

Be set *free* from the bondage of porn

# PLAY THE MAN



*Todd Friel*



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## Introduction

As if languishing for eighteen months in the Bocardo Prison in Oxford, England, weren't enough, on October 16, 1555, Nicholas Ridley and Hugh Latimer were marched to a stake where they became human torches courtesy of Bloody Queen Mary I. The match was struck while the two Anglican Bishops stood back-to-back, bound to a single stake.

The green wood surrounding Ridley slowly burned the lower extremities of his body as he repeatedly cried, "Lord have mercy upon me! I cannot burn. Let the fire come unto me, I cannot burn."

The brown wood beneath Hugh Latimer quickly engulfed him as he raised his voice to fortify Ridley, "Be of good cheer, Mr. Ridley, and play the man! We shall this day light such a candle by God in England, as I trust never shall be put out."

After Latimer encouraged his friend to man up, not be a sissy, and die well, a bystander brought the flames to the top of the pyre as the fire finally consumed Ridley. He played the man.

This book is going to call you to play the man before the flames of your unbridled lust consume you. This is a call to stop being weak, strengthen your resolve, grow in godliness, be a Christian man, glorify your God, and reach your full potential.

This book is for you if you are single or married. While I regularly address married men, this clarion call to man-up applies to singles as well. As a single, you should be working to become the godly man to whom any father would happily give his daughter's hand. When you read about being a godly dad, strive to become the man who is qualified to one day be a father.



Whether you're married or single, I would like to ask you to do something before we begin. No doubt you have attempted many times to slay the lust dragon, but you have failed over and over again. Will you commit to the following?

## **Finish this short book.**

If you throw this book down without completing it, that is an almost certain sign you are not ready to play the man and overcome your lusts. By actually finishing this book, you can count that as your first victory over the sin that has been defeating you for too long.

## **Do not be the proverbial fool**

who rejects correction. You are going to read some things that hit hard. Take your knocks. While I could sugarcoat this for you, that is not what you need. You are playing with fire, and I would not be a friend if I simply handed you a thimble of water.

## **Pray your way through this.**

When you feel guilty, confess your sin and thank the Lord for His mercy and patience. When you feel weak, ask God for His strength. When you think you are too sinful to be His son, ask the Lord to remind you of His promise that He will complete the good work He began in you (Philippians 1:6).

If you just committed to those three requests, congratulations. You have taken a significant step to become a man that men, women, and children admire. I am glad you are here. Now, let's get on it.

## **Three questions:**

- 1. Why are you reading this booklet? Write down your top three reasons.*
- 2. Why do you think you have not had total victory over this sin?*
- 3. Are you willing to commit to reading this entire booklet? Why or why not?*



## Chapter 1

# FIRST THINGS FIRST

Before you can pass go, collect \$200 and gain strength to play the Christian man, we need to determine if you are indeed a Christian man. Admit it, you have wondered that about yourself, and for good reason. Ongoing sexual sin is not the mark of a true convert. A steady diet of smut might indicate you are not genuinely born again (1 John 3:6). Let's take a moment to resolve this issue once and for all.

Men who claim the name of Christ but regularly look at porn fall into one of two categories. Let's see which category you are in.

### Category 1: The Diver

You are the man who consumes porn like a dog devouring a biscuit. You plot, plan, strategize, and carry out your dirty deed with little or no remorse. My friend, you are in serious danger.

The Bible is a cannon loaded with dire warnings aimed at you. The sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God (Ephesians 5:5; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Revelation 22:15). Please don't think that you will be the first pornographer God lets slide. You are playing with fire; a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

1 John 3:8–9 offers this stern warning to you: if you continue in willful, unrepentant sin, you are of the devil. Please note, Christians stumble into sin, but you don't stumble, you dive into sin. You don't battle your enemy; you fraternize with him.

Your conscience is severely dulled. It is only God's grace that has led you to read this booklet. You have but one option, repent now or you will not only perish, but your life will continue in the downward spiral it is currently in.



Your time of grace may soon be over. Your cup of wrath will one day be filled to the brim and God will see to it you drink it to the dregs. If you die in your sins, perhaps at your computer, you will be discovered in shame, and you will face a furious God who will give you what you deserve.

You have no hope without Jesus Christ! He is mighty to save, but you must come clean today! You must repent of all your sins (not just your porn problem) and place your faith in Christ. Throw yourself at His mercy and He will save you to the uttermost, but you must not delay.

You have every reason to run to Christ. Jesus drank your cup of wrath so you don't have to. God took your perversions, fantasies and self-pleasuring, and laid them all on His spotless Son. Jesus took your vile, nasty, dirty, disgusting vices and owned them as His own. The Father saw Jesus as a pornographer so you can be seen as forgiven and righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Do not face the God of righteous fury. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Accept His terms of peace right now. Flee to Him, not merely because you're afraid of hell, run to Him because He's been so kind to save you from hell (Romans 2:4).

Why would you reject God's gracious offer of loving-kindness? Why would you not want to be in a right relationship with the God who is rich in mercy? Why would you not want to live forever with the God who died so you could live?

If you delay and God strikes you dead, you will rue this day forever. The words you just read will contribute to your eternal misery as you constantly remember that God offered generous terms of reconciliation, and you rejected Him. This should be the biggest no-brainer of your life. Your choice is simple: you can let your mind grow darker and darker as you sink deeper and deeper into perversion, or you can receive forgiveness from the Savior who became a curse for you (Galatians 3:13). You are sinking down, and Jesus is extending His benevolent hand to pull you out of the cesspool you are swimming in.

Who in his right mind would say yes to porn, dirtiness, shame, and guilt, but say no to the God who delights in redeeming grotesquely lost men? Why would you choose dog-vomit over God (Proverbs 26:11)?



You currently smell like the stench of an open grave, yet God stands ready to cleanse you (Romans 3:13). Would you choose the sins that are like the secretion of an open sore over the One who opens His arms to embrace sinners who come to Him in repentance and faith (2 Timothy 2:17)?

Stop trifling with God; you do not realize whom you are playing with. This day His patience may run out and He will make you pay your wages for your sin (2 Peter 3:8-10). That is not His desire. God doesn't desire to go to war against so paltry a foe. God desires that you should turn from your wicked ways to Him, and live (Ezekiel 33:11).

Rather than burn you up like dry stubble, He prefers that you lay down your arms, surrender, place your wholehearted faith in King Jesus, and be planted in His garden where he will cause you to flourish.

Wherever you are, I appeal to you to close this book and call out to God. Confess your sins. Forsake your sins. Place your whole-hearted faith in His Son, and you have His promise that He will receive you joyfully. I will be here waiting for you to reopen this book as a son of the Living God.

## **Category 2: The Battler**

The second kind of pornographer constantly wages war with his sin. You consume porn, feel miserable, ask God to forgive your wickedness, and recommit to slaying the lust dragon. It is a good sign that you battle your sin, but that doesn't automatically mean you are out of the woods. There are four considerations that must be weighed to determine if your battle is the battle of a genuine convert:

### **1. Preparation:**

It's one thing to impulsively click a button and find yourself immersed in dirty images. It's another thing to plot, plan, strategize, search for your favorite porn-sites, and create the environment necessary to commit your premeditated sin. A genuine Christian might impetuously click a button and regret it, but the false convert spends a considerable amount of time preparing to sin. Which man are you? Are you a man who falls or dives into sin?



## 2. Frequency:

Do you fall occasionally or regularly? While there is no biblical formula for sin frequency, it is helpful to replace one sin with another sin to bring clarity. For instance, how many times could I punch you in the face and retain a credible Christian confession? Similarly, a man who frequently practices a willful sin of the magnitude of porn would do well to ask if he is in the faith. Is your frequency accelerating or declining? If you are watching porn less, that is a good sign. If you are consuming it more and more, you might still be saved, but it ain't a good sign.

## 3. Earnestness:

A born-again Christian is willing to cut off his right hand if it causes him to sin because he is earnest about the seriousness of sin (Matthew 5:30). Have you done every single thing you can to mortify this sin? You shouldn't actually cut off a limb, but you should be willing to cut off all access to pornography. Are you willing to put a fool-proof filter on your computer, exchange your smart phone for a flip phone, cancel your cable subscription or gym membership, or even quit your job? If you have not taken these steps, or are not willing to take those steps, you might be in danger. Prove the veracity of your testimony by exercising radical amputation right now.

Are you so earnest that you have disclosed your besetting sin to a trustworthy brother who will hold you accountable? Are you willing to confide in your pastor who can further help you determine the security of your salvation, and implement church discipline if necessary? If you are willing to do these things, then do them. Now. If you are not willing to be transparent and held accountable, then you are not earnest about your commitment to holiness and you should be very skeptical of the status of your soul.

## 4. Response:

When you complete your sinful deed, why do you feel bad? Is it because you feel like a loser who's afraid of being found out? Is it because you are tired of playing the hypocrite? Is it out of fear your parents, wife, kids, or employer might discover your shame?

That is the sorrow of an Esau or Judas Iscariot. That is the sorrow that is motivated by the consequences of the sin and is not genuine repentance.



To be clear, shame, embarrassment and fear of being found out are appropriate sentiments, but if those are the exclusive or even dominant reasons you feel bad about watching other people have sex, you might be exercising mere worldly sorrow that leads to death (2 Cor. 7:10–11). Godly sorrow that leads to life looks very different.

Godly sorrow is remorse for sinning against the One who saved you. Godly sorrow says, “Oh God, how could I sin against you in this way? Have mercy on me, the sinner” (Psalm 51).

The godly man doesn’t use a feather duster to destroy his infatuation with porn; he arms up, mans up, and relentlessly slays the lust dragon.

If you have been claiming to be a follower of Christ, but upon further examination, you are now uncertain, what should you do? Simple. Repent of your sins and place your faith in Christ. If you aren’t saved, He will save you.

The Lord will not be upset with you for repenting even if you are saved but simply confused or unsure. You can sort out the day of your salvation later; just make your calling and election sure TODAY. If necessary, take the time to do what you need to do right now.

If you are not spiritual (saved), you will not understand the spiritual things you are about to read (1 Corinthians 2:14) and you will forever be a pornographer. Please, make your calling and election sure right now (2 Peter 1:10). Then, and only then, should you proceed to our second step: exploratory heart surgery to discover the root cause of your enslavement.

## Three questions:

1. *Are you sure you are born again? If so, why? If not, why not?*
2. *If you are not sure, why not resolve that issue right now?*
3. *Have you spent much time contemplating how amazing grace is, that God would save a wretch like you? If you haven’t, you would do well to give it your constant consideration.*



## Chapter 2

# WHY YOU ARE ENSLAVED TO PORN

Despite what you have been told, you are not a porn addict. Addiction is a secular term that was concocted by the founders of modern psychiatry to describe those who cannot gain mastery over a behavior. They removed any moral component and infused the term with a biological emphasis. The Diagnostic Statistical Manual allows you to be a helpless addict who simply cannot help himself. This disease model descriptor is fraught with fallacies:

- There are no scientific tests to determine if you have a disease that forces you to look at porn, drink, or smoke.
- The disease model releases you from all responsibility for your actions by telling you, “You can’t help it, you are a porn addict.”
- This descriptor offers no medical solution to cure your supposed addiction.

I think most of us intuitively know that someone is not a murder addict, child abuse addict, or a rape addict. Effective immediately, you are NOT a porn addict.

The first step of playing the man is to let the Bible diagnose your issue. The Bible doesn’t let you off the hook the way secular psychiatrists will because you are just a victim of bad genetics. The Bible says you are not a victim; you are a slave. Specifically, you are a slave to sin because you are a slave to the one you obey (Romans 6:16, 19).

Jesus was emphatic about this, “Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Paul describes you as a man who is caught in a trap and can’t get out (Galatians 6:1). You are a slave who is ensnared in sin. You are not a victim; you are a volunteer who obeys your lusts and not your Savior.

You do not have a disease; you have a heart problem. Currently you choose porn because you prefer sin more than righteousness. You choose the lesser thing because, in the moment, you think porn is the better thing. The goal of this book is for you to get a better vision of yourself and your Savior, so you begin to choose the best thing.

## You Need Different Affections

A long dead theologian, Thomas Chalmers, described the “expulsive power of new affections.” To summarize, you choose what you love the most. If you love a particular sin more than Jesus, you will choose that sin every time. Further, it’s not enough to command a sinner to stop sinning; the sinner must be given a vision of a more attractive love that will cause him to happily deny his sinful passions. Chalmers put it like this:



***To bid a sinner to love not the world is to pass a sentence of expulsion on all the inmates of his bosom. To estimate the magnitude and difficulty of such a surrender, let us only think that it were just as arduous to prevail on him not to love wealth, and to prevail on him to set willful fire to his own property. This he might do with sore and painful reluctance, if he saw the salvation of his life hung upon it. But this he would do willingly, if he saw that a new property of tenfold value was instantly to emerge from the wreck of the old one.”***

This is why you remain enslaved to porn; you LOVE it. You say, “No, I hate it. I want to stop.” That isn’t true. If you hated it, you would stop just like you would stop putting a knitting needle in your eye. Jesus told two parables that illuminate your need for something greater than sinful pleasure.





***The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:44–46).***

Let me apply that parable to you. When you contemplate watching porn, your affections are fully engaged as you weigh your options. When you choose porn, you do so because you love porn more than being obedient. You choose to do the thing you love the most.

Perhaps you have been trying to mortify porn through accountability software (which is a good tool), or by going for a long run and taking a cold shower (not terrible ideas), but those implements will always be insufficient because they lack power to overcome your passions. That is why you need new and better affections. You need to be passionate about your Savior and a better version of yourself.

1 John 2:15 commands you to “not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Let’s invert that verse. If you grow in your love for the Father, your love for the world will diminish. Put another way, the more you love porn, the less you love righteousness; but the more you love Jesus, the less you will love porn.

This is going to be our focus, to help you see that your affections need to change. You need to not just hate your sin, but love something more. You need to be motivated by a higher view of your Savior and a grander version of yourself. Are you ready?

## **Three questions:**

1. *On a scale of one to ten, how much do you love Jesus?*
2. *On a scale of one to ten, how much do you love porn?*
3. *Now that you know your choices reflect the passions of your heart, are you certain those numbers are accurate?*

## Chapter 3

# TRADING A CISTERN FOR A WELL

No doubt you are going to accuse me of beating a dead horse, and you would be right. This point must be fully understood, or you will not win your war with porn. Understanding the affections of your heart is both a diagnosis (why you are still sinsick), and a prognosis (what you need to gain victory).

MERELY pointing out the disgusting nature of porn cannot expunge your love for it. A denunciation of the horrors of your habits must be supplanted by something else, or your heart will forever desire its former lover. If you are commanded to kick a beloved king off the throne of your heart without a benevolent king in waiting, you will not be willing to engage in this coup.

To be clear, you should never stop growing in your revulsion toward sin, but a man who is merely sin focused will never gain mastery over his members. 2 Corinthians 3:18 makes this super clear:



*But we all, with unveiled faces, looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”*



When you were saved, the Lord removed a veil from your eyes and granted you spiritual eyes to see Him. Now that you can see Him, you must stare at Him, and as you do, you will become like Him. If you just stare at porn with contempt, you will continue to become what you consume. In order to pry your eyes away from porn, you must have a more beautiful and pleasing alternative.

Instead of being exclusively sin focused, you need to be more Savior focused. Please note, I didn't say you should abandon seeing your sin as exceedingly sinful, but you need to adjust your balance from being mostly sin focused (and slightly Jesus focused), to mostly Jesus focused (and slightly sin focused). As you stare at Jesus more than your sin, you will grow in your love for Jesus and revulsion for your sin. In other words, you need to change the passions of your heart.

## The Passions of Your Heart

Thanks to indoor plumbing, most of us don't know what a cistern is. It's a man-made receptacle to gather and store rainwater for human consumption. While the water is wet, it is usually dirty, grainy, and tepid. Jeremiah 2 says this:



***My people have committed two sins:  
They have forsaken me,  
the spring of living water,  
and have dug their own cisterns,  
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.”***

In other words, God told His chosen people that they were foolish for choosing mealy, tepid, dirty cistern water to quench their thirst, when they could be satisfied by consuming God's fresh, cool, clean, spring water. This was a poetic way of saying, “You knuckleheads! What are you thinking? Why do you choose to live life in a way that can never satisfy when you could live life my way and be totally fulfilled and content.”

Let me personalize that for you. Why do you choose porn, guilt, shame, self-loathing, impotence, and regret, when you could choose to love and obey the God who loves you and offers you a truly abundant life without guilt or shame?

Later in the book of Isaiah, God pleaded with His chosen people, “Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost” (Isaiah 55:1). In other words, God made them an offer they shouldn’t have refused. God was willing to give them everything for nothing. God offered them Himself, and they chose themselves.

Jesus was alluding to Isaiah when He called out to religious men just like you, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water’” (John 7:37–38).

Every time you look at porn, you choose dirty water. Every time you do your filthy deed, you tell the Lord, “I prefer myself over you. I choose my baser things, not your loftier things. I want shame, not joy. I want filth, not goodness. I want me, not you.”

When you give into the temptation of porn, you guzzle dirty water. Your thirst for pleasure might be satisfied for a moment, but let’s be honest, as soon as you have completed your profane act, you are anything but satisfied. You feel dirtier than the water you consumed.

Do you want ongoing victory? It’s simple; stop choosing water from a broken cistern. Choose the cool, clean refreshing water of Jesus Christ. Choose to find a satisfaction that will actually satisfy. Be smart. Be strong. Be wise. Choose the better thing. You will never hear a Christian regret being obedient. Ever.

Obedience brings blessing. The Lord rewards holiness. Godliness generates heavenly gifts. I am not talking about jobs, cars, houses, or cash; I am talking about profound blessings, like peace, self-respect, joy, strength, courage, purpose, and true manliness.

When pornography begs you to heed its call, you have a simple choice, “Will I choose trash or a treasure? Will I choose what is base or what is lofty? Will I play the fool again, or will I serve my benevolent Master? Will I obey the devil or Jesus? Will I be defeated again, or will I be a conqueror?”

You **CAN** have victory. You **CAN** become a man who is given noble assignments. You **CAN** play the man. Here’s how we are going to accomplish that:



## **In order to experience the expulsive power of changed affections, you need to change your view in four areas:**

- 1. You need to loathe the effects of sin by seeing what porn has done to you.*
- 2. You need to desire the vision of the amazing man you could be.*
- 3. You need to loathe your current master, the devil.*
- 4. You need to love and long for your amazing Savior.*

## **The result of this will be fourfold:**

- 1. You will possess the expulsive power of changed affections.*
- 2. You will stop consuming dirty water.*
- 3. You will have increasing victory.*
- 4. You will become a man the Lord uses mightily.*

We will look at those in the following chapters. Be warned, this is going to be a bit of a pistol-whipping, but this painful exercise is necessary. Before you can long for holiness, you must loathe your sin. While we don't want to be exclusively sin focused, that doesn't mean you don't need to see what sin has done to you. Let's expose what you currently look like so you can be repulsed by the effects of your sin, and then we will paint a better vision of you.

## **Three questions:**

- 1. What do you hate about pornography?*
- 2. What do you love about it? (Be honest, there must be something you love about it, or you wouldn't watch it.)*
- 3. What do you love about Jesus?*

## Chapter 4

# VISION ONE: WHAT YOU LOOK LIKE **NOW**

What you are about to read is not intended to be an exercise in cruelty. If you are captive to porn, there is little doubt you no longer know what you truly look like. Perhaps you haven't even considered how profoundly porn has marred you. Before giving you a better vision of yourself, you need to see what you look like now. Before calling you up, we must go down. This is intended to sting, but it isn't intended to demoralize or belittle you.

You might think this is unnecessary because you already feel discouraged. While that may be true, the modus operandi of sin is deception, and you have believed sin's lies for so long you are likely unaware of the extent of your deformity. If you are going to play the man, you need to first recognize how damaged and distorted you currently are.

The sin of porn is by nature deforming as it is a distorted version of an activity that God designed to be holy. Each time you look at porn, you commit a slew of sins: idolatry, adultery, deceit, theft, greed, sloth, sexual violence, and grieving the Holy Spirit. No sin so affects the body like sexual sin (1 Corinthians 6:18). Of course porn has diminished you; you reap what you sow (Galatians 6:8).

You might think you are nowhere near as tragic as I suggest; that's because porn has blinded you to the reality of your own depravity. A blind man doesn't know what he can't see, and neither can you.



Please believe I am not trying to demean you. I am merely trying to help you see the depths to which the millstone of porn has plunged you. After you take these hits, THEN we will change gears and get on the road of genuine Christian manliness. Hang in there.

## **Weak and Wimpy**

A pornographer might be an MMA fighter, but he's not much of a man. A real man knows how to genuinely love a woman; a pornographer is a weak man who chooses solitary pleasure over an actual woman. We don't expect children to control themselves, but you are not a child; yet you lack the strength to get your members under control.

You might be able to beat me up, but if the word "wimp" could apply to spiritual and emotional strength, then Sir, you have become a wimp. You might bench 315 pounds, but pixels have more power than you do. Your physical prowess is overshadowed by your internal weakness, and you are easily overtaken by sin (Proverbs 25:28).

Let me ask you a question, is that the kind of man you want to be? Do you want to continue being a weak, childish, impotent loser? I know you don't. So, let me ask, why do you keep consuming the toxins that are poisoning your soul?

## **Downright Creepy**

Imagine a man who donned a bathrobe, then snuck up to his neighbors' house to watch a man and woman through their bedroom window. You would think that guy is a creep. Bingo. Every time you visit your favorite porn site, you reveal yourself to be a creepy peeping Tom.

Perhaps you don't feel like a creep because you present yourself as a clean-cut Christian man, but outward appearances are not what makes a man a creep: It is his heart and his actions. A real man has integrity even when people aren't looking.

Is that the man you want to be? Do you really want to be a skulking pervert who peers through the windows of your computer screen to watch total strangers have sex? I know you don't. So let me ask, why do you keep acting like a total creep?

## **Shriveled**

Your soul is deformed and shriveled. You might look great on the outside when you go to church, but your putrefied diet of trash is rotting your soul.

You are as deceived as the overweight man at a grocery store who fills his cart with junk food and persuades himself he's healthy. No man can consume physical junk food and not become sickly. The same thing is true for you. Can a man hold fire to his chest and not get burned (Proverbs 6:27)?

Do you want to live the rest of your life with a shriveled soul? Then I am curious, why do you keep consuming the very thing that causes you to be shriveled?

## **Isolated**

While in a crowded room, you feel isolated and distant from family, friends, and your God. If you don't have that feeling, that doesn't change the reality that you are isolating yourself from all that should be precious to you. You may not know you are isolated, but your loved ones do. They know you aren't present, even when you're at home. Aren't you tired of living the lie? Then why do you?

## **Out of Control**

Your lust dominates and controls your life. You don't plan your day; your unbridled lust schedules your calendar. You are distracted and unfocused on the important things because the priority of your day is self-gratification. Your computer or cell phone tells you where to go and what to do. You don't control your life, dirty images do. How long do you want to be at the mercy of filthy videos?

## **Tired**

Living a lie is exhausting, and you are bone-tired from lying, conniving, slinking, plotting, planning, and then secretly surrendering to the lie that promised you, "This is worth it." How much longer do you want to live like Charlie Brown who buys the lies of Lucy and lands flat on his back? Aren't you tired of being tired and used?

## **Rewired**

While you may not be aware of it, porn is rewiring your brain and your sexual desires. Your understanding of lovemaking is totally twisted. While you may think this won't happen to you, the American Urological Association concluded that porn enslaved men are more likely to struggle sexually with an actual woman. If that hasn't happened to you, it will. Why would you purposely continue working to become impotent?



## Monstrous

You may not perceive it in yourself, but your perception of women is monstrous. Study after study reveals that pornographers do not see women as image bearers, but mere objects of their fantasies. You are a monster. If you don't learn to play the man now, then in the near future, you are going to be an old, creepy, shriveled up monster. Is that what you want to become?

## Perverted Participant

No doubt you consider those who facilitate the sex trade as the bottom of the morality barrel. You are that man. Thanks to you, more and more women (and girls) are sex trafficked and forced to do unspeakable things for your personal pleasure. Would you want your wife or daughter to be used and abused by other men? Do women mean nothing to you? Did you ever imagine you would be so selfish and callous?

## Grievous

As you scheme, connive, lie, slink, then dive into your porn pigsty, you grieve the God who made you as one of His precious image bearers (Ephesians 4:30). Why do you continue to mistreat the Lord who loves you?

## Descending

Sin is like a greedy rich man who always wants more. Because sin is never satisfied, it will continue to drive you to deeper and darker images to bring you the pleasure your current content will soon cease to deliver. Go ahead, ask a man who views kiddie porn if he ever imagined he would stoop that low. You are on your way, my friend. Why won't you stop the slide right now?

## Abusive

You think your wife doesn't know, but she does, or at least she suspects it. She knows that you are not the man you once were, nor are you the man you could be. She is heartbroken and devastated. Why shouldn't she be? You have regular affairs in your mind, thus abusing the one you promised to have and to hold, to love and to cherish. Tell me, what do you think of a man who physically abuses his wife? Are you any better? Did you realize you are an abusive husband when you watch other people fornicate?

## Selfish and Stingy

You could be giving more time, energy, money, and true love to your wife, children, and church, but you choose to expend yourself on yourself. Why would you want to go to your grave without being eulogized as a gracious and giving man?

## Disappointing and Damning

While it's possible your kids aren't aware of Daddy's dirty little secret, they are horribly disappointed in you because you are not nearly the father you could be. Look at their precious faces; you are crushing them. Even worse, you could be the stumbling block that keeps them from loving their Heavenly Father. Do you really want to play a role in your children's damnation?

## Unqualified

Whether you are single or married, you are not qualified to be married. You do not deserve to have a wife; you are actually a danger to godly women. If you are single and dating, please do her a favor, repent to her and release her so she is free to find a genuinely godly man. If you are married, while you may have a low view of your wife, you are the bottom of the barrel. Why do you think she should stay married to a man like you?

## Failure

You are an epic failure in that you don't know how much you could have accomplished. Porn keeps you from maximizing your potential in relationships, career, good deeds, service to your church, and manliness. Why do you continue to be such a loser?

Perhaps the greatest tragedy is that you don't know how much you could be achieving right now. Porn robs a man of maximizing his potential in relationships, career, good deeds, service to his church, and true manliness.

Is this the man you want to be? Probably not, but this is the man you have become. If you don't think you are, it's because sin has so dulled your conscience you just don't realize how grotesquely it has deformed you.



I hope this stings more than a close shave with a dull razor. Sir, before you can change, you need to know what you have become. Your sin has shrunk you into a diminished version of what you could be. You might think you have this little distraction of yours under control, but you do not; it controls you. You are an adult who can grow a beard, yet your lusts wag you like the tail of a dog.

Maybe you realize what a dog you are, but you have lost the battle so many times you don't think you could ever be a man that would make a wife and children proud. Listen up: That is a lie. The Lord can change you. Jesus has provided a way for you to man up. You don't have to continue swimming in your cesspool of sin. You can change the course of your life and begin the journey to becoming a great man of God.

While you don't have the strength to climb out of the swamp, Jesus has more than enough power to pull you out, clean you up, and set you on a path of righteousness and godliness. Christ has everything you need to slay the lust dragon once and for all. Are you ready? If you are, then it's time to paint a portrait of what you could become.

## Three questions:

- 1. Having read the effects of your best friend, pornography, do you have a different perception of yourself?*
- 2. Identify three reasons you continue to consume the acid that is corrupting everything about you.*
- 3. Would you like to become a better version of you? What does that look like?*

## Chapter 5

# VISION TWO: A BETTER YOU

A godly man is the best of men. He might not have the strength to strangle a wild boar, but he has an internal strength that rules his members. He has mastery over his thoughts, emotions, will, and passions. The godly man doesn't strut with his chest thrust out, but he has an internal confidence that is attractive to women and men alike.

A godly man is relied on. A godly man is looked to. A godly man is admired. A godly man is given weightier responsibilities. A godly man makes women feel safe. A godly man raises his kids to love the Lord because they see Christ in their father. Would you like to be that kind of man? You can be. You can have mastery over your desires and channel your energies into accomplishing great things. What are great things? Let me tell you what they are NOT:

- Becoming a captain of industry
- Obtaining the corner office
- Owning a big house
- Driving a fast car



While these accomplishments are perfectly fine things, they are not great things. Let me tell you what great things are:

- Being honest in thought, word, and deed
- Possessing integrity at all times and all places
- Inspiring other men to be better versions of themselves
- Leading a woman who looks at you like you hung the moon
- Having children who tell their friends, “I want to be just like my Daddy”

**Those are great things. Would you like to be that kind of man? You can be.**

Would you like to be a man who is mentally strong and able to direct his energies toward one woman? Would you like to be a man who celebrates fifty years of marriage with a woman who cannot live without you? Would you like to be a man whose children think you belong on Mount Rushmore?

Would you like to be a man who doesn't need to feel ashamed publicly because of what he has been doing privately? Would you like your soul to grow and increase in genuine godly masculinity? Would you like to be able to experience intimacy with your wife on a level you cannot currently imagine?

Would you like to have more strength and energy (Psalm 32:3-4)? Would you like to be a man who rescues and protects women as opposed to belittling and harming them?

Is it time for you to stop grieving your God, and grow in your relationship with Him? Instead of being stingy with your time, talents and energies, are you ready to give them to nobler causes that help others and have eternal value (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)?

Are you ready to have confidence that the Lord has purchased you, cleansed you, adopted you, and loves you forever? Are you ready to access the power to overcome your sin and control your members? Are you ready to play the man and have victory, peace, joy, contentment, and purpose?

You will always choose what your affections tell you is the better thing. Permit me to show you in very stark terms what your choices are when you contemplate porn.

- You can choose dog vomit or godliness.
- You can choose to be a low-life pervert, or a dignified, masculine man.
- You can choose to live a diminished life of shame, or a life that leads your wife and children to conclude you belong in the Godly Man Hall of Fame.
- You can choose to pleasure yourself in a way that would make the world disgusted if they caught you in your dirty deed, or you can walk away from your computer and tell the Lord, “I love you more than this momentary pleasure, and I want to be a man who does great things for you.”
- You can choose to be a low-life creeper who peeps into forbidden windows, or you can choose to lead a virtuous and admired life.
- You can choose loneliness, laziness, and emptiness, or you can choose to be godly, happy, strong, respectable, and worthy of greater assignments.

Which man do you want to be? I know you want to be the latter and not the former. You can be a different, better, nobler version of yourself. Jesus will help you. Loathe the man you have become, but love the idea of the man you could be. If you want to mortify your old self, then you need to love the vision of the man God wants you to be. But we aren't done yet; you need two more visions.

You need a clear vision of your current malevolent master, and then you need to see the Master you could be serving. Remember, it isn't enough to loathe your current taskmaster, you must have a more glorious replacement, or you will continue to serve your current ruler.

Currently you are a slave to Satan. Before you can break his chains, you must increase your loathing of your current master. Then we will turn our eyes to a far more benevolent master, Jesus Christ.

## Three questions:

1. *Do you need to alter your understanding of what makes a man great?*
2. *Can you think of any men you know who are great and godly men?*
3. *What makes them so great?*

## Chapter 6

# VISION THREE: YOUR CURRENT MASTER

No, a genuine believer cannot be indwelt by the devil, but that is not to suggest that Satan isn't a clear and present danger for a Christian. The devil, like a roaring lion, continues to roam about, seeking to devour you (1 Peter 5:8). While he cannot take you to hell, he sure can keep you in chains and wreck your life.

Currently, you are giving your obedience to the cruelest of masters. When you choose porn, you tell the devil, "I seek to do your will." Wait, it gets worse. When you choose darkness, you tell the Prince of the Air that you prefer worshipping him and not the Prince of Peace.

Because everything we do is an act of worship (Romans 12:1-2), when you choose sin, you worship the devil. When you choose righteousness, you worship your Savior. No doubt you don't want to worship Satan, but in order to resist him, you need to know who you worship when you watch porn, and what his intentions are for you. They aren't good. This is the vision of the devil you must see.

### A Cruel King

Let me take you to the birth of your Savior to introduce you to a king who was anti-Christ. King Herod was not the devil, but he most certainly was under the sway of the devil. As we study Herod in Matthew 2:1-13, we see a vivid picture of Satan himself.



The magi from the East followed a star that led them to Jerusalem. They asked King Herod where the Messiah was. Once the Scribes and priests informed him that the King of the Jews was to be born in Bethlehem, he lied to the magi. “When you find him, let me know, so I can go worship him too” (Matthew 2:8). Not knowing it was Herod’s intention to off the newborn King, the magi had no idea they were being deceived. What can we learn from this?

- 1. Satan is a liar and the father of lies. Perhaps you don’t think you can be played the fool, but Satan is better at lying than you are at discerning.*
- 2. Satan doesn’t look like he is evil. If Herod had been a drooling insane man, the magi would not have obeyed him. Herod, aka Satan, presents himself as a benevolent king.*
- 3. Satan offers good things. The magi must have been thrilled to hear that King Herod wanted to worship the newborn King with them. That was a lie. Satan offers you good things (pleasure, release, happiness), but he is lying to you.*
- 4. Satan is a murderer. King Herod’s response to the good news that a Savior was born, was to murder the baby who might usurp his throne. Satan wants to murder you too (John 8:44).*
- 5. Satan doesn’t care who gets hurt. King Herod ordered the slaughter of every boy under the age of two without any regard to the pain and suffering he would inflict on countless families. Satan doesn’t care if he destroys your precious family.*
- 6. Satan doesn’t love; he hates. King Herod demonstrated the opposite of love for the magi, for the baby boys he slaughtered, for their families, and for the entire nation of Israel. That is how Satan feels about you; he loathes you.*

Satan hates you because he hates Jesus, and while he can't get to Him, he does have access to us. Satan would love to do nothing more than to destroy everything that is precious to you. He wants devastation for you, and his modus operandi is deception. When you choose porn, you tell the one who hates your guts, “I choose to give my obedience to you. Please accept my actions as an act of worship.” You have given Satan an inch, and he has taken a mile.

I know you don't want Satan ruling your life, but remember, it isn't enough to loathe the one you worship when you choose to engage with porn. You must have a better master to turn to.

Remember our friend Thomas Chalmers who taught us about the expulsive power of new affections? At this moment, he would shout at us, “It isn't enough to know that worshipping Satan is foolish, you must believe there is a far more attractive and benevolent Master.” I agree. That is what we are going to do next. Prepare to catch a vision of the most amazing King in the universe.

## Three questions:

- 1. Have you taken the time to consider how much Satan hates your guts?*
- 2. Have you taken the time to realize that your viewing preferences are worship decisions?*
- 3. What will it take for you to stop worshipping Satan with your choices?*

## Chapter 7

# VISION FOUR: AN AMAZING KING

Jesus is a different kind of King. He is a truthful, loving, beneficent King who doesn't merely rule, He shepherds. That is precisely what Matthew wants you to see as he contrasts King Herod with King Jesus. Matthew tells us that Jesus fulfilled this Old Testament prophecy when He was born.



**AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH,  
ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH;  
FOR FROM YOU WILL COME FORTH A RULER  
WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL" (Matthew 2:6;  
see Micah 5:2-4).**

This is the vision you need of King Jesus; a mighty ruler who uses His strength to shepherd you. Jesus called Himself the good shepherd in John 10:11-18 because a good shepherd:

- Has a staff of authority to guide, protect, and defend.
- Makes sure the daily needs of his sheep are met.
- Knows each sheep by name, and they know him.
- Works tirelessly for the benefit of the sheep.
- Is willing to lay down his life for the sheep.



That is your Shepherd-King. Jesus is the mighty ruler with an iron scepter in one hand and a shepherd's staff in the other. That's the ruler you want. That's the ruler you need.

You don't need a ruler who is mighty and mean, or weak and nice. You need a King who is mighty and meek, good and true, strong and gentle. That is what you have in King Jesus.

Jesus will never lie to you. He doesn't seek your demise; He desires that you live a genuinely abundant life (John 10:10). Jesus will never pull the rug out from under you or yank the football away as you are about to kick it. He is loyal, mighty, gracious, good, faithful, omnipotent; and He loves you.

Jesus is unlike any pretender who claims to be king. How many kings give up their thrones for rebellious people? How many kings abandon their palaces to live in pigsties? How many kings are born with the express goal of dying for others?

Every king has to fight to win the throne; Jesus surrendered to receive His title (Philippians 2:6-11). King Jesus didn't earn His title by shedding other's blood, but by shedding His own. Our King didn't win through strength, He conquered through weakness. Jesus defeated death by dying. King Jesus lived a perfect earthly life of righteousness so you can be commended to God and loved by God.

Your King has all the strength of the universe to destroy and conquer, but He restrains that power through meekness to shepherd you and know you by name. Satan is a nightmare king who hates his people. Jesus is the benevolent King who loves His people.

Yes, you should loathe the devil, but you will not have victory over porn until you love Jesus more than you love the lies of Satan. It is only when you stare at Jesus with unveiled face will you be changed from one level of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18). Stare at Jesus now through the lyrics of a song written by Bill Cantos.

***What would you do for a king***

***If He won all the battles He went out to fight***

***And returned as a hero on a starlit night, to a cheering crowd?***

***Would it make you proud?***

*What would you do for a king  
If He kept every promise that He'd ever made  
Would you get out the tickertape and lead a parade, a society ball?  
Would you care at all?*

*What would you do for a king  
If He came to your door, would you ask Him in?  
Would you tell Him how much you admired Him?  
Do you think you'd dare  
Would you be too scared?*

*Most kings don't seem to know much about the common man  
So far removed and set apart  
I cheer with thousands, we blend into a roar  
Another face in an endless crowd  
Is that all I really am, just one more?*

*So what would you do for a king If He saw you fishing out by the sea  
And He walked up to you and said "Follow me – it's time you know"  
Do you think you'd go?*

*And what would you do for a king  
If He took off his crown and agreed to die?  
And as you tried to understand it, He looked you in the eye and said,  
"This is for you"  
What would you do?*

Choose this day whom you will serve, King Jesus who loves you and offers you life, or the pretender king who would love to see you destroyed. Choose this day who you are going to be: a low-life pervert who will never accomplish anything truly great, or a manly man who grows in stature and is awarded much responsibility?

It's decision time. Who will you worship? Who will you be? Are you going to be a worm or a man worthy of a doting woman? Will you be a father that makes his children disgusted and ashamed, or will you be a father that inspires his children to thank God for you? It's time to stop being double-minded and unstable in all your ways (James 1:8). Choose this day whom you will serve (Deuteronomy 30).

Perhaps you think, "That's easy for you to say! You don't know how hard it is to resist temptation." Actually, I disagree; it isn't just hard to play the man, it's impossible. You don't have the strength to overcome such a deceptive foe, but Jesus is mighty, and He has given you every weapon you need to be victorious like Him. But before you can achieve victory, you must have a battle plan.

While predictable, it's inevitable that we would incorporate the language of war because that is the language the Bible uses regarding sin. You are a soldier in the Lord's army. You are in a spiritual battle and have been issued spiritual weapons (Ephesians 6:10-18). The reason you have been losing the war is nine-fold:

- 1. You don't know where the battlefield is located (Chapters 2, 3).*
- 2. You have invited the enemy into your camp (Chapter 8).*
- 3. You don't know how to use your superior weaponry (Chapter 9).*
- 4. You refuse to train for battle (Chapters 10, 11).*
- 5. You keep forgetting who you are and what you are enlisted to do (Chapters 12, 13).*



6. *You forget what you are fighting for (Chapter 14)*
7. *You fight without a platoon (Chapter 15).*
8. *You don't have a fallback strategy (Chapter 16).*
9. *You use excuses to justify being a vanquished soldier (Chapter 18).*

**It's time to change your battle plan, train as if your soul depended on it, engage in the real war and become all God wants you to be. Ready?**

### **Three questions:**

1. *Prior to reading this chapter, how did you think about Jesus?*
2. *Now that you've read this chapter, what do you think of Jesus?*
3. *Are you ready to plant your flag and stake your life on King Jesus?*

## Chapter 8

# EVICT THE ENEMY

It will do you little good to train for battle if you continue to let your enemy bunk in your barracks. If you do not kick the enemy out of your camp, then you will not only fail to have victory, you won't even get out of boot camp.

Who is the enemy that is currently residing in your platoon? Anything or anyone who knows your weakness and can easily persuade you to disobey the orders of your Commanding Officer. I'm talking about the tools you use to sin: phone, TV, computer, internet, beach, pool, gymnasium. These enemies need to be destroyed or brought under submission now.

If you do not have mastery over your electronic devices, get rid of them. Nope, I am not kidding. If you linger at women on TV, cancel your cable and throw away your big screen. If your computer is your Achilles, kill it. If you need a phone for work, get a flip phone. At the very least, you should install anti-porn software that alerts an accountability partner of your viewing activities.

Do you watch porn at work on the company computer? Quit your job and find work that doesn't allow you to have unfettered access to the poison that is killing you. If you just scoffed, then you haven't grasped the gravity of your situation. It is better to be a godly homeless man than it is to be a perv who lives in a mansion.

Jesus was emphatic about this when He said you should pluck out your eye or cut off your hand if they cause you to stumble (Matthew 5:29, 30). No, Jesus doesn't want you to amputate body parts, but He does want you to cut off access to the devices that cause you to sin.

Would you tell a person who struggles with overeating to purchase a cheesecake but not eat it? Would you tell someone who struggles with suicidal ideations to leave a loaded gun on the nightstand? Would you tell a thief to get a job as a bank teller? You don't need unfettered access to what tempts you.

Do you ogle women at the beach? Then you are going to have to live without sand in your toes and tan on your body. What does it profit a man if he gains a great tan, but loses his soul? If going to the pool provides the opportunity to gawk at women in bikinis, then stay home and splash in the kiddie pool. It's better to be white and pasty on the outside than to be filled with darkness on the inside (Matthew 6:22-23).

If your eyes wander at the gym, drop your membership. Get a home gym or get flabby; it's better for your body to be pudgy than for your soul to be corrupted. Is the movie theater the place where you think you can safely consume sex scenes? Then stay home, save money, and make popcorn that won't clog your arteries.

Identify where and when you lose the war. If you fall when you are alone, then surround yourself with godly friends, or flee the place that leaves you alone and vulnerable. This is war!

Do you have friends that goad you into going to a strip club? Then you have bad friends, and you need to distance yourself from them (Proverbs 1:10-15). Bad company will always corrupt good character (1 Corinthians 15:33). Does your roommate make access to porn easier? Move out and find a new roommate. Or live in a refrigerator box on the street.

If you fall when you are alone, then never be alone. Find a fellow soldier you can enlist to come running if you are alone and tempted. Find a godly man in your church who will be a phone call away when you fear you are falling.

Do reconnaissance, Soldier. Know where you are most vulnerable and do something about it. Only a stupid soldier lets the enemy lurk inside the camp. Godliness is more important than anything or anyone. Make radical changes now, before the enemy captures you completely.



**You have a simple choice.** You can either kick the enemy out or take Jesus' words literally regarding your eyes and hands. This should be a no-brainer.

### **Three questions:**

- 1. How did your heart react to the challenge to get rid of your phone, quit your job, or drop your gym membership?*
- 2. What do those reactions reveal about your heart?*
- 3. Will you perform radical amputation right now? Why or why not?*

## Chapter 9

# IDENTIFY YOUR WEAPONS

We've all watched enough war movies to know that a smart soldier concerns himself with weaponry. Before charging a hill, the captain inevitably asks, "What do we have for firepower?" After all, a soldier doesn't want to enter a gun battle with a plastic spoon. Here's the good news, Jesus has provided you with an entire arsenal of sin-destroying artillery. Your job is to familiarize yourself with your weaponry, train with it, and then unleash it on your enemy.

**First**, Jesus has given you His Holy Spirit. You have all of the power Jesus had to successfully battle the temptations of the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). You have that power dwelling in you; you're just not tapping into it. Read on and you will see HOW you can be more fully under the control of God's Spirit.

**Second**, Jesus has given you everything for life and godliness in His Word (1 Timothy 3:16-17). The more you consume His Word, the stronger you will become. Is it possible that the guilt and shame you experience after a porn-session has created a Scripture fast when you should be feasting on His Word? Consider the promise of Psalm 1, when you dwell on the Word, you will be like a tree planted by streams of water, always bearing fruit and doing genuinely important things. When you starve yourself of the Word, you hang out with thugs and losers who do wicked things. (More on this in Chapter 10.)

**Third**, Jesus has provided you access to the throne of God. Because Jesus is your mediator, you can talk directly to your Creator (1 Timothy 2:5). Maybe you feel too ashamed to talk to God, but that is a grave error. Sinners should NEVER run from their Savior, only to Him. Don't let your sins keep you from communing with God in prayer. If you cut off your communication line to HQ, you are exceedingly vulnerable. (More on this in Chapter 15.)

**Fourth**, you have the gift of repentance (2 Timothy 2:25). When you sin and repent, God is gracious to forgive you of your sins. But repentance is more than saying, “Oops, I did it again!” Repentance is a wholehearted commitment to stop sinning. Perhaps you have practiced the former, not the latter. Here’s how you know your repentance is genuine, you are willing to promise God you will not watch porn again. If you aren’t willing to do that, then you might feel bad, but you aren’t exercising genuine repentance.

**Fifth**, you have the gift of unmerited favor. Maybe that sounds strange, but it is crucial to know that even if you commit a heinous sin, the Lord loves you as much when you are sinning as when you are singing hymns. The Lord loves you as much when you are looking at porn as when you are paying a visit to your grandma in a nursing home.

There is tremendous power in knowing that God loves you so much, you could sin and be forgiven. That is the very knowledge that will actually keep you from sinning as you look at your computer screen and say, “I could watch XXX rated videos, and God will love me just the same. Why would I want to sin against the God who loves me that much?” (More on this in chapter 11.)

**Sixth**, Jesus provides you with a support system. When Jesus adopted you into His family, he gave you brothers and sisters to help you. You will find that family in your local church. (More on this in Chapter 16.)

Imagine a soldier who enters an armory, takes inventory, discovers a cache of weapons capable of annihilating the enemy, but he closes the door and walks away saying, “Those weapons are a lot of work. Besides, I’m not sure they can get the job done. I’ll fight the enemy all by myself.” That is as foolish as you knowing the spiritual weaponry Jesus has provided you, but you refuse to access it, train with it, and employ it when you engage in the battle. So let’s go to Christian boot camp and armor up.

## Three questions:

1. *Do you regularly access the weaponry God has provided for victory? Why or why not?*
2. *Have you been exercising genuine repentance, or do you just “feel bad” about watching porn?*
3. *Did you know your God loves you even when you sin? Should this reality cause you to sin more or less?*



## Chapter 10

# TRAIN WITH YOUR WEAPONS

Theologian J.C. Ryle once warned, “Do not suppose that it needs some great scarlet sin to bring you to the pit of destruction. You have only to sit still and do nothing, and you will find yourself there at last.” In other words, if you are not actively engaging in the sin battle, you will soon be a vanquished soldier.

Complacency and laziness are your enemies. A soldier who doesn’t train for battle will suffer quick defeat. Victory takes effort because your enemy is like a roaring lion who can devour you (1 Peter 5:8). In order to resist temptation and make the devil flee, you need to submit to God (James 4:7). What does that mean exactly?

Here’s the scenario: Your computer is seductively calling you to visit your favorite porn places. You are now confronted with a worship decision. Who will you worship through your obedience? Your heart will choose what it loves the most. If you love sin more than your Savior, you will obey Satan and pick porn. If, however, your mind is filled with truth about God, and if your affections for the Lord are larger than your affections for the flesh, you will choose God. That is how you resist the devil; you choose to obey your benevolent Master because you KNOW He is the much better choice.

**DO NOT WAIT FOR THE URGE TO STRIKE. YOU MUST PREPARE FOR BATTLE BY TRAINING WITH YOUR DIVINELY PROVIDED WEAPONRY. HERE’S HOW YOUR GOD WANTS YOU TO TRAIN.**

## Memorize truth

Think of Bible verses as truth bullets. The devil's favorite strategy to destroy your life is to lie, lie, and then lie (John 8:44). You must arm up with truth to defend yourself or you will fall. You will see what this looks like in a moment, but God has a promise for you if you take the effort to memorize His Word:



***How can a young man keep his way pure?  
By keeping it according to Your word.  
I have treasured Your word in my heart,  
So that I may not sin against You” (Psalm 119:9, 11).***

If the Psalmist doesn't persuade you to load up your holster with Bible verses, then let Jesus compel you to treasure God's Word in your heart. Matthew 4 shows our King being tempted by the devil, who lies to our Savior three times. Jesus responds with three truth bullets from Scripture. You must do likewise.

So, here's your assignment, Soldier: Look up all of the Bible verses listed below and memorize at least FIVE of them. Yep, you are going to have to spend time and effort, but if you want victory, this is the training you need. If you are not willing to do this, then I might suggest you throw this book away and go watch some porn. This is that urgent. A smart soldier learns how to use his weapons; the Bible is your weapon. Arm up or you will keep losing. Guaranteed.

If you are not yet incentivized to wear out your Bible looking up all these verses, not only will the exercise equip you for battle, it will actually make the battle less intense. The more you saturate your brain with the Bible, the more you are going to resist temptation like Jesus.

As you read through this entire list, identify the verses that you think would be most helpful when you are in the heat of battle. Identify at least five and write them out on note cards; then dedicate your free time to memorizing them. You will soon learn how to aim these verses at the lies you will inevitably hear.

**Genesis 39:9; Psalm 91:3–4; Psalm 97:10; Proverbs 28:13; Proverbs 6:28; Matthew 5:6; Matthew 6:13; Romans 6:11–12; Romans 8:38–39; Romans 12:2; Romans 13:13–14; 1 Corinthians 6:18–20; 1 Corinthians 10:13; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:16–17; Ephesians 5:2; Philippians 3:8; Colossians 3:6; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Hebrews 4:16; James 1:3; James 1:12; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8–9**

Did you think this war would be waged without effort? Military boot camp is not a picnic; spiritual boot camp is no less taxing. Please, don't be passive like most men; actively memorize five verses, and you will start to notice a change in your thinking almost immediately. But training isn't over yet.

## **Three questions:**

- 1. Are you willing to commit to memorizing at least five of these verses? Why or why not?*
- 2. Because your enemy never rests, will you commit to memorizing your verses within the next week?*
- 3. If you think this is too onerous, then ask yourself why you eagerly spend time consuming the poison that makes you sick, but won't spend time consuming the elixir that will make you well?*



## Chapter 11

# DROP TO YOUR KNEES, SOLDIER

Imagine a man standing on his front lawn while his house goes up in flames. A neighbor hands him a cell phone and tells him to call 911. Then imagine the man says any of the following:

- No thanks, it's too hard to call 911.
- No thanks, I'm not good at calling 911.
- No thanks, it won't do any good to call 911.

You would think that man a fool. If we are honest, aren't we just as foolish for offering those excuses to not pray? We have a direct line to the One, the only One, who can actually rescue us from going up in flames, and yet, we offer excuses.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Prayer, it's really hard. It's like the rope climb in an obstacle course!" You're right! It is hard! Ask the disciples. On the night Jesus was betrayed, He asked them to stay awake, watch and pray. They chose sleep over prayer (Matthew 26:40), and there are six reasons you are just like them.

**First**, prayer is hard. Staying focused is just plain strenuous. Watching ESPN is easy, praying is not.

**Second**, you aren't persuaded that God answers prayer. That's a lie. The prayers of a righteous man avail much (James 5:16).

**Third**, your mind wanders all over the place when you pray. Tell me about it.

**Fourth**, you don't recognize your need and its power. What soldier in his right mind enters the battle without communication with his commanding officer?

**Fifth**, your schedule is so slammed you think you don't have time. That indicates that everything else is more important to you than prayer.

**Sixth**, you don't pray like you should because you love almost everything else more than prayer. It really is amazing that we have a direct line to God, and we don't even text Him, let alone call Him and talk to Him.

**Are you ready to lose the excuses and become like the half-brother of Jesus? James' nickname was Camel Knees because he spent so much time on them praying his knees looked like a camel's. While you might not be excited about having knees that look like a pachyderm's, you can become a praying man who receives more power, favor, and assignments from the Lord.**

## **Plan**

Do some reconnaissance on your life. When would be the best time for you to pray without being interrupted? Most likely it's morning. Learn to force yourself to wake up, get out of bed, and get on your knees.

## **Place**

Having done reconnaissance, you have identified a location that secludes you from interruptions.

## Posture

Jesus is the One who makes your prayers pleasing and powerful, but you will pray with more fervency and focus if you assume a humble posture that tells the Lord, “I am your servant and I need my Master’s help.” Get on your knees with your face to the ground. See if that doesn’t help you focus.

## Pray the Scriptures

This is a game changer. Get Ken Boa’s book *Face to Face: Praying the Scriptures for Intimate Worship*. This prayer book will help you:

- Stay focused
- Pray for the right things
- Use God’s own words and promises

This book will help you more than any other tool I have ever seen. Get it. Use it.

## Practice

Just do it. The more you pray, the more you will pray. You will get better at praying by praying. When your mind wanders, focus, and your mind won’t wander. The more you practice prayer, the more your life will be marked by prayer.

## Prevent

Whatever you do, don’t wait to call God until your house is on fire. Call Him regularly and your chances of a housefire diminish considerably. Prayer is that powerful and that important. Don’t neglect your God, cultivate a heart of prayer. Your greatest weapon against sin is God Himself. Talk to Him.

## Three questions:

1. List the reasons why you don’t pray as much as you should. Are those reasons really valid?
2. Is there any other being in the universe that would be more beneficial to talk to than the Creator of the universe?
3. Will you commit to creating your own prayer plan right now?



## Chapter 12

# KNOW WHO YOU ARE

If our brains were a computer, then thanks to Adam and Eve, our computers are wired very poorly. Theologians call this the noetic effect of the fall; our brains are fundamentally busted, filled with lies, and are easily deceived. The lifelong goal of the man of God is to let God rewire our brains so they operate at peak efficiency. The question of course is, how does one get his brain rewired?

Memorizing Bible verses is the first step in that rewiring process. Studying theology is our next step to having brains that function properly and make better decisions.

The more you download theology into your brain, the more your noggin will get rewired to its original design (Romans 12:1-2). The more you know what Jesus has done for you, the less likely you are to betray Him. Our next military exercise is to change your thinking about yourself by studying soteriology (salvation theology).

By considering what Jesus has accomplished on the cross for you, you will find it increasingly difficult to disobey the Captain of your salvation.

### Identity

Perhaps you have never learned, or have just forgotten, that you are a chosen royal priest, a holy man who is owned by God for the purpose of “proclaiming the excellencies of the One who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light” (1 Peter 2:9).

Let’s camp on that thought for a moment. The God you once hated has made you a royal priest and a holy man for the lofty task of glorifying Him by modeling Him for your family, neighbors, and the world. I dare you to watch porn when you are meditating on that truth.

You are no longer a slave to sin, but a slave to righteousness (Romans 6:18). As a new creation, you do NOT have to sin anymore (2 Corinthians 5:17). Think long and hard on what you have been made, and you will find it increasingly difficult to act like a pervert.

When a Christian sins, it is not in keeping with his character. Sin is entirely foreign to who we are in Christ. When you sin, it is like a whale taking a walk in the desert, or a chicken that gives birth to a hamburger. Or Taylor Swift writing good music. It is not natural for you to sin. You belong to Christ, not Satan. Dwell on these things.

## Position

Study your status with God. You have been taken out of a swamp of sin, purchased, and adopted into God's family as a beloved child. You are a son of God; that is who you are (John 1:12; Ephesians 1:5; 2 Corinthians 5:17).

You have been seated in the heavenly realms with Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:6). One day, you will reign with Christ (2 Timothy 2:12). You are no longer a slave of the devil, but a beloved son of the Lord Most High.

Do you fear intimacy? Are you embarrassed about your body? Do you think you will be mocked if you are intimate with a real woman? Then you need to remember this truth: Because of Jesus, your position with God is: accepted, beloved, cherished, loved, delighted in. Who cares what the servants think when the King approves of you?

You don't need anyone to tell you you're hot. First of all, like the rest of us, you probably aren't. Second, being hot is not nearly as important as being a beloved son of God. In Christ you are fully approved by God Himself. Being hot doesn't seem all that important now, does it?

**Let me challenge you to train for battle by grabbing your concordance or simply Googling: Bible verses "in Christ." You will learn that you are:**

- The righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- A new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
- A son of God (Galatians 3:26)
- An ambassador for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20)
- Not condemned (Romans 8:1)
- Never alone (Romans 12:5; Hebrews 13:5)
- Free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
- A temple of God (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

Your identity is not pornographer, it is Christ-one (Galatians 3:28). You are alive, not dead (1 Corinthians 15:22); you are not alone but in a family of believers (Romans 12:5). You have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 1:3). You do not NEED anything more. Your identity, position, and reputation in Christ is the most exalted it could ever be.

**Can you handle that truth? If not, then you better try.** Knowing who you are in Christ is crucial not only for victory over sin, but for joy in life. You cannot spend enough time and energy considering what God has done for you in Jesus Christ. That is why we need to spend time unearthing another profound and powerful truth about the atoning work of Jesus.

### **Three questions:**

- 1. Did you know that you don't have to sin? How does it make you feel to know that?*
- 2. If you are afraid to be intimate with a woman, ask yourself why.*
- 3. Will you commit to taking the time to memorize who you are in Christ, then remind yourself of those truths when you are tempted to sin?*



## Chapter 13

# KNOW YOU ARE LOVED

As if Jesus didn't do enough for you when He died on the cross to change your identity, position, and reputation, Jesus also made it possible for you to experience the most intense and powerful love in the universe: the love of God. Your brain will likely resist this rewiring because the devil will lie to you, "God doesn't love a pervert like you." The devil is wrong.

Because of Jesus, God loves His children with the same love He has for His beloved Son. That's a lot. Knowing this truth does not give you a license to licentiousness, instead, it will give you the strength to reject lesser loves. You aren't loved because you're lovable, you are loved because God is love and He loves us despite our sins.

The second Person of the Trinity was passively beaten and killed for the forgiveness of your sins, but Jesus' active life of obedience accumulated righteousness that gets credited to your account. That means you are not only forgiven, but you are seen as perfectly holy and thoroughly loved by God.



***God made Jesus who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Jesus" (2 Corinthians 5:21).***

## **Jesus gets our sins; we get His righteousness. Talk about a great exchange! The benefits of being in Christ are endless.**

- God justifies us and declares us, “Not guilty” (Romans 5:1–9).
- God buys us out of slavery to sin and the devil (1 Peter 1:18–19).
- God forgives all of our sins—past, present, and future (Colossians 2:14; Ephesians 1:7).
- God cleanses us and removes the stain of sin (Hebrews 9:14).
- God sanctifies us and makes us holy, set apart for a special purpose (1 Corinthians 1:2, 30).
- God seals us with His Spirit to guarantee our glorification (Ephesians 1:13).
- God gives us His Spirit to indwell and empower us (Romans 8:9).
- God brings us into His family as a beloved child (Romans 8:14–17).
- God grants us eternal life (John 11:25–27) and makes us heirs (Romans 8:17) with an eternal inheritance (1 Peter 1:3–4).
- God declares us saints (Colossians 1:2), prepares a place for us (John 14:2), and allows us to reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).
- God is pleased to welcome us into a lavish, rich, loving relationship with Himself (Romans 5:1–2).

Our response to that list should be, ***“Wait a second, God did all of that for my sake and His glory? Why would I ever want to sin against Him?”***

The answer to that rhetorical question helps us understand why Jesus flipped the calendar from BC to AD. No other person in human history has ever done anything remotely as significant, or beneficent as Jesus Christ. God is so loving He sent His Son on a kamikaze mission to die for sinners.

All of the Marvel superhero movies are feeble knockoffs of the most amazing superhero story ever. Seriously, can you conceive of a more sacrificial, loving, and magnanimous story than the greatest story ever told? Every other religion commands its adherents to sacrifice for their deity; Christianity proclaims a deity who sacrificed for its adherents. Astonishing!

Milton Vincent leads us in this thought experiment. The year is 500 B.C. Would anyone have been so audacious to offer this prayer to God?

***Dear Lord,***

***Although we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, and deserve your temporal and eternal punishment, would you please send the second member of the Trinity to take on human form, live a perfect life, be tortured to death, forgive us and credit us with His righteousness? Would you welcome me into your presence to be lavishly loved by You forever?***

***And, Lord, would you send the third member of the Trinity to dwell inside of me, empowering me for all of life and godliness? Would you then patiently grow me in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control?***

***And then, Lord, would you provide every spiritual blessing for me in the heavenly realms, and prepare a magnificent dwelling for me in heaven so I can be ushered into Your presence and reign with You forever? Amen.***

No human would have dared to petition God for that, but that is precisely what God has done for us without being asked. As Milton Vincent asks, “What is not to love about a Savior like that?”

- When we give Jesus Christ our rap sheet, He gives us His resume.
- When we give Him our filthy rags, He gives us His royal robe of righteousness.
- When we repent and place our faith in Jesus Christ, we are seen as more than forgiven criminals; we are seen as citizens of the century.



**When you meditate on what Jesus has provided you in the atonement, you will increasingly see Jesus as the better choice because your affections for Him will grow greater than your love for sin.**

### **Three questions:**

- 1. Have you been looking for love in all the wrong places? Did you know the greatest love of all is God's love for His children?*
- 2. Knowing the Father loves you as much He loves the Son, can you list three things that should change in your life?*
- 3. What could you do each day to remember God's great love for you?*

## Chapter 14

# BEHOLD THE MAN

A soldier's job is simple, do what you are commanded to do and be victorious in battle. While that is also the Christian soldier's job, the ultimate goal of a soldier in the Lord's army goes far beyond obedience and victory. Your ultimate goal, soldier, is to love your commanding officer above all things, and become just like Him.

Christianity is not simply about moral conformity. It is about that, but it is not merely about that. Christianity is about little Christ-ones loving their Savior so much, they desire to become like Him. We love Him because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). When we live for our Savior, love our Savior, desire to be like our Savior, only then will we live the truly abundant life Jesus promised (John 10:10).

Don't miss this. If you simply try to do battle with sin, you will win a few skirmishes, but you will not accomplish what your God ultimately wants for you. He wants you to look, act, and think just like His perfect Son because you love Him. That is the best of goals and a much more transformative ambition. Let me put it this way, if you succeed in mortifying porn, but your heart isn't affected by God's love for you, you will never reach the true goal of Christianity.

Jesus made this crystal clear in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5-7). Jesus relentlessly assaulted the religious Pharisees, even though they were the most outwardly moral people in Israel. Jesus, like His Father, is disgusted by religiosity.

God rebuked the Old Testament Jews for offering phony sacrifices (Isaiah 1:11-17) . He uses words like despise, hate, and loathe. He calls His outwardly religious chosen people, prostitutes.

Speaking of prostitutes, God commanded a man named Hosea to marry a prostitute who would inevitably be unfaithful to him. Hosea's broken heart was a picture of our Heavenly Bridegroom's feelings toward His unfaithful bride, the nation of Israel. "I desire loyalty rather than sacrifice, and the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

**Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" (John 14:15). Notice the order? For us to genuinely keep His commands, we must perpetually increase our love for Him.**

Jesus wants your heart. Jesus wants you to love Him and willingly surrender to Him. Jesus wants you to be in a warm and loving relationship with your God (Romans 5:1-2). Jesus wants you to become the best version of you; and the best version of you is when you look like Jesus.

Jesus is the best of men, and He wants you to be the best of men by having your head filled with knowledge and your heart filled with love, which then makes its way to your hands, feet, and eyes. Most likely you have been focusing just on your hands, feet, and eyes, but you have likely not been focusing on genuine transformation from the inside out. Your propensity is to act just like the Pharisees: cleaning up the outside of the cup, but on the inside, you're filled with sludge.

### ***This must change.***

The path to transformation is simple: behold the man. Study Jesus and you will grow in your love for Him, and your desire to be like Him. Then, and only then, will you truly live. To that end, let's do a drill comparing Jesus to a man who consumes pornography. As we see this contrast, we see a Savior who is far superior to anything or anyone. Do you remember the list of descriptors that revealed what you currently look like? Let's revisit that list but apply it to Jesus. You will see a Man worth loving, serving, and emulating.

**Jesus is not weak and wimpy.** Jesus is strong and mighty, yet His awesome power is under His total control. Jesus could have destroyed those who sought to murder Him with a thought, but He didn't. The One who upholds the universe by the word of His power is omnipotent, yet humble; mighty, yet meek. That is your Savior.

**Jesus wasn't creepy.** In fact, Jesus is so not creepy that little children happily sat on His lap to be hugged by Him (Mark 9:36).



**Jesus wasn't a shriveled man.** He grew in stature because He was filled with wisdom and life (Luke 11:49; John 14:6). He was a robust, hearty, and healthy man. He is the One with whom the Father was well-pleased (Matthew 3:17).

**Jesus was not isolated.** He was a man surrounded by people who flocked to be near Him, hear Him, and worship Him. Even when Jesus isolated Himself to pray, He wasn't alone as He communed with His Father.

**Jesus wasn't out of control.** Jesus was always in full command. That is most evident in His dominion over events to ensure His crucifixion ran on schedule (John 7:6). Satan didn't rule Him; Jesus ruled the devil (Matthew 4:10–11; Genesis 3:15).

**Jesus was not emotionally tired.** He was not a man who was exhausted because His energies were spent plotting sin and covering His tracks. As He ministered to others, He received strength from His Father (John 4:32–34).

**Jesus' thinking was wired rightly.** He always thought right, acted right, and was pleasing to the Father (Matthew 3:17).

**Jesus wasn't a monster.** He was gentle and lowly of heart (Matthew 11:28–29).

**Jesus was the opposite of a pervert.** His thoughts, words and deeds were always above reproach (1 Peter 2:22; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5).

**Jesus didn't grieve people.** He pleased them (Luke 2:52).

**Jesus didn't descend in stature.** He grew in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52).

**Jesus didn't abuse.** He healed, fed, and helped (Matthew 14:13–21).

**Jesus wasn't selfish.** He gave of Himself to the point of death on a cross (Philippians 2:5–8).

**Jesus never disappointed anyone.** He never did anything that would embarrass His family or friends.

**Jesus was anything but a failure.** Jesus completed His assignment to save sinners, die, resurrect, ascend into heaven, and sit down at the right hand of the Father (John 19:30; Romans 8:34). He was not a loser; He was a victor who crushed the head of the serpent and defeated death (Genesis 3:15).

**Jesus never gave into temptation. He never let His flesh or emotions lead Him. He was righteous in every way possible. He was strong, fearless, stable, joyful, and filled with love for sinners.**

That is your Savior. No man compares to Him. He is the best of the best. If you would like to be like Him (and you should), study Him. Read about Him. Behold the Man and you will become like Him.

Yes, you should continue to war against sin, but if you want to decimate the enemy, then battle to become like Jesus by loving Him more and more. He will be your victory and your strength, and you will become the best of men.

### **Three questions:**

- 1. Take a moment to envision what life would look like if you looked more like Jesus.*
- 2. What will it take for you to believe you could become the best of men?*
- 3. Will you make a commitment right now to die to yourself and start living fully for Christ?*

## Chapter 15

# FIND A PLATOON

Onward, Christian soldier, march to war alone and prepare to be vanquished. If you don't find a platoon to join, you will be a weak soldier who battles the lust dragon all alone. That is a terrible strategy.

Where will you find a platoon of soldiers who will train with you, strengthen your weaknesses, and pick you up when you fall? The local church. This cannot be stressed enough; the man who is not a serving MEMBER of a local church is a very vulnerable (and foolish) soldier.

If you are not a member of a local church, you are like a World War 2 soldier who wanders around the battlefield without a regiment. You are in danger. You are more likely to fall. You are more likely to grow weary. You are far more likely to keep slip-sliding away into pornography. Not only that, but you are also in grave danger of potentially going to hell. Let me explain that.

If you are not a member of a local church and you start diving into unrepentant sin, your church cannot practice church discipline and rescue you. Discipline is like Saving Private Ryan. When Ryan's unit was searching for him, they risked life and limb to locate and rescue him. That is what your church will do for you.

If you are a soldier who gets captured by the Enemy, your church will seek you, find you, and discipline you to bring you safely home. If you are just a regular attender and not a member, your church has no obligation or authority to put you under discipline and rescue you.

When you regularly surround yourself with fellow soldiers who are engaged in the same spiritual battles you are in, you are surrounding yourself with the best people possible. While it is true that Christians may not be as hip and cool as your unchurched friends, I make you three promises if you will join a church and immerse yourself in Christian fellowship:



- 1. Your church friends will be your best friends. I didn't say they will be the funniest, richest, or most interesting friends, but they will be there for you every time.*
- 2. Your church friendships will be built on something stronger than sports, travel, or lifestyle. Your church friendships will be built on Christ. There are no better friends than those who are in Christ with you.*
- 3. When you die and they lower you into the ground, it will be your church friends who eulogize you.*

Joining a Bible-based local church will be one of the smartest things you ever do. Orient your life around your church. Attend every Bible study you can. Volunteer at every opportunity. Make lifelong friendships. Serve others. Sit under strong, biblical teaching. Weekly attendance at a sound church will orient your entire week, reorder your priorities, encourage you, strengthen you, and produce the fruit of obedience.

Ask any man who has slain the porn dragon; church membership was a crucial component in his victory. Church membership—faithful attendance, serving, giving, one-anothering—is one of the most powerful weapons in your armament.

Be wise and seek till you find a local church filled with born-again soldiers who war against their sins. Together you will be stronger and safer.

## **Three questions:**

- 1. What are your top three excuses for not joining and serving in a local church? Are those excuses valid?*
- 2. If you aren't persuaded church is truly important, may I ask, have you ever really immersed yourself in a local church?*
- 3. Are you persuaded that church friends are the best of friends? Why or why not?*

## Chapter 16

# PLAN FOR FAILURE

This might sound counter-intuitive, but you need to plan to fail. No, I didn't say you should make a plan in order to fail. You should make a plan in the event you do fall.

Because our flesh is not yet glorified, we will forever be at war with it (and the world, and the devil). Unfortunately, sin isn't an "if" question, it is a "when" question. The genuine believer does not use that theological truth as a "Sin Pass" to continue sinning (Romans 6:1), but a genuine believer needs to be prepared should he fall into pornographic sin.

1 John 1:8 and 1 John 2:1 make it clear, Christians still sin. 1 John 1:9 tells us what to do, however, when we do sin: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." That's your battle plan right there: When you sin, confess! Commit to that plan and employ it when you fumble.

**There's your battle plan. Study it. Memorize it. Employ it if you fumble.**

Knowing you are forgiven and loved even while you watch porn doesn't give us a license to sin, but you need to know that if you do sin, you have an Advocate, Jesus the righteous (1 John 2:1). When you sin, RUN TO HIM IMMEDIATELY. PLEASE commit to this battle plan right now, because this plan is the last thing you are going to want to do when you fall back into the pigsty.

As soon as you have satisfied yourself by consuming porn, you are going to feel horrible, dirty, shameful, disappointed. You will feel a sense of betrayal against the God you love. You will want to run from, not to, your Savior. Resist that temptation. Initiate your battle plan. Run to Him immediately and confess your sins.

If you don't commit to this Failure Plan and you fall, you will avoid your Advocate in shame. You will feel like there is no way God would want to hear from you until you spend some time away from Him doing some sort of penance (that doesn't actually exist). A day can turn into a week. A week can turn into a lifetime. Don't let that happen. Don't let a single second pass before you flee to your Savior.

Will you commit right now? Will you promise your Lord you will run to your Advocate who will receive you, cleanse you, renew you, and send you on your way with joy?

**A failure plan is not a plan to fail; it is wisdom for the contingency that you could fail. Make your commitment now. Then, and only then, will you be ready to go to war. Are you ready? If so, it's time for war games.**

### **Three questions:**

- 1. Historically, did you run to your Lord immediately after failure? Why or why not?*
- 2. Will you make the commitment to pray immediately to your Savior should you fall?*
- 3. Do you have someone who can hold you accountable to do this?*



## Chapter 17

# WAR GAMES

It's time to conduct our final boot-camp exercise before going into battle: war games. Let's set up the field of battle and demonstrate what your spiritual warfare should look like.

Imagine you are alone where no one can see you. Your password-protected laptop begins to whisper, "Do it. You know you enjoy this. After all, you've earned it. I promise, this time I'll make you happy."

What you are hearing/feeling is an outright, diabolical lie. STOP listening to those lies and take out your weapons. Start by running to the only One strong enough to help a weakling like you overcome sinful temptation.

### Talk to God

Yes, it is wise to call a trusted friend when you are tempted, but your first call should be to your Commander in Chief. God wants you to talk to Him while you are feeling weak. Cast all of your cares upon Him. Tell Him how you are feeling. Petition Him for His help.

**Lord Jesus,**

***You know the power of temptation because you experienced genuine temptation. You never surrendered to it, and I want to be like You. Help me right now to be strong like you and resist this temptation. Grant me victory.***

***Remind me that your ways are better. Make me believe that I am being lied to and tempted to drink dirty water. I want you, the Living Water. Help me believe that there is joy in obedience and that you promise to empower me to do honorable and important things if I am a man who resists temptation.***

***Don't let me do this evil thing that would have increased your suffering on the cross.***

***Help me to resist temptation and make the devil flee. I love You more than this fleeting pleasure. Accept my refusal to sin as an act of worship to You, the Lord of my life.***

After you finish talking to the One who has the power to help you, then it's time to have another conversation.

## **Talk to Yourself**

When you are tempted to sin, you must never forget that you are being lied to. The devil deceives through deception by playing you for a fool. Don't let him. Don't be a fool, play the man and speak truth to lies. That's right, you need to have an inner dialogue with yourself. This is precisely when you need your memorized Bible verses. Your discussion with yourself could go like this:

- The devil wants to kill me, but Jesus promised life more abundantly (John 10:10). I am going to choose obedience and blessing.
- The devil wants me to be miserable, but Jesus prayed I would have joy (John 17:13). I choose joy over guilt.
- The devil is lying to me right now, but Jesus always tells the truth (John 14:6). I am going to trust the One who has never lied to me.
- I will not be defeated because Jesus made me a conqueror (Romans 8:37).
- The Lord promises good things to those who obey Him (Psalm 37:4). I want good things, so I will not do this bad thing.
- Psalm 1 promises that I will be given greater responsibilities when I obey the Lord. I will not do this dirty deed and be left on the bench.
- God has made me a saint and a royal priest; I will not act like a pervert (1 Peter 2:9).
- God commands me to be holy just like He is holy, I am not going to provoke His discipline by being profane (1 Peter 1:16).

- If God loved me so much that He gave His only Son to save me, I will not betray my God (John 3:16).
- Joseph fled temptation, I am going to join him and get out of here (Genesis 39:9).
- If I commit this sin, I will grieve my God, and I refuse to do that (Ephesians 4:30).
- If Jesus died for me, the very least I can do is mortify this degrading desire (Romans 8:13).
- I want to be used as a vessel that renders honorable service. If I commit this sin, the Lord will only use me for common things (2 Timothy 2:20). I want to render honorable service, so I will not commit this profane act.

If you are single, tell yourself, “I am going to be a godly man, not a scumbag. I am going to be a man that earns people’s respect. The devil wants me to be a loser, but I am going to be a conqueror who wins the heart of a godly woman and the permission of a godly father to marry his precious daughter. I am going to play the man, not the rat. I am going to be better than my peers, I am going to be the master of my body and utilize my members for godly things.”

If you are married, remind yourself that your wife placed her trust in you to lead, protect, and nurture her. What would her father think of you if he knew you were being unfaithful to his precious daughter with a stupid computer? Imagine how your kids’ lives would be forever altered if they discover you are a pornographer.

## **Interrogate yourself and force a confession**

Remember, porn is not your problem, what’s in your heart is the problem. Porn is the fruit; you need to go digging for the root. Begin by asking yourself, “What am I trying to accomplish by looking at porn?” Let’s use our list of “deeper heart problems” I asked you to study in chapter 9. Do you remember what they are?

***Is your idol pleasure and not the Savior?***

***Are you experiencing a worship disorder by desiring to choose sin and thus worship the devil and not Jesus?***



***Do you not trust God's sovereignty and, therefore, feel the need for control?***

***Are you being a sluggard who just won't burn the calories to woo, win, and wed a godly woman to whom you are totally faithful?***

***Are you being so lazy that you find it easier to look at pixels and not expend the energy to serve and love your wife in order to earn sexual fulfillment?***

***Is your porn usage an effort to get even with your wife and not humbly forgive?***

***Was Carly Simon singing about you when she sang, "You're so vain"? Do you really think all of those pixelated women want you?***

***Are you afraid of embarrassment in the bedroom? Shouldn't you fear God so much that your fear of performance or appearance pale by comparison?***

***Is your desire for affirmation so great that you seek it through your imagination and not by remembering God's affirmation of you? Why is it so important that you feel the need to be sexy, loved, and attractive?***

***Have you forgotten how much God has given to you that you feel the need to take and never give?***

***Do you not remember who you are in Christ?***

Once you have interrogated your heart, REPENT! Talk to your God and confess your sin, knowing He is gracious and just to forgive you and cleanse you (1 John 1:9). Thank Him for His renewed mercy. Petition Him to grant you the strength to stay in the battle and fight another day.

## Defuse That Bomb

Shut down your computer and change your surroundings. Call or visit other believers. Spend more time praying. Grab your Bible and read it. Get in your car and start singing praises to God. Go to church and do something.

***Wash, rinse, repeat.***

No, this won't be easy, but the more you train for battle, the more equipped you will be to defeat your enemy. Every time you have victory, you will be more godly, more trustworthy, more mature, and more valuable to those around you. Best of all, you will begin to look like the man God wants you to be.

**You have all the weapons, power, and vision you need to strive to increasingly be like the best of men, Jesus Christ. Yet, there might be one last thing you need to do: lose the excuses.**

## Three questions:

- 1. Have you been more feelings led, or more facts led?*
- 2. Can you identify the lies you believe when you choose sin over your Savior?*
- 3. Will you commit to having an inner dialogue to correct lies with truth and be led by biblical facts and not feelings?*

## Chapter 18

# LOSE THE EXCUSES

As this book comes to a close, I wouldn't be surprised if the devil is sending in his SEAL team to persuade you that what you just read can't actually work for you. Do NOT let him keep you off the battlefield because he has coaxed you into believing the following excuses.

### Excuse 1

You say, "My wife, she's frigid." The Bible says, "That's actually your fault because you are the husbandmen (gardener), and if your garden isn't growing, it's not the crop's fault, it's the gardener's fault." If you have weeds, pull them up and plant better seeds. Only a woman who is out of her mind would refuse a man who cherishes her like this and acts like Jesus Christ. If your wife is cold, then warm her up by being kind, gentle, good, and loving. Stop trying to "get lucky." Earn her affection and intimacy by playing the man. Let your desires drive you to be the man any wife would gladly give herself to.

### Excuse 2

You say, "My wife has let herself go." I would ask, why has she let herself go? Are you giving her the incentive to make the effort to look the best she can? Are you behaving like the man that any woman would say, "I'm going to take extra time to get ready so that I can present myself to my husband in a way that is pleasing to him"? It starts with you. And may I ask, is it a reasonable expectation for her to look like she did before having your children? Is that really reasonable? Besides, what does outer beauty have to do with intimacy? Sex isn't about you getting visually stimulated, it is about expressing love by fulfilling your wife's desires, not yours.

### Excuse 3

You say, "My wife is embarrassed about her body." She wouldn't be if you regularly told her that you love the person she is. She is only embarrassed because she doesn't trust you. Earn that trust back. Tell her you love her, no matter what she thinks her body looks like.



## Excuse 4

You say, “She’s pregnant or going through menopause and never wants to be intimate.” While those life events can certainly dampen intimacy, you don’t need to experience a total drought. Couples can discuss ways to “work around” these issues, but is it possible she doesn’t want to because you aren’t playing the man?

## Excuse 5

You say, “She always says she’s tired or has a headache.” It’s one thing for a godly wife to occasionally not be in the mood, it’s another thing for a wife to NEVER be in the mood for love. She is likely using those excuses because you haven’t earned the privilege and she’s not very motivated to give her body to you.

**What I am trying to say is, man up. Dump the excuses and get to work on earning the privilege of sex with your wife. Christian men don’t get lucky, real men earn intimacy. So stop with the excuses and start cultivating your garden.**

Rather than getting frustrated with your wife, do the hard work necessary to cherish your wife. Let your sexual frustration call you up. Let your unfulfilled lust motivate you to godliness. Channel your pent-up desires toward godliness. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

## Three questions:

- 1. What are the excuses you need to detonate?*
- 2. If your home is chilly, are you willing to do whatever it takes to warm it up?*
- 3. Do you need to repent to your wife for anything?*

## Chapter 19

# PLAY THE MAN

There are two landmines you need to be on the alert for as you go marching off to war. These two landmines employ the same explosive: discouragement.

Chances are you will begin to employ these biblical strategies, but the second you fall, Satan is going to tell you, “Why bother? Clearly your efforts are futile. There’s no need to waste precious energy doing things that aren’t nearly as fun as porn.” That is a lie. Talk to your Savior, remember the truth, and then get back in the battle.

Here’s another landmine; you might overcome temptation a time or ten, but you receive no encouragement from anyone. Nobody has noticed and said, “Way to go. I see a difference in you.” The truth is, I am not surprised. Your character cannot change profoundly after a few victories. It has taken you years to deform yourself, it will take time to be transformed into the man God wants you to be that people recognize and identify as godly.

An obese man takes years to pack on his tonnage and he shouldn’t expect to lose it in a month, or a year. Neither should you. You must persist. Over time you will notice a change, and so will others. Even if they don’t, you know that your Lord sees, and that will be enough.

### Ending where we began

Let me take you back to Bishops Latimer and Ridley. Do you remember what Latimer told Ridley, who was in misery because the flames wouldn’t consume him quickly?



***Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”***

Latimer was right. Three years later, Bloody Mary died, and the crown was passed to her Protestant half-sister, Elizabeth. Latimer's and Ridley's candle burst into a flame. The Protestant Reformation burned across England as millions were saved, crime decreased, literacy rose, and Western civilization was built. Ridley's and Latimer's candle turned into a light station that was seen by the entire world for centuries.

What's my point? Be patient. Persist. Don't grow weary. In due time the Lord will reward your efforts. Engage in the battle and don't abandon your post. As you stay strong and faithful, the Lord will reward you in ways you can't currently imagine.

Permit me to play Bishop Latimer and encourage you to play the man. When you get tired, play the man. When you think you are going to lose it if you don't watch porn, play the man. When your wife reminds you of your porn rap-sheet, play the man. When others around you fall, play the man. When the devil lies to you, play the man. When nobody notices how hard you are trying, play the man.

With perseverance you will light a candle that will never be put out. You will become a better version of yourself. You will be more godly, more reliable, admired, called upon, and loved by those around you. Best of all, you will look more and more like Jesus Christ, who will one day say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. Well done. You played the man!"

# NOW PLAY THE MAN!

## Three questions:

1. Are you prepared to be patient as the Lord changes you over time?
2. Are you willing to continue growing in godliness, even if nobody notices?
3. Are you willing to commit right now to stay engaged in the battle until you die?

*For more information for living as a godly man, visit:*

*The Way of Manhood with Dr. Adam Tyson:*  
<https://fortisplus.org/tabs/discover/podcasts/33548>



**No doubt these are the words that describe how you feel after you have set your eyes on forbidden internet images:**

- **Dirty**
- **Ashamed**
- **Defeated**
- **Weak**
- **Deceptive**
- **Stuck**
- **Demoralized**
- **Hopeless**

Perhaps you turned over this booklet in hopes it contains a different solution to your porn problem. Everything else you have tried has failed you. Is this booklet different than the rest?

**The answer is a resounding, YES!**

**PLAY THE MAN** will not coddle you, but it won't leave you deflated either. You can become the man you want to be.

**Are you ready  
to PLAY THE MAN?**

