

Sexual Purity in Ministry

By Tim Swanson

Introduction

A believer is born again into an identity of holiness and is a new creature in Christ. He is a temple of the Holy Spirit and desires to be like Jesus Christ in thought, emotion, and action. He lives life from the foundation of the gospel and his identity in Christ. Sexual sin is a false reality for a believer because it doesn't match his identity as a new creation in Christ. This is why a believer must repent of sexual sin and live a godly life. Sexual sins cause pain for the believer and for others. This is especially true when a ministry leader commits sexual sins. A leader can hurt people and damage the faith of others. Before we discuss the problem of sexual sin in leadership, let's calibrate our thinking with Scripture. Paul's letter to Titus gives clear insight into how to prevent sexual sin and risk indicators for sexual sin.

⁶An elder must live a blameless life. He must be faithful to his wife, and his children must be believers who don't have a reputation for being wild or rebellious. (NLT) ⁷or a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money. (NKJV) ⁸Rather, he must enjoy having guests in his home, and he must love what is good. He must live wisely and be just. He must live a devout and disciplined life. ⁹He must have a strong belief in the trustworthy message he was taught; then he will be able to encourage others with wholesome teaching and show those who oppose it where they are wrong. ¹⁰For there are many rebellious people who engage in useless talk and deceive others. (NLT) Titus 1:6-10a

The Biblical requirements for church leaders build behavioral boundaries, which can protect a leader from sexual sin. We'll begin by looking at the qualifications for an elder or church leader in Titus 1:6-10a. Notice the positive descriptions of this man. He is self-controlled and living a blameless lifestyle. He is a family man and has a good relationship with his wife and children. Especially, he is innocent of immorality in his life choices because loves what is good and is living a wise and just lifestyle. He is Micah 6:8 personified. In Titus 1:8, he is described as have a "disciplined life." In the Greek, this word (*egkratés*) means "mastered from within." A godly man must be "mastered from within." This mastery of himself protects him from sexual sin. It also gives him the strength to serve others rather than please himself.

The Bible also warns against specific sins that disqualify a pastor, which also can lead him into sexual sin. A leader cannot be arrogant. He must not be focused on serving himself or building up his own kingdom. Connected to pride is rebellion. The sin of rebellion is like the sin of witchcraft. A pastor must not be rebellious. A rebel wants to be the one who is in control. It is difficult for a rebel to submit to others. Also, notice that a pastor must not be easily angered or violent. Both of these sins often grow from a root of pride and self-honor. He is also to avoid the love of money, which opens up the door to greed and manipulation. In verse 7, it specifically says that he must not be greedy for money. All of these sins put a man in a place where he can easily sin sexually because his focus is on himself. Verse 7 contains a key that opens the door to sexual sin: self-willed. In the Greek this word (*authadē*) is "self-pleasing." Can you see how self-pleasing is the context for sexual sin? As we discuss the problem of sexual sin, you'll see how these sins can prepare a pastor for sexual sin. On the other hand, you'll also

see how humility, self-control, and godliness are part of the solution for staying pure. Before we dig into the problem of sexual sins, let's refresh our memories with some foundational Bible truths.

Foundational Bible Truths

Never be in a hurry about appointing a church leader. Do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure. Remember, the sins of some people are obvious, leading them to certain judgment. But there are others whose sins will not be revealed until later. In the same way, the good deeds of some people are obvious. And the good deeds done in secret will someday come to light. 1 Timothy 5:22, 24-25 (NLT)

Paul reminds Timothy, a young pastor, to take time to get to know a person before giving him a position of leadership because the true character of a man takes time to search out. Paul tells Pastor Timothy to keep himself pure! These verses have a strong warning against sexual sins. At some point in the future, sexual sins will be revealed for others to see.

But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. 1 Corinthians 6:13b (NLT)

This is one of the most important foundational truths for sexual purity. Your body does not belong to you. It was made for purity and belongs to God. It is also the temple of the Holy Spirit. This truth should be meditated on with godly fear.

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts. 2 Timothy 2:22 (NLT)

This is one of Paul's beautiful prescriptions for pastoral purity. Be like Joseph and run from the temptress. Run from anything that stimulates or ignites a passion that is off limits for you. Instead live a purposeful lifestyle of godliness. Know your purpose and live it! Glorify God and reflect His purity in your lifestyle.

You burn with lust among the oaks and under every spreading tree; you sacrifice your children in the ravines and under the overhanging crags. Isaiah 57:5

The nation of Israel was ignited by idolatry and was passionate about sexual sin and the murder of their children. These people had the only temple of God on Earth at that time, located in their capital city. No other people group on the planet had the temple of God in their community. Instead of being ignited with passion for God and His worship, they committed horrific sins. They substituted intimacy with God for spiritual and sexual adultery. Israel is an example for every believer of what sexual sin in a believer looks like. Every believer is privileged to be the temple of God. The sinning believer has the temple inside of him and yet he chooses to commit adultery against God by serving the idol of sexual immorality.

Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers

of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Ephesians 6:11-12 (NKJV)

This verse is very important as we look at the reason why some pastors fail in the area of sexual purity. They fail to realize that Satanic forces hate them and want to destroy them, their families, and Christ's church. It is critical to recognize that very intelligent, crafty beings are plotting your fall into sin right now. Are you ready to fight?

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman. For what has God above chosen for us? What is our inheritance from the Almighty on high? Isn't it calamity for the wicked and misfortune for those who do evil? Doesn't he see everything I do and every step I take? Job 31:1-4 (NLT)

Job was proactive in setting up boundaries against lust because he knew the terrible consequences for sexual sin. He knew that God had chosen marriage and purity. And, Job had a keen sense of God's omniscience. Staying pure requires planning ahead and a healthy fear of sinning against God.

As you read through the sections on the problem sexual sin, our enemies, how to successfully avoid sexual sin, remember this Biblical context of godliness replacing pride and self-idolatry. It is important to remember that you exist to glorify God and to enjoy a close relationship with Him. The rest of this discussion rests within the Biblical foundation of your identity in Christ, purpose in life, and the fruit of the Spirit saturating your heart, mind, soul and life.

The Problem of Sexual Sin

Sexual sins and sexual addictions can be problems for people in ministry. Over the course of a few years, it is common to hear of four or five spiritual leaders who have fallen into sexual sin. Some leaders have a secret sin habit and live a double life with multiple sexual partners. Other leaders hide a pornography addiction and hope that no one finds out. Over time, these sins come into public knowledge.

I want to start this discussion with a statement that no one is immune. King David was close to God and then fell into sexual sin. God responded to David's secret by saying, **"You did it secretly, but I will make this happen to you openly in the sight of all Israel."** 2 Samuel 12:12 (NLT). If a man after God's own heart could fall into sexual sin, any one of us could, too. That is why we need to clean our spiritual houses and fight against sexual temptations. Sexual temptation is an easy trap for some pastors because of the elevated status that they create around them. They elevate themselves above others, creating a layer of pride. David took Bathsheba because he elevated himself above her. Ministry leaders are susceptible to this temptation to be above others, especially above women. Satan can see this and quietly attacks in this vulnerable area. Along with sexual temptation, an elevated leader can begin to control and manipulate others to maintain his high position of power. Greed, pride, control, and manipulation can be a series of doors leading to sexual sin because they all are connected to lust. The antidote is to humbly serve others and let God elevate you. The only Person who should be controlling believers is the Holy Spirit. That is not a pastor's job because a pastor's job is to serve,

teach, disciple, preach, and warn of danger. The Holy Spirit's job is to teach and apply the pastor's words in the hearts, minds and lives of the sheep.

Another major issue is that many believers are ignorant to the fact that they were born again into a major battle that is raging against them. Since they don't realize the situation and aren't fighting, they are dragged down into the mud and kicked repeatedly by Satanic spirits. This can happen to pastors, too. Some pastors are ignorant of how to effectively fight the world, the flesh and Satanic forces. They fight with only one weapon, when they should be skilled in many weapons of warfare.

Possible Excuses

Most leaders who sin sexually probably have felt better by using excuses. Here are a few: My wife might divorce me if I tell her. I might lose my ministry if people know about my sin. It is a small sin. My ministry is such a burden. I need this. I deserve this. This is Biblical. I'm helping other people who need money. Obviously, none of these excuses is true, but they can comfort a leader who is sinning sexually.

Common Tactics of Fallen Leaders

If you read about fallen leaders, you will find some common tactics. They often hide their sin in plain sight. The double life is lived out in front of others. A Christian leader will pick a victim who is vulnerable emotionally and needs financial assistance. Once the person trusts him, he will find a way to create a dependency. The relationship is unequal, with him as the provider and her as the recipient of money. He may use threats or guilt to keep her from telling anyone. Examine your own life. Are you in danger of an inappropriate relationship? Do you find yourself creating relationship opportunities with emotionally or economically vulnerable women?

Pornography addictions are also lived out in plain sight, often on the family computer or on a cell phone. Think about your own internet habits. Are you in danger of looking at pornography online? Do you sneak a peek when you're checking your Facebook or email?

The Truth

Sexual sin is idolatry and self-worship. Sexual sin is theft from a spouse and is adultery. For example, pornography is considered to be a harmless sin. But, looking at pornography is an act of adultery because one is satisfying himself outside of the promise of marriage. God has said that a husband and wife are one body. Sexual sins rip apart the marriage unity of one body. When repenting of sexual sins, a believer must be honest about the wickedness of his rebellion. Last, willful sexual sin is rebellion against God. It needs to be confessed to God as rebellion.

Sexual sin does not have any valid excuse. Believers must repent and discontinue sexual sins. This can be very difficult if there are spiritual strongholds woven into the believer's life. And, it can be difficult if the believer refuses to learn how to fight against Satanic spirits. Many Christians are taught that they are immune to Satanic spirits making internal attacks. This causes those believers to continue in the torment of unwanted thoughts and feelings. Jesus Christ's blood has purchased everything that a believer needs to be free from sexual sin and torment.

Your Three Enemies

Your Flesh is Your Enemy

The flesh is the remaining software from the old operating system that was you. When you were born again, your old nature went to the cross with Jesus and died. Your new nature resurrected with Jesus Christ. You are now a new creature, created in Christ Jesus for good works. (Romans 6:1-7, Ephesians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 5:17). Your operating system has been changed and you are not the old person anymore. However, there is software that has been left behind, woven into the fabric of your heart, soul and mind. This is called the flesh. It is also called sin that is living inside of you. It is like malware. You have to use the antivirus software of the Word and the Spirit to find and delete the sin. You can slowly kill your flesh by taking replacing it with a godly lifestyle.

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹ For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:18-19 (NKJV).

The flesh does not have a mind. It produces rebellion against the Holy Spirit and God's law. You can fight the flesh by denying its appetite for rebellion. Don't allow the rebellious thoughts to germinate. Command your soul to worship rather than lust. Command your soul to have joy rather than discontentment. You can kill your flesh by denying it and following Jesus. The Bible refers to you as having a body, soul, heart and spirit. It is my belief that your spirit is the new creation. That is you, and you are in the control center with the Holy Spirit. You are separate from your heart and soul. You must take full control of your heart and soul through the process of sanctification. Your heart and soul is where you think, plan, dream, and feel emotions. In the Bible, David commands his heart, soul and mind. He commands his mind to remember God's goodness. He commands his soul and everything inside of him to praise God for his holiness (holy) and authority (name). You must rule your heart, mind and soul by taking control of your will through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Psalm 103:1-2

The Kingdom of Darkness (The World) is Your Enemy

Your worldview is a framework of beliefs that organize and filter your thoughts about yourself and the world around you. Your worldview is a compilation of beliefs from many sources, which include your culture, education, the media that you watch, and your music. How you interpret the world around you and how you think about the world around you are produced by your worldview beliefs. This is why you must tear down all philosophies and beliefs that do not agree with the Bible. (2 Corinthians 10:5) Since you were born spiritually dead, naturally, your beliefs will default to humanism and legalism. You will instinctively believe that humans can solve their own problems and that God will only accept you if you are a good person. You will also naturally weigh moral choices on whether the results are good for you and for others. These are all false foundational values that are natural to your thinking. These false doctrines about life are taught to you when you watch movies, talk with friends, and read books. The result is that many believers have a mixture of false and true beliefs that make up their worldview. This is a problem because your flesh takes advantage of your weak worldview to introduce sin into your thinking. And, it is a problem because Satanic spirits use your weak worldview

to create a foothold in your mind. A foothold is created when you accept a demonic or fleshly lie as truth. Footholds can become strongholds. There are two steps to filtering out the incoming messages.

Step 1: You must learn the truth. This requires you to be metacognitive, which means you must think about the beliefs that you have and decide why you believe them. You must find the lies that you believe and reject them. This process happens as you read the Bible and replace the lies with truth. This is part of the process of sanctification. You have the Holy Spirit and the church to help you with this process.

Step 2: You must stop the free flow of anti-Biblical input. Immediately, cut all immoral movies, TV, and music. Topics that you need to stop are sex, sexual dancing, worldly parties, sexual lyrics, adultery, discontentment, longing for a better life, witchcraft, magic, horror, murder, occult, and content that leads you to think about and want immoral sex. Topics that you need to be aware of and evaluate Biblically are humanism, evolution, gender topics, science, current events news, and history.

The flesh and the world work together to cause you to desire sin in your emotions and mind. Satanic spirits look for places in your thinking where your thinking or behavior is weak. All three of your enemies can be involved in an attack on you. However, you may find that it is only one attacking you.

The important part of the process of sanctification (living a life authentic to your identity as a saint) is becoming strong in your mind by practicing Biblical thinking and godliness. The next enemy we'll discuss is Satanic spirits. Part of sanctification is cleaning out the Satanic access points in your life. Another part of sanctification is learning how to fight future Satanic attacks.

Satanic Spirits are Your Enemy

If there is a magnification in your mind towards a specific sin, you are probably under spiritual attack from a spirit. If you immediately notice specific people in a room or immediately feel an inappropriate feeling, you are probably under spiritual attack. If you feel drawn to open your phone and look at pornography, you are under attack. If your mind makes a plan for you to sin when you don't want to, you are under a spiritual attack. The flesh does not plan sin for you and then trick you into doing that sin. Demons do this work. You think that these are your thoughts because they can answer you back immediately. But, they are not your thoughts.

Access Points

A. Strongholds

Satanic spirits can set up a stronghold in a person's life when he does a sexual sin. If a person did a sexual sin before being saved, that stronghold can remain after he becomes a believer. A stronghold can also be created when a sexual sin is done to a person. This stronghold becomes an access point for sexual spirits of lust, pornography, adultery, abuse, and sexual perversion. The person is unaware of this stronghold.

Bitterness and unforgiveness create a stronghold that opens a door to spiritual oppression. Oppression is when a spirit continually tempts or tortures a person mentally in an attempt to push him to commit willful sin. The unconfessed sin of bitterness or unforgiveness creates a space for demonic oppression.

Occult practices in a person's past or occult items in his house can create an access point. To find freedom from strongholds, a believer must confess and repent of all occult activities in the past, and clean out his house of all idols or occult books or things.

Generational strongholds are sinful habits that are transferred from grandparents to parents, or from parents to grandparents. Spiritual oppression is possible because of the generational sin.

B. Spiritual Attacks

Spiritual attacks are usually thoughts or emotions projected inside of a person from an external source. Demons have some power to push in thoughts, fears, and feelings. The person owns these as his own thoughts and emotions, which creates more opportunity for willful sin.

Spiritual attacks can happen because of environment, types of people you are ministering to, and because you are a Christian. People will come to church, into your home, and meet you at the grocery store who have sexual spirits attached to them. Those spirits can attack you. Sometimes, you will feel a heavy presence, feel sick, or have many unwanted thoughts. This is not coming from you. It is coming from an external being that is attacking you.

If you travel through an area of prostitution, partying, or drinking, you may feel an attack. Or, you might notice a slow change in your attitude or thoughts. You may start to feel discontent, angry, irritable, judgmental, or accepting of sin. Your desire to read the Bible and pray might become muted or low. These are signs that you are under a spiritual attack.

A person can suddenly feel an inappropriate attraction to another person. Or, a believer can suddenly be seen as very attractive by another person in the room. He may think that this is a good day because he is suddenly desired and popular. All of these feelings are probably coming from demons. They are not real feelings based on truth. They are false feelings based on demonic lies.

C. Media:

Books, movies, video games and social media can be doors through which Satanic spirits attack you. When you read or watch with an empty mind, you are willingly receiving the messages of rebellion, humanism, and occult. When you watch entertainment that is sexual, vulgar, blasphemous, or exalting ungodly behaviors, you are inviting in those spiritual attackers. Over time, you might see your quiet time with the Holy Spirit become dry. And, you might start to spend more time doing secular activities. These are all signs that you are under spiritual attack.

D. Three Types of Spiritual Attack:

1. Spiritual attackers from your past can attack you without you realizing you are under attack. These spirits are very quiet and work behind the scenes in your life to push you to choose sin. They sabotage you and may try to kill you, if they can.
2. Some spiritual attackers enter into your life quietly and slowly turn down the volume on your spiritual effectiveness. These can cause sickness, exhaustion, lust, anger, sudden sleep, fear, etc. They desensitize the believer in regards to spiritual things.
3. A third type of spiritual attackers can enter your world quickly and with power. Suddenly, you have many thoughts or feelings that are ungodly. Suddenly, you feel a powerful emotion. Suddenly, you feel

sick. Suddenly, your head hurts, your mind is confused, and you feel very heavy. Suddenly, you feel sexually attracted to a person. Suddenly, you feel defeated or controlled by another. These are all examples of spiritual attacks that are false power in your life. They are not authentic power, yet they can cause destruction.

Cleaning House

1. Are you willing to discipline and fight?

But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Corinthians 9:27 (NKJV)

2. Are you willing to be visible to God and others?

All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. John 3:20 (NLT)

Bring it into the light. Take a few minutes to inspect your life. Invite your wife and others to evaluate you.

A. Go to the Light

Prayer: "Holy Spirit, Please show me what needs to be cleaned out in my life. Please tell me what I need confess and repent from. In Jesus's name Amen."

Sit quietly and wait. The Holy Spirit will show you if there is something that you need to clean out. Take time to confess those sins and repent of them in prayer. Then, say this out loud: "I renounce my sin of _____ and I turn from it in Jesus's mighty name!"

B. Clean Out All Spiritual Oppressors:

Prayer: "Holy Spirit, Please show me anyone that I need to forgive." Forgiveness is not saying that it was okay or right. Forgiveness is giving Jesus Christ the right to judge and have vengeance. You release your rights to vengeance when you choose to forgive. Forgiveness is a journey that you start by releasing the person to Jesus.

Say this out loud "I choose to forgive _____ and I give him/her to you Jesus. I give you're the right to justice." name of person

Prayer: "Holy Spirit, Please show me evil spirits that need to be sent away." He may tell you specifically. Or, the Holy Spirit may use the following process to clean out the strongholds.

Read through this list of evil spirits. If there is something that clicks inside of you or seems to be highlighted, make a check mark next to that one.

Pornography	Lust	Adultery
Homosexuality	Control	Manipulation
Anger	Accuser	False-guilt
Pride	Rejection	Self-Rejection
Sexual Abuse	Prostitution	Masturbation

If you marked a check next to any of the above, pray through the following two steps for each spirit. Before you pray, have you asked God forgiveness for the sins that came to mind? Take time to confess

your sins to Jesus, if you haven't done that yet. For the next part, you must say each of these prayers out loud.

Prayer: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I cover myself and my family with the blood of Jesus. Holy Spirit, please protect me and my family from spiritual attack. Please send your angels to protect us. I pray a blood hedge of protection around me and my family. In Jesus's name amen." Now, work through the spirits that you marked.

Step 1: "In the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command the spirit of _____ to leave me now. I command you to go to Jesus Christ to receive your judgement." (Blow out a big breath.) "I renounce all agreements that I've made intentionally or unintentionally with the spirit of _____."

Step 2: "Holy Spirit, Please show me when this spirit first came to me." Wait quietly. If the Holy Spirit immediately shows you a memory, then do step 3. If not, go back and repeat steps 1 and 2 for any other spirits that you marked.

Step 3: "In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the sin of _____ when I was _____. Holy Spirit, Please clean out the place where that spirit was in my life. Please cleanse me from that sin and from that evil spirit."

For sins of pornography or sexual sins, pray that the Holy Spirit will clean your eyes and (if applies) your sexual organs.

For addictions to pornography or alcohol, you need to take one more step. You need to publically replace king lust or king alcohol with King Jesus.

Say this out loud: "King Lust. In the name of Jesus Christ, I take your throne, your rulership, your robes, your crown, and your scepter. You have no power over me from this day forward in Jesus' mighty name. I break your hold and cast you out of my life right now. King Jesus is now my king. I reject you. Leave now in the mighty name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I cut you out of my life with the sword of the Spirit. Do not return to me or my family." (blow out a breath)¹

You need to use this also for king alcohol, if you were addicted to alcohol in the past.

Prayer to break a generational sin or stronghold

Did you aunt, uncle, grandfather, mom, or dad have the same sin problem? How about your siblings? If so, you probably are dealing with a generational issue. Pray this prayer to free yourself and your family from this issue.

"Dear Heavenly Father, I come to you with this problem of _____. It is sin and is a problem for my family. It was a problem for my _____, my _____, and is a problem for me. I repent on behalf of my ancestors, my family, and me for this sin and I turn from it. Please forgive my ancestors, and my family and me for this sin of _____. Holy Spirit, Please cut off this generational spirit of _____ from my family and from me." "Generational spirit of _____ I cut you off from me and my family with the sword of the Spirit. I break you with the blood of Jesus. In the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ, I command you to leave me, my family, my children, and my

descendants now and forever! Generational spirit of _____ I command you to go to Jesus Christ to receive your judgement.” (blow a big breath out.)

Repeat this prayer for each generational sin. I.e. anger, lust, Alcoholism.

Breaking Soul Ties to Sexual Partners

If you have had sexual relations with anyone other than your spouse, you need to say the following prayer for each person’s name. If you have had a porn addiction and watched specific porn actors, say their names also in the following prayer out loud. Make a list of names. Pray the following prayer for each name. Insert the name in the blank lines.

“In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, I break all ungodly spirit, soul and body ties that have been established between me and _____. I sever the linking supernaturally and ask God to remove from me all influences of _____, and I draw back to myself every part which has been wrongfully tied in bondage to _____. I now speak directly to every evil spirit that has taken advantage of this ungodly soul tie. You no longer have any rights here, and I order you to leave now without hurting or harming me or any other person, and without going into any other member of my family. In Jesus’s name amen!”^{ii iii}

Living a Successful Life of Purity

Get Help Immediately

If you had or have an addiction to a sexual sin like pornography, you need to get help to overcome this addiction. You can contact Tim Swanson. Pride says to fix the problem by yourself. Pride is your enemy!

Be Visible and Accountable

Be the humble learner who is leading your organization. Don’t be the angry, proud person at the top of your organization. Instead, open up your heart and life to your close friends. Allow people to see your true personality. Live your life so others can see your example of holiness. Don’t hide your failures. Let your wife and close friends see the true person that you are: a saint who is growing in sanctification. Be accountable to others. If you are under attack, tell your wife. If you stumble on the internet, apologize to your wife. Let others see into your private life. Don’t create secret spaces in your private life. Be open and invite trusted friends to hold you accountable. Be honest with your wife. If you have a problem with internet, don’t use your phone or computer where others can’t see you. Be visible and don’t hide activities.

Accountability is the kryptonite for leadership sexual sins. Invite your wife and other elders into your personal life. Be vulnerable and honest. You fear that your wife and others will reject you. At first, your wife may feel like you’ve rejected her, which you have. Later, you will probably find that she will accept you, forgive you, and respect you for being honest. If you are the king of the kingdom and are unapproachable, you will be an easy target for the world, the flesh and Satan’s armies of demons. If you sit at a round table with your wife and other leaders, you will find strength and support. It is difficult for Satan to destroy a man who is accountable to others.

Building Boundaries

Your mind, soul and life are like a city. You must build solid walls around them to protect yourself from spiritual attacks. There are some specific actions that you must take to build these walls.

Mental Boundaries

Take every thought captive and make it obey Jesus. You must gain control of your thoughts. You must fight until you have a strong mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 says that God has given you power, love and a controlled mind. Claim that and build your mental muscles until your mind is strong enough to shut down thoughts that should not be in your mind.

Relationship Boundaries

Create a safety zone around the time when you're alone with others. Choose to be alone with people who are either your family or friends of the same gender. If you are a man, do not be alone with women or young ladies who are not your spouse. Don't give a ride to a young lady from church on your motorcycle. Be careful not to have online relationships with women who are not your spouse. Be careful not to minister alone to a person of the opposite sex. If you are going to pray for a sick woman, take another church member with you. The rule here is for you to create a safe space around you, so you won't have the appearance of evil, a false accusation, or a fall into sexual sin. If you are a married man, do not have close relationships with other women. If you find that you are spending time with another woman at church, go find other people to talk with. Do not allow emotional relationships to develop between you and women who are not your wife. Remember to always avoid the appearance of an inappropriate or sinful relationship. When you are joking, remember to keep a purity boundary around your speech. Don't joke about sexual topics. Don't talk about sexual topics to a woman alone or in a small group. Teach on sexuality in the context of mixed gender or large groups.

Touching Boundaries

Prayer: Watch your body space and body language around women. Keep your hands away from inappropriate areas on others' bodies. For example, if you are going to pray for a woman, ask if you can touch her shoulder or her knee. In some circumstances, you can touch her head. However, touching the top of a woman's head can create a feeling of submission for her. Be careful how and where you touch people when you pray for them.

Hugs: Instead of giving hugs and loving handshakes, give people of the opposite gender a fist bump or a high five. If you choose to give a hug, be careful that it is a side hug and that it doesn't feel inappropriate to the woman. It is best not to hug any women except for family members or your wife.

Looking: Some people avoid making eye contact with women. I don't think this is the answer. The answer is to smile at and appreciate people equally. If you are staring at a young lady or repeatedly making eye contact, that is inappropriate. You can look at people and smile without being aggressive or inappropriate.

Say Sorry: If you accidentally touch someone inappropriately, just say, "I'm sorry," and then move away.

Ministry Boundaries

It is important to have a healthy balance of family time, personal study time, exercise and ministry. Many pastors default to doing ministry all of the time. Create a schedule in your week when you are not available for ministry. You must have quality time with the Holy Spirit before you can give time to His ministry. You must have quality time with your family because they are part of the foundation from which you minister. Your family is what God has given you to keep you safe from sexual sin. One suspicious trait of the spirit of lust with a pastor is an inability to stay home. The spirit of lust drives the pastor to constantly be on the move and constantly ministering in the community. This is because the spirit of lust is insatiable and promotes discontent feelings when at home. Do you find yourself constantly promoting yourself or your ministry? This is also a sign of a spirit of lust. The spirit of lust may not be able to affect you sexually, so it will attack other areas. The Bible doesn't restrict lust to only sexual sins. Lust can manifest itself in a lack of ministry boundaries. Basically, the leader becomes addicted to ministry. That becomes his adultery. Paul warns Timothy of leaders like this in the church.

“He is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this world*, ^[c]and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. 1 Timothy 6:4-10 (NKJV)

In this text, Paul gives a variety of ways that lust manifests: greediness, using godliness for personal gain, desiring to be rich. Some don't want to be rich with money. They want to be rich with power or prestige. One very good way to build a boundary against this type of greed is by creating a balanced schedule for ministry. Let people know your schedule and say no when they ask you to break your schedule. If it is a true emergency, which is uncommon, break your schedule. However, most meetings and phone calls are not time-sensitive. You can attend to them tomorrow. Instead put into practice Paul's advice to Pastor Timothy in 1 Timothy 6:11-12a: **But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called. (NKJV).**

A lifestyle of godliness is a good defense against spiritual attack. However, Jesus was completely godly and He was attacked. So, expect attacks in your life of godliness. Godliness will create a boundary against attacks of shame, guilt, and lust.

Creating Equal and Respectful Relationships

Avoid the trap of being the proud man with the servants who follow him. Do you pride yourself as the spiritual father of your flock? If you are a pastor, you need to remove the elevated position that you are given by the men and women in your church. You should be their servant, not their highly esteemed leader. Of course, people will respect you for being a pastor. But, the elevated status can be a trap for you and lead you into a sexual relationship with someone who is below you. Encourage the

people around you by valuing them as equals. Everyone has different gifts in the body of Christ, and we are all equal in value. Intentionally grow relationships that do not elevate you to be higher than other people. If you are the boss or the provider, you can be tempted to use that position to manipulate others into a sexual relationship with you. If you are the pastor (servant), you should use your influence to grow others into confident, pure people of God.

Neutralize Triggers

As you walk through life, you will suddenly be hit with a spiritual attack. Often, that attack is triggered by something you saw, smelled, an old movie you remembered, a song, something you remember or are thinking about. If you notice a trigger, renounce that trigger. Immediately, say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the trigger of the _____ . You have no power over me." Then say, "In the mighty name of the Lord Jesus Christ, spirit of lust leave me now. Do not return." Do not be fearful of triggers. Neutralize them as you find them in your life. If there is place that you pass on the way to town where you are always attacked, when you get to that place say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I renounce the trigger of this place. I renounce the attack here in Jesus's name." You will see a difference. If you have a sexual dream, wake up and say, "I renounce the _____ in my dream. That is not reality for me. In the name of Jesus Christ, spirit attacking my dreams leave me now." Over time, you'll find that these triggers lose their power. In fact, some of them will immediately lose power when you renounce them as a trigger.

Get Prayer Help

If you feel a repeated attack, and you can't get it to leave by commanding it to leave in Jesus's name and quoting Scripture, you need to get prayer help. Ask your wife to pray for you and send away the spirit attacking you. Or, ask another pastor to pray for you and send away the attacking spirit. When you bring the attack out into the open and someone else knows about it, the attacker will usually leave immediately. Don't battle a spirit by yourself. It is critical that you bring the battle into the light.

Plan Ahead

If you know that you are weak in a certain place or at a specific time, plan ahead to avoid that place or fill that time with a healthy activity. For example, if you are tempted to look at pornography in the evening on your phone, store your phone out of reach in the evenings. Replace the phone with a book or a conversation with someone.

If you are leaving to drive into a place where you often feel attacks, say this out loud: "Holy Spirit, please protect me as I leave my house. In the name of Jesus Christ, I cover myself with the blood of Jesus and pray a blood hedge of protection around me and my family. Holy Spirit, please send your angels to protect me." Taking the time to say this prayer before you leave your house will help prevent some attacks.

Date Your Wife

People put a lot of energy into not having sexual sin. Instead, invest some of that energy into having a good relationship with your wife. Learn what makes your wife enjoy time with you. Start to speak her love language. Create space in your life for passion with your wife that both of you enjoy. Make this a

priority. Sexual passion is a blessing that Satan is trying to steal from you and your spouse. Fight back by gardening a healthy sexual relationship in your marriage.

Use the Sword of the Lord

The whole armor of God is necessary for battle. Now, I'll just talk about using the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Jesus spoke the truth out loud when tempted by Satan. It didn't stop Satan from tempting him immediately. But, it did diffuse the temptation and Satan did leave when Jesus persisted in quoting Scripture. Identify the type of attack that is happening on you. For example, if it is lust, say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, spirit of lust leave now. I choose to be content and I choose godliness." If you are being attacked by fear say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, spirit of fear leave me now. I choose to trust God. I have not received a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a strong mind." If you are under attack by a spirit of control say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, spirit of control leave me now. I trust in the Holy Spirit to teach and control."

Use Truth Statements Based on the Blood of Jesus

Here are some examples of truth statements based on the blood of Jesus Christ. Read your Bible to find out more truths of what Jesus's blood purchased for you. Say these out loud when you are attacked.

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I am sanctified and set apart as God's temple. Leave now. You are trespassing on God's property.

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I am justified and forgiven. Accusing spirit leave now.

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I am cleansed as I walk in the light.

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I am accepted. Spirit of rejection leave now.

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I am an ambassador of Christ. I am not ashamed. Spirit of shame leave now.

By the blood of Jesus Christ I am healed. Sickness leave now in Jesus's name.^{iv}

By the blood of Jesus Christ, I release myself from this curse. Return to sender by the finger of God.^v

Quiet Time With the Holy Spirit

All spiritual warfare is fought from a place of intimacy with God. You must consistently begin each day with time in the Word and prayer. You must read through the New Testament repeatedly and spend time in the Psalms and Proverbs. If you have a hard time concentrating on the Bible, stop and ask the Holy Spirit why you are having difficulty concentrating. Then say, "In the mighty name of Jesus Christ, spirit that is distracting me from the Bible leave now and don't return. Go to Jesus to be judged." Then take the time to read the passage again that you were having a difficult time reading.

Take the time to be quiet with the Holy Spirit and pray. Take time to ask Him what He wants you to focus on in your ministry. Ask Him what He wants you to clean out of your soul and mind. Be honest with the Holy Spirit about attacks that you are experiencing.

Ask God for Help

This should be like a sandwich. Two pieces of bread and filling in the middle. Start all spiritual warfare by asking God to help you. Then, use your truth statements and speak in Christ's authority. Finish all warfare with thankfulness and praise. Say this out loud: "Victory in Jesus! Victory in Jesus!" Remember

that you fight with a sword that is already bloody with Satan's blood because Jesus already fought and destroyed Satan. You are in the process of bringing that victory into every area of your own life and into the lives of many others.

Thankfulness and Praise

A strategy that works for me is to respond to spiritual attacks by immediately thanking God for something and praising God.

Conclusion

Maintain a Righteous Walk

The ruler of this world is coming, and he has nothing in Me. John 14:30b (NKJV)

The ruler of this world is coming. He has no claim on me. (ESV)

The ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me. (NLT)

Jesus had no sin, no strongholds, and no areas of rebellion. Therefore, Satan had no power over Jesus. There was no place in Jesus for Satan to use as a foothold. A believer must consistently deal with his strongholds, rebellion and sin. If he sins, confess and renounce that sin. If he finds a stronghold, tear it down. If he feels a spiritual attack, fight back. He must keep a clean lifestyle. This is one of his most important weapons against sexual sin. Be visible and accountable.

If you are currently addicted to pornography or are in an inappropriate relationship, you will need to get help. The strategies for becoming free from an addiction are not specifically explained in this booklet. So, you must get help. There are very helpful books available for becoming 100% free from pornography and sexual sins.

What will your legacy be? What will you pass onto your children? Will you pass on godliness, power, love, and a healthy mind? Or, will you pass on sexual strongholds and leave a legacy of hidden sin? No! That is not your story! Your story will be one of purity, victory, and godliness. Make that choice today and make that choice every day. Spiritual warfare is our calling. We already have the victory. Let's live out that victory with success!

ⁱ Adapted from a prayer and used by permission from God's Way Out of Pornography by Aureole Piper (Queensland, Australia: Freedom In Christ Ministries, 2019)

ⁱⁱ Soul tie prayer used by permission from Healing Through Deliverance 2: The Practical Ministry by Peter Horrobin (Ventura, CA: Renew Books, 1995)

ⁱⁱⁱ Prayer to remove demon used by permission from How to Cast Out Demons: A Guide to the Basics by Doris M. Wagner (Bloomington, Minnesota: Chosen Books, 2014)

^{iv} Some basic concepts from Applying the Blood by Derek Prince (Shippensburg, Pennsylvania: Destiny Image, 2020)

^v Basic concept from Blessing or Curse: You Can Choose by Derek Prince (Bloomington, Minnesota: Chosen Books, 2006)