazines!
- People I'm with/going to meet
- When I'm....
  - Angry
  - Stressed
  - Sad
  - Happy
  - Relaxed
  - Frustrated
  - Disappointed
  - Bored
- Other:
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_
  - \_\_\_\_\_

## God's View

SAY: As we talk about triggers times, places and emotions that can lead us into temptation it can bring up more feelings of guilt or shame. But remember what we talked about last week? God's heart isn't to shame us further. It's to set us free. And truth is the feeling of temptation isn't the sin, it's when we follow through on it with our thoughts and our actions. While Jesus never gave in, the temptation part He totally gets.

Check out these verses in Hebrews 4:15-16 (NLT)

*This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin. So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.*

Jesus understands. He's faced the same temptations. When He lived here on earth, He was fully God, yes. But, He was also fully human which means He experienced the same challenges we do. Because of who HE is, we can come boldly to the throne of God... not meekly, not hiding our shame. This passage says our God gives us mercy and grace when we need it most. When we're faced with our triggers... those are the moments when we need God most... and He is present with us in them.

Read the temptation of Jesus found in Matthew 4:1-11 (NLT)

*Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted there by the devil. For forty days and forty nights he fasted and became very hungry. During that time the devil came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become loaves of bread." But Jesus told him, "No! The Scriptures say, 'People do not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'" Then the devil took him to the holy city, Jerusalem, to the highest point of the Temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God, jump off! For the Scriptures say, 'He will order his angels to protect you. And they will hold you up with their hands so you won't even hurt your foot on a stone.' Jesus responded, "The Scriptures also say, 'You must not test the Lord your God.'" Next the devil took him to the peak of a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. "I will give it all to you," he said, "if you will kneel down and*

 **God's View**

worship me." "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" Then the devil went away, and angels came and took care of Jesus.

What did Satan try to use as 'triggers' in this situation?

What do you think this experience was like for Jesus?

 **Response**

Now that we've looked at what triggers are, we get to talk about how to use that information to help us stay strong in the midst of temptation. 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT) says

*The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

 **Notes**

Think about the times or situations that you know are triggers for you. What are some simple ways that you can avoid them or set yourself up to avoid temptation? We'll call them Wise Steps. Brainstorm together. Here are some examples to get you started:

- If it's being in your room alone, commit to leaving the door open as much as possible.
- If you struggle the most late at night because you've got your phone in bed with you, plug it in across the room or even better in an entirely different room altogether!
- If a trigger is the internet do you have "Use Restrictions" on your phone & computer? (We'll talk more about this next week when we look at "Accountability".)
- If there is a pattern of struggling in the morning think about committing to setting an alarm and getting up earlier than you have to. Get up and spend time with God, workout, get involved in a morning club, etc!
- If feeling stressed is a trigger, find other ways to process and deal with it, like going for a run or calling a friend.

**MY WISE STEPS**

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 **Take Home**

This week be mindful of your triggers - the times, places and emotions that can lead you into temptation. **Keep track of your triggers on the chart on the last page.** Track when, and what they were, and practice putting your Wise Steps into place.

 **Take Home**

Remember, this isn't about feeling guilty or ashamed. It's about bringing your struggle into the open, about knowing that God totally understands it and that He is faithful to always provide you a "way out". Your job is to be aware of your triggers, take wise steps to avoid temptation, and to confess and ask forgiveness when you do give in...and along the way, there is more than enough grace. Remember, you are a deeply loved son / daughter of the most High King.

 **Fighter Verse**

**Fight the Lie: God doesn't understand what temptation is like.**

*1 Corinthians 10:13 (NLT)*

*The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.*

PRAY to wrap up your time together!