

Purity, Week 2

Hook



Main Point: Fight sexual temptation.

Current Event: Pornography is an epidemic in our country and our churches; share the statistics on the attached handout “Porn in the Digital Age”, research from the Barna Group, with your class.¹

What statistics surprised you most?

Why do you believe pornography is so prevalent in our culture?

What safeguards do you have in place to prevent yourself from falling to pornography?

Transition: Today’s lesson will examine the process of temptation and will provide your class with practical tools to battle sexual immorality.

¹ <https://www.barna.org/research/culture-media/research-release/porn-in-the-digital-age-new-research-reveals-10-trends#.V7cwIWVLDdEd>

Porn in the Digital Age A Barna Study

1. There is Moral Ambiguity Toward Porn, Particularly Among Younger

"VIEWING PORN IS WRONG"

1 out of 3 adults

1 out of 3 teens and young adults

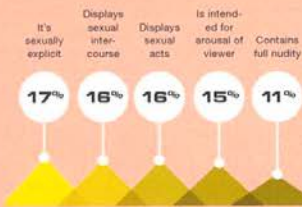


July 2011 (18-24 age 25+ 17-24 age 18-24) | July-August 2011 | barna.org | © 2011 Anderson Ministry

2. There are Varied Opinions About What Constitutes Porn

5 SIGNS IT'S PORN

The following are the top five indicators for people that something has "crossed the line" into porn



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3. 1 in 3 Americans Seek out Porn at Least Once a Month

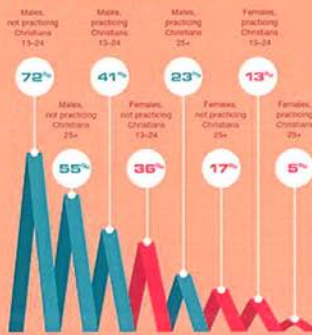
1 OUT OF 3 AMERICANS SEEK OUT PORN AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH



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4. Age, Gender and Faith Practice are the Three Biggest Factors in Frequent Porn Use

AGE, GENDER AND FAITH PRACTICE ARE THE THREE BIGGEST FACTORS IN FREQUENT PORN USE



It's important for Christian leaders - especially youth and young adult pastors - to realize that the people who are most likely to use porn are backsliding adult males in the Church. While they are still well below their peers who are not practicing Christians in frequency of porn use, four in 10 of them are actively seeking it out at least once or twice a month.

5. Young Adults Use More Porn—and are Less Likely to Say It's Bad for Society

YOUNG ADULTS USE MORE PORN—AND ARE LESS LIKELY TO SAY IT'S BAD FOR SOCIETY



6. Teens and Young Adults Rank not Recycling As More Immoral Than Viewing Porn

TEENS AND YOUNG ADULTS RANK NOT RECYCLING AS MORE IMMORAL THAN VIEWING PORN



7. Most Porn Users Say it Doesn't Bother Them to Use Porn



54% OF PORN USERS SAY IT DOESN'T REALLY BOTHER THEM TO USE PORN

8. Very Few Adults Feel a Sense of Guilt When They Use Porn

"I FEEL A SENSE OF GUILT WHEN I USE PORN"



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9. Most Porn Users are ok With how Much Porn They Use—but Practicing Christians are Divided

MOST PORN USERS ARE OK WITH HOW MUCH PORN THEY USE—BUT PRACTICING CHRISTIANS ARE DIVIDED

% among all adults and teens 18 and older who actively seek out porn at least occasionally



TRYING TO STOP?

All (orange), Practicing Christians (teal)

You have tried to stop using it, but have been unable to (or started again)



You are currently trying to stop using porn



10. Few Adults are Actively Trying to Stop Using Porn

Purity, Week 2

Book

Main Point: Fight sexual temptation.

James 1:13–14 (Read)

Sub Point: Temptation comes from within.

Sub Application: Know yourself and invite accountability.

Believers are not slaves to circumstance. For those who might claim that their present hardships, permitted or initiated by God, give them no other option but to sin, James presents a strong rebuke. The Father does not tempt anyone to sin; it is not in His nature. Rather, temptation to sin comes from within the believer himself.

To help the reader understand, James introduces a fishing metaphor. A fish catches notice of a worm dangling in the water. Motivated by desire for the food, the fish is lured into action and certain calamity. Likewise, a Christian is enticed by sin, often underestimating the danger that the temptation invites.

Note that the “desire” in verse 14 is unique to each man and woman. What might be a strong temptation for one might be less enticing to another. This truth demands that a believer truly examine his or her sin tendencies; the more one knows oneself, the stronger one can fight temptation.

The process of prayer-led self-examination is challenging and often ugly. To aid in the process of identifying and dealing with temptation, God’s Word instructs believers to develop accountability relationships. Below are several elements that should mark these partnerships:

Confession and Prayer

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.—James 5:16

Engagement in One Another’s Challenges

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. —Galatians 6:2

Consistent Contact and Encouragement

But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. —Hebrews 3:13

And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. —Hebrews 10:24–25

Mutual Spiritual Growth

Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another. —Proverbs 27:17

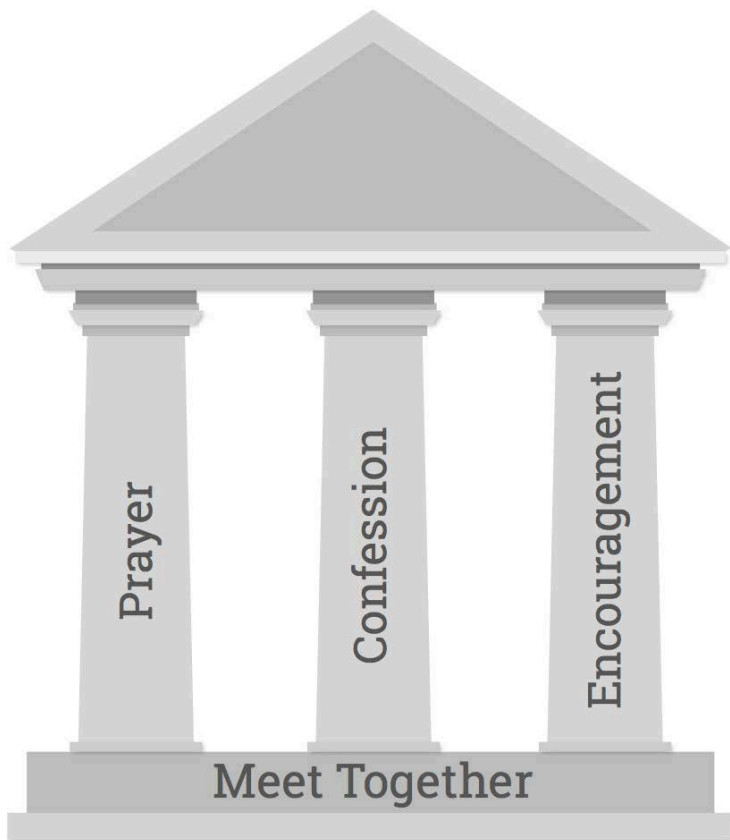
Humility and Honesty

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. —1 John 1:8

Focus on the Scriptures

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. —Colossians 3:16

This process of accountability is like constructing a building. By participating in each step, a person becomes stronger as illustrated in this diagram:



Action Steps

1. Find an accountability partner. Look for someone of the same gender who is faithful, available and teachable (hold yourself to those requirements as well). If you find it difficult to choose an accountability partner, request your Bible Fellowship Director's assistance.
2. Contact the Women's Ministry (cdunham@prestonwood.org) or Men's Ministry (dshivers@prestonwood.org) and ask for a mentor. Prestonwood mentors utilize a number of resources, including a discipleship book by Dr. John Tolson and Larry Kreider, *The Four Priorities*. This resource will challenge you to grow in your commitment to Jesus, yourself, relationships and the work of Christ in the world. *The Four Priorities* is available in the Prestonwood Bookstore.
3. Download and implement Covenant Eyes on all of your devices (details in the Took section of today's lesson).

Describe what you would view as a healthy accountability relationship. Describe what you would view as an unhealthy accountability relationship.

In what ways does Scripture help a believer fight temptation?

Describe an accountability relationship in your life. How has this partnership impacted your spiritual walk and pursuit of purity?

Describe the destruction that pornography causes in the life of a believer. How does increased transparency help to fight the grip that pornography holds?

How would you respond to a mature Christian who believes himself beyond the reach of sexual temptation?

James 1:15 (Read)

Sub Point: Temptation is a process.

Sub Application: Disrupt the process of temptation.

James presents his readers with a vivid illustration. The believer who nurtures sinful desire is like a mother conceiving a child. That temptation, incubated and held close, eventually gives birth to a baby—sin. Just as a newborn progresses and grows, that sin becomes stronger and more powerful, eventually causing inevitable destruction and ultimately death.

The progression is striking: desire > sin > death. One's unchecked thought life (desire) leads to action on those thoughts (sin) and eventual death. The formula (desire > sin > death) serves as

a warning, a call to action to interrupt a most dangerous progression of events. Each stage is perilous, but there is hope. Remember:

Temptation can be fought. The Scriptures promise that there is no temptation too great that cannot be overcome by the power of the Lord in the life of the believer; He will always provide a way out of temptation (1 Corinthians 10:13). As the battle of desire is fought internally, believers are called to consider their thought-lives, capture those desires that are not from God, and fill their minds with reflection on the qualities of Christ (Philippians 4:8).

Sin can be forgiven. Christians will inevitably sin and when that occurs, God is faithful to hear their confessions, forgive their sins, and cleanse them from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:8–9).

Those headed for death can be given new life. Individuals marching toward full rebellion and death are not without hope. For the non-believer, destined for eternal death, eternal life is waiting through a relationship with Jesus (Romans 6:23). The believer is called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, repent, and restore a healthy relationship with the Father while the opportunity remains (Hebrews 3:15–19).

Action Steps

1. Interrupt the process, temptation > sin > death, with healthy behaviors: memorize and cite Scripture (Psalm 119:11), confess and pray for strength to resist temptation (Matthew 26:41), immediately contact your accountability partner (Hebrews 3:13), and remove yourself from the temptation (1 Corinthians 6:18).
2. Create a list of all of the things that might “die” if you fall to sexual sin (example: my marriage, my friendships, my children’s respect for me).
3. Place a photo of your family next to your desktop computer and make that photo the wallpaper on your smartphone, laptop and desktop computers. Allow these pictures to remind you of what you have to lose; each time you begin to access the Internet, make a deliberate choice: I choose my family over sexual sin.
4. Maintain vigilance during times of increased vulnerability, particularly when you are Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired, or Sick (HALTS). In moments when you are experiencing one of these five physical or emotional states, the risk of falling to temptation seems to increase. Recognize your hunger, anger, loneliness, tiredness or sickness and choose healthy and responsible ways to address it immediately instead of turning to sin.

Sexual temptation is everywhere: television, the Internet, billboards, even on phones. What safeguards have you established to protect yourself from sexual immorality?

When do you find yourself most vulnerable to temptation? What strategy have you/could you put into place to resist temptation during these times?

How can parents help their children to fight sexual temptation? How can parents help their children to find restoration once temptation has given way to sexual sin?

James 1:16–18 (Read)

Sub Point: Jesus is stronger than temptation.

Sub Application: Pursue Jesus.

As if the clouds part and the sun breaks through, James shifts his focus from the death that sin brings to “the Father of lights.” Unlike the Enemy who brings about destruction, our Father is responsible for every good and perfect gift. He is unchanging, not changing in His character. He is constantly good and desires good for His children.

The words “brought forth” in verse 18 once again call to mind the imagery of childbirth.² The Gospel (“the word of truth”), when embraced, fundamentally changes an individual. Believers are reborn. No longer slaves to a heritage of failure and lust, Christians are adopted into God’s family and given a new name—children of God.

Without Christ, man is slave to sin; passions and desires rule the body without fear of being conquered. However, upon conversion, the power of sin is brought to nothing and the believer is no longer obligated to obey the call of temptation (Romans 6:6). The old man, the one who had no hope of breaking sin’s bonds, has been crucified with Christ. The believer has died to sin.

As a Christian, understanding that you are no longer a slave to sin is not enough to live a life of victory over temptation. Victory over temptation requires a vigorous pursuit of Jesus:

Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. —Romans 6:12–13

Children of the Father of lights are called to submit themselves, every part of themselves, as instruments to His service. This requires a daily commitment to capture every thought that would be in opposition to His holiness, to measure each word before being uttered against His Word, and to commit the body completely to His will. Believers have a choice: willingly re-chain themselves to shackles of sin or submit every moment as a slave to Christ.

² Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 2392.

Action Steps

1. Find a Scripture reading plan and commit to studying God's Word daily. Several Bible reading plans may be found [here](#).
2. Commit Scripture to memory.
3. Write down three ways that you would like to see your children or grandchildren pursue Jesus (examples: engaging in daily Bible reading, memorizing Scripture, serving others, participating in local or global missions, etc.). Next to each of these three desired pursuits, write down how you can model these traits or actions for your children/grandchildren in the next 12 months.

What does it look like, in a practical sense, to “present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness”?

In what areas of your life has God demonstrated His ability to break chains of addiction?

How has your study and meditation on the Bible assisted you in your pursuit of holiness?

Purity, Week 2

Took



Main Point: Fight sexual temptation.

Play the video “What Is Covenant Eyes” found in your classroom’s DVD player and at this link: <http://www.covenanteyes.com/family/>.

Challenge: With purity comes power, a greater array of opportunities to be used for the kingdom of God, and a unique positioning to speak unfettered truth into the lives of those you love. Pursue purity for yourself, your wife, your husband, children and grandchildren. Engage your family in a conversation this week, discussing Covenant Eyes and any other safeguards you plan to set in place. The talk might be difficult and uncomfortable, but it is certainly worth it.

COVENANT EYES

Covenant Eyes is offering a promotion for the people of Prestonwood; visit www.prestonwood.org/covenanteyes to find a cost-reducing promotional code. For more information on how you can fight for your purity and the purity of your family, visit www.prestonwood.org/homelife.