

Striving for Purity



Discussion Aids

This discussion aid is intended for those who wish to remain free from the bondage of pornography and unwholesome material. It is designed to be used in a small group setting and encourages the sharing of weapons in the battle against sin and Satan. We all face various temptations and battle the flesh in different ways. Sometimes we are successful and sometimes we struggle. Sharing our successes and struggles with others can be beneficial and encouraging as we all strive for pure lives and hearts. Satan wants us to believe we are the only one with struggles and thereby tries to isolate us and keep us in darkness and shame.

Each lesson has a couple of verses followed by a few questions to provoke conversation and to cause each one to study God's Word more fully in his own individual life. Following the verses and questions are three accountability questions. These should not be ignored and should be answered truthfully. While unpleasant, confession is required and necessary. Knowing these questions must be answered may serve as a deterrent to sin. These questions may be changed according to the age and needs of the participants.

We suggest beginning and ending with a prayer offered by one of the attendees. It is our hope each participant may feel the blessings of God as they study and that God might be glorified.

Ephesians 3:21 "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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Light vs. Darkness

John 3:19-20 “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. (20) For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.”

1 John 1:5-10 “This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. (6) If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: (7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (8) If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. (9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (10) If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”

1. Read *Genesis 3* regarding the fall of man. Examine how “darkness” [or sin] is ever-present, from the garden until today. Explain what is more natural to our flesh: confession or keeping sin secret?
2. According to *John 3:19-20* the light represents whom? What biblical principle regarding darkness/evil and light is illustrated in these verses?
3. *1 John 1:5-10* explains our “fellowship” [relationship] with God. Fill-in-the-blank: “If we say we have _____ with him and walk in _____, we _____.” Explain the seriousness of this principle.

4. Study *1 John 1:8* “*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.*” Does this verse give us license to not take sin seriously? Explain its meaning.

5. The last principle of *1 John 1* is found in verse 9. How does this verse both challenge us to honesty and humility while also encouraging hope?

Accountability

1. Did you view any pornography/unwholesome material or engage in sexual immorality since you last met?

2. If so, how did it happen and what might you have done to prevent it?

3. If not, were you tempted and how did you overcome?

Who is Our Master?

Joshua 24:15 “...choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”

Luke 16:13 “No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.”

Romans 6:6, 16 “6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

1. By choosing to love or serve sin, what choice do we make with God?
2. *Romans 6:6* explains what Christ's death accomplished. Using your own words, state the principle of this verse.
3. Contrast the examples in *Romans 6:16* and list characteristics of both types of “servants”. Relate how sexual sin can be a master of our lives.

4. How do impure choices/thoughts/actions define a “*servant of sin*”?

5. *Joshua 24:15* describes a historical scene where Joshua needed to ask the Israelites to commit on the question of “*whom will you serve?*”. Apply this scenario to your daily choices. How serious are you in your commitment to the Lord?

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Our Relationship with God

Psalm 34:18 "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

Isaiah 59:2 "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear."

1 John 2:16-17 "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

1. According to *Isaiah 59:2*, sin causes _____ between us & God. How does this principle make you feel?
2. Consider the result of God turning His face from us. Think about the relationship between God and Christ - was there ever a time when it seemed God turned His face from Christ? [*Matthew 27:46*] What does this indicate regarding sin & its seriousness?
3. Can we live a godly life while being alienated from God?

The Race of Life

Romans 13:14 “But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”

Philippians 3:13-14 “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,¹⁴ I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Hebrews 12:1 “Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

1. In *Hebrews 12:1* what is sin compared to? Do you see how sin hampers our “race”? Explain.
2. What should we do with this sin? Who should we “put on” instead according to *Romans 13:14*? Describe why this principle of “put off, put on” is important.
3. Discuss who the “cloud of witnesses” might be and identify them in your own life. How is your life impacted by this “cloud of witnesses”? How does *Hebrews 12:1* encourage us?

4. Is it hard to fall into sin? Is it difficult to overcome sin? Which one takes longer? Examine why the “*patience*” listed in *Hebrews 12:1* is crucial.
5. *Philippians 3:13-14* gives us hope in several key areas. List the principles which allow us to keep “*running the race*”.

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God's Grace

James 4:6-10 “But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.”

1. *James 4:6-10* has great action verbs. List as many of them as you can find. What do these words mean regarding how God's grace is given and received? [ex: submit]
2. Look at the analogies in *James 4:8b*. What do they mean?
3. *James 4:8b* also illustrates a key principle regarding our part in receiving God's grace. What is it?

4. Choose a word to complete this sentence: A _____ heart is the key to receiving God's grace and being forgiven. Explain your choice.
5. Describe what submission to God looks like. Give examples.

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Eye Control

Job 31:1 “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”

Psalm 101:3 “I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.”

Ezekiel 20:7 “Then said I unto them, Cast ye away every man the abominations of his eyes, and defile not yourselves with the idols of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

1. What part of the body is mentioned in all of these verses as an entry point for evil? How can eye control affect our relationship with God?
2. In all of the above verses, one pronoun is used. What principle in our purity efforts does the use of this pronoun emphasize?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?”

20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

3. According to *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*, why should we not defile ourselves with sexual sin?

4. Compare how the “*idols of Egypt*” and pornography are both “*abominations*”, “*wicked*” and unwholesome. Are there any differences between the two? Explain.
5. List specific examples of where/when eye control is a problem for you. How can you eliminate these weak areas and train yourselves to not look at unwholesome material?

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Thoughts/Imaginations of Our Heart

Proverbs 23:7 “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”

Matthew 5:28 “But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

2 Corinthians 10:5 “Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;”

1. How much does our thinking form who we are? Explain using *Proverbs 23:7*.
2. *Matthew 5:28* describes the seriousness of impure intent, regardless of actual action. Compare and contrast sins of thought vs. sins of action.
3. The words “*to lust after her*” are a very important part of *Matthew 5:28*. Explain what this means and contrast this phrase with the idea of “passing thoughts.” What is our responsibility according to this verse to keep our thoughts/imaginations of the heart pure?

4. *2 Corinthians 10:5* calls us to action in the area of disciplining our thoughts. Describe the challenge this verse presents. Why is this discipline so important?
5. How do we begin to bring “into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (*2 Cor. 10:5*)? What are some strategies?

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Secrets

Psalm 51:6-7 “Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.”

Psalm 139:23-24 “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Jeremiah 23:24 “Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? Saith the Lord.”

1. Describe the principle in *Jeremiah 23:24*. How does this make you feel?
2. What do these words imply: darkness, secret, hidden? Who dwells in these hidden places [*Acts 26:18*]?
3. What does *Jeremiah 23:24* say about God’s character? How can that fact help us stay pure?

4. Have you ever tried to hide sin in the past? How about sin dealing with sexual impurity? Before we begin to overcome sin, what must be done according to *Psalm 51:6-7* and *Psalm 139:23-24*?
5. If by going through this study you find there are secrets in your heart, what should be done with them? When and with whom will you take care of that?

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Growth & Hope

Colossians 1:21-23“(21) And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled (22) In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable [without blemish] and unproveable [free from accusation] in his sight: (23) If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.”

1 Peter 5:8-9“(8) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.”

1. *Colossians 1:21-23* starts out fairly harsh yet encourages reconciliation by the end. Contrast what “you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works” means next to “yet now hath he reconciled In the body of his flesh through death...”. How does this relate to your present purity struggle[s]?
2. Explain Christ’s purpose on the cross according to *Colossians 1:22b*. How does this mercy encourage us to progressively strive for sanctification away from “wicked works” and to a continual, humble growth in godliness?
3. Discuss what “continue[ing] in the faith grounded and settled” means. List specific examples of what this looks like on a daily basis. What role does grace play in this continuation?

4. We are called to continually defend against Satan's attacks while also growing and building upon our faith during stronger times and during weaker times. According to *1 Peter 5:8-9*, what is necessary to succeed in this goal?

5. The above *Colossians* verses are a great illustration of the gospel. Describe the "*the hope of the gospel*" using words from the scripture above and identify how this applies to you striving toward purity.

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Glorifying God

Psalm 115:1 “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake.”

1 Corinthians 6:20 “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”

1. While shame and conviction from the Holy Spirit may be the reason we are motivated to purify ourselves from sexual sin, our primary motivation should be to _____ God. How does *Psalm 115* illustrate this purpose?
2. Explain the all-encompassing principle described in *1 Corinthians 10:31*.
3. Describe the cause-effect relationship of the gospel message in *1 Corinthians 6:20*. How should the gospel message motivate us?

4. Share thoughts on how striving for sexual purity brings honor and glory to God.
5. What have these ten lessons taught you? Reflect on what was convicting, what scripture or principles stuck out to you and/or what was good knowledge of which to be reminded.

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