

5 Committing to Accountability

Review

What we talked about last week:

- Last week we looked at specific triggers - times, places and emotions - that lead you to stumble in your struggle with pornography. We talked about "Wise Steps" - simple ways that you can avoid your triggers or set yourself up to avoid temptation. God's heart isn't to shame us further. It's to set us free.

Take-Home Follow-up:

- As part of your take-home last week you were meant to keep track of your 'triggers' this week. How did it go?
- How did you do putting your "wise steps" into practice?
- What did you learn from the experience? Did you notice any patterns?
- What could you do differently going forward?

Intro

A survey done quite a few years ago discovered some interesting results around the topic of temptation. We'd guess not much has changed.

Survey respondents noted temptations were more potent when they had neglected their time with God (81 percent) and when they were physically tired (57 percent). Resisting temptation was accomplished by prayer (84 percent), avoiding compromising situations (76 percent), Bible study (66 percent), and being accountable to someone (52 percent).

(Discipleship Journal, November / December 1992) <http://www.family-times.net/illustration/Accountability/>

The survey mentioned 5 areas that are important for resisting temptations...

- Alone time with God
- Physical Health
- Prayer
- Bible Study with Others
- Accountability

The area we really want to focus on this week is accountability...which ends up including all of the other areas as well.

Warm Up Question: Can you think of a time when you had to be held accountable to something?

Accountability is not the most popular word these days - especially in our culture. We like to get our own way, and we like to get away with whatever we'd like. Here's how the dictionary frames it:

ac·count·a·bil·i·ty

/ə,koun(t)ə'bilədē/

noun

an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions

ac·count·a·ble

ə'koun(t)əb(ə)l/

adjective

required to explain actions or decisions to someone

Why do you think accountability is important to our conversation?

Self-Assessment

Let's take some time to evaluate the 5 areas that are important for resisting temptations... On a scale of 1 -10, (1 being really bad, 10 being totally awesome), how would you say you are doing in each of these areas (circle the number that best represents how you are doing).

Alone time with God

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

Physical Health

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

Prayer

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

Bible Study with Others

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

Accountability

1 ... 2 ... 3 ... 4 ... 5 ... 6 ... 7 ... 8 ... 9 ... 10

Is there one thing you could do this week, in each of these areas that could help you improve your rating by 1 or 2 points?

God's View

When it comes to accountability, we often talk exclusively about what we "do". Doing is super important, but if accountability is going to be really effective, we need to think in terms of "doing", but also in terms of "knowing" and "being".

Let's start with "knowing".

Knowing:

"Knowing" is basically what we do every week when we memorize our fighter verses. We want to know the truth about porn, what role it plays in our lives, and how God would have us see and respond to it.

Take a look at 1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

Paul, (the dude that wrote 1 Corinthians), tells us a few things we need to "know" about sexual sin.

How are we to respond to sexual sin? (**circle the action word Paul uses to describe how we should respond**).



What are the reasons Paul gives for "running" from sexual sin? (**underline them**)

How did God "buy" us?

Is it difficult to think that our bodies don't actually belong to us? Why or why not?

Think through your last week and the sexual temptations that came your way...was there any time you responded by "running"?

I think the main point Paul wants to make, is that there is no room for fooling around with sexual sin. We need to know God is serious about fighting for purity. There are times when it is easy to forget why this battle is so serious...that's why part of our battle for purity, is a battle to keep "knowing".



Response

Over the next week, what is one thing you could do to help you grow in the area of "knowing"? Here are a few options...

- Commit to memorizing the "fighter verse" for next week.
- Go to fightthenewdrug.org, and read through the "get the facts" section of the web page that talk about the effects of porn on the brain, heart and world.
- Go to covenanteyes.com and read the article "Escaping the Lies of Pornography".

Being:

There are few things that drive our temptation into porn more than shame. Basically, we forget who we are. We feel disgusted about our use of porn, which makes us feel isolated, alone, and unworthy of healthy intimacy...which drives us back to porn to experience a fake, destructive substitute for true intimacy. Maybe the best way to get rid of shame, and experience the freedom of God honoring intimacy, is by remembering who we really are, or rather, who God has made us to be because of His death on the cross and resurrection from the grave.

Take a look at Ephesians 2:8-10

God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

According to this passage, what did we do, to deserve being "saved" by God? (by "saved", I mean being saved from the consequences we deserve for our sins against God, and instead experiencing His love and mercy).

What does Paul say about how we should respond to His grace?

Because of what Christ did on the cross for us, what does Paul say about "who we are" now?

If there is nothing we have done to deserve salvation, is there anything we can do to lose our position, even when we are struggling with temptations?

Here is the point, when we give ourselves to Christ, because of His death on the cross, we ARE a new creation. This is our identity. We need to be reminded over and over again that we belong to God, we are His, our shame is gone. Therefore, we do not need to hide, instead, we can pursue the purpose of good works we were re-created for.



Response

Choose one of the options below, that will help you remember “who you are” this week.

- Put a reminder on your phone for each morning at 7:30am, with Ephesians 2:8-10 as your “event”. Each day when that alarm goes off, thank God for His gift of salvation.
- Find a rough stone, and then find a smooth stone. Put them in your pocket and each time you grab the rough stone, remember who you were before you chose to follow Jesus, each time you grab the smooth stone, thank God for who you are now...recreated, His workmanship, not because of what you have done, but because of what He has done.
- If you are creative or artistic, draw, build, craft something that represents “old to new”, and put it in a place that you will see everyday before you go to sleep and each morning when you wake up. Again, remember that much like that piece of art is your workmanship, you are the workmanship of God. Thank Him for the truth that His work on the cross, has permanently changed who you are...even when you struggle with temptation.



God's View

Doing:

Not only are there things we need to know, not only do we need to remember who we are, there are also many things we should do. Take a look at 1 Corinthians 6:18 (again).

1 Corinthians 6:18

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.

Paul is really serious about fighting against sexual sin. I think there is something significant about the word “run”.

Why would Paul use the word “run”?

When you think of your fight against pornography, in what ways have you “run” from porn?

Run is an active, aggressive, and passionate word. Now the truth is, there may be times that we should literally run from sexual sin. But other times, actual “running” may not be our best option (think about temptation while watching a movie on an airplane...probably not wise to immediately exit the plane and start running). However, we must be intentional and active when it comes to fighting for purity. We need to take the battle seriously.



Response

Last week you talked about “wise steps” as a response to triggers (people, places or things that cause you temptation). How have you done implementing your “wise steps”?

Are there any other triggers or steps that you need to add to your plan?

What is one thing you can do this week to avoid temptation?

What is one thing you can do this week to “run” once you have been tempted?



Take Home

Think through accountability for this next week.

What is one thing you would like your accountability partner to ask you about in the area of “knowing”.

What is one thing you would like your accountability partner to ask you about in the area of “being”.

What is one thing you would like your accountability partner to ask you about in the area of doing?



Take Home

One of the “doing” things that can be really helpful is filter and accountability software. You can put these on your device to a). limit what kind of material you can actually access, and b). let others know exactly what material you have accessed. Three websites you can go to for this type of software are:

- xxxchurch.com (look for the “x3 watch” software)
- covenanteyes.com

Take some time this week to look at these different software options, and next week, talk about the value of the software and which one you should install on your devices.



Fighter Verse

Fight the Lie: A little sin is no big deal.

1 Corinthians 6:18

Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body.

PRAY to wrap up your time together!