

# S.I.G.

*Men's Sexual Integrity Guide*

*A Biblical Guide for  
Men Seeking Sexual Integrity*

PHIL HERNDON & TODD WERMERS

TIN  MAN

*This guide is designed to be used to provide a simple, structured format for men who struggle with sexual integrity. It can be used in a group format, for one-on-one discipleship, or as an individual tool to begin or continue the journey toward sexual integrity.*

*The truths are presented through scripture and probing questions designed to promote conversation and honesty, which can deeply move into men's hearts and equip them to live with sexual integrity and authenticity.*

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Sincere thanks to **Stephen James** for his valuable contribution in creating the original study that we adapted for our use. Not only has his work significantly informed and supported our work, but his friendship is also a gift to us.

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*A Tin Man Guide*

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## *Confidentiality*

If you are doing this study with another person or in a group, it is essential to discuss the need for confidentiality. We encourage you to discuss openly any feelings you may have about sharing with others. Be open to asking other members of the group if they can commit to this genuine and legitimate request. While these groups are not therapy, we do ask that standards of confidentiality be upheld so that trust can be developed.

Confidentiality is the foundation of a safe relational connection. In light of this, it is helpful to remember two primary threats to a relationally connected and safe group: (1) arrogance: the presumption we know what is going on in someone's interior life; (2) anxiety: internal "unease" while someone struggles. There is significant internal healing when we wait for God to do His work in another without rushing to "fix" them through advice, spiritual platitudes, or reframing struggles as "something to learn from" and to get through as quickly as possible.

The purpose of our meeting is encouragement, education, and exhortation. We are not here to "fix" one another. Confidentiality is essential for building trust, and trust is vital for growth. No person is required to share anything they don't want to. However, each member will benefit more from the group when all can share the truth of their hearts. Trust allows the process to work. Anything said between two or more group members at any time is part of the group and is confidential. What is shared in group stays in the group.

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# Week 1: Introduction

*“Let sin break your heart, but not your hope in the gospel.”*

Thomas Wilcox (1621-1687), *Honey Out of the Rock*

We are broken yet hopeful people. We closely identify with the first description of our condition in that sentence (“broken”), but find the ‘yet hopeful’ part of the sentence difficult to grasp. Echoing Wilcox’s words above, we are often heartbroken, and that heartbreak clouds our ability to recognize the hope of the gospel. Something deep inside us believes what he wrote is true, but somehow, not true for us. In other words, we feel hopelessly trapped in a seemingly endless cycle of sin, confession, repentance, resolution, only to return to sin again. However, God’s word is clear: His love for us permeates every page of scripture and covers every sin. Pornography, serial sinful sexual behaviors, control, food, workaholism to the neglect of family, rage...the list is endless.

The list is indeed endless, and is representative of something the prophet Jeremiah writes about in Jeremiah 2. The items on the list, along with many others, describe ways of forsaking God for “broken cisterns.” In verses 12-13, the prophet describes God as being utterly astonished. God calls the cosmos together to share in His utter heartbreak and grief:

*Be appalled, O heavens, at this:  
be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord,  
for my people have committed two evils:  
they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters,  
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,  
broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

Read that passage again through the filter of what God is experiencing. He calls together the heavens and says, “Look at this... can you believe it? They have turned aside from me; fresh, clean, pure, refreshing water, relied on their abilities, wisdom, toughness, and subjective sense of relative truth, and settled for putrid, rotten, non-potable water...Hard to take in, isn’t it? Absolutely shocking.”

For context, in Jeremiah’s day, some private homeowners built private cisterns, usually on the top of their houses, to catch rainwater or conveniently store enough for household needs. These private cisterns were rarely used for drinking water since they could easily be contaminated. But the “government cisterns” were constantly cleaned and routinely purged to provide fresh “living water” for the population.

William McClure Thompson wrote in his classic, *The Land and the Book*,

*“Even the best cisterns are strangely liable to crack and are a most unreliable source of supply of water. If, by constant care, they somehow hold water, the water is collected from clay roofs or soil.*

*“The water has the taste of the earth or the stable, is full of worms, and in the hour of greatest need, it utterly fails. Who but a fool, or one gone mad in his love of filth, would exchange the sweet, wholesome stream of a living fountain for such an uncertain compound of nastiness and vermin!”*

## WHO IN THE WORLD WOULD DO THIS?

**US...WE WOULD. WE HAVE. WE DO.**

And there is hope. Many of us have found that God is faithful in ways we did not know and perhaps could not know until we faced our own insufficiency to flourish in the way we read in scripture and perhaps believed long, long ago.

Perhaps you have lived in emotional scarcity and have been in “survival mode” for a very long time. The closest you could come to “having a life” was to become intoxicated with alcohol, power, sex, approval, work, food, or some other way to numb the pain in your life.

We hope this study will walk you not just out of what you have relied on in the endless cycle of dependence you’ve been trapped in, but will usher you into the life the gospel proclaims we are made for.

Let us let sin break our hearts but not our hope in the gospel. You do not have to do this by yourself. You are not designed to do this by yourself. You were made for connection, to live fully in relationship with your identity, others, and God. We are grateful you are here.

1. List one thing you hope to gain from this study

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2. What prompted you to undertake this study?

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**3.** Who can you contact to pray for you for the next 12 weeks?

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# Week 2: Sex Ed

When Joe turned 13, his dad took him away for a “guys’ weekend.” During their time together, they listened to some tapes on “sexual integrity” by a national speaker. Although they had never talked about sex, the entire weekend was a call to “live pure” until Joe’s wedding night. As they returned home late Sunday night, Joe’s dad gave him a new Bible, and they both prayed for Joe’s future wife. Joe and his father never talked about sex again.

Riding the bus home from school one afternoon, eight-year-old Tommy was talking with his friends when a fifth grader turned around in his seat and asked the younger boys, “Do you want to know where babies come from?” . . . and continued a five-minute graphic and vulgar description of sexual intercourse, pregnancy, and delivery.

Chris’ parents divorced when he was eight years old. After the separation, his dad moved to another state, leaving Chris to live with his mother and brother. When he was almost 10, Chris’ mother called him and his brother into the living room and read them a book she had gotten from the bookstore: “My Body and Me.” She said that they could ask questions whenever they wanted about anything they wanted, and she would do her best to answer them. As Chris got older, he had many questions he never felt comfortable asking his mom, so he kept silent.

When Jimmy was seven years old, his older brother took him to a friend’s house whose father owned pornographic movies. Young Jimmy watched the film with much curiosity and fascination. On the way home, Jimmy’s brother said, “Now you know about sex. Don’t tell mom and dad what you know.”

Rob’s introduction to sex occurred when he was 11 years old. His dad walked in while Rob was watching a pornographic movie on a streaming service platform. His dad ripped the remote away from Rob and yelled, “Give me that! You don’t need to be looking at that crap.”

## YOUR STORY

1. How did you first learn about sex? Where were you? How old were you? Who were you with? What was said?  
Briefly write your story below.

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## Week 3: Swept Clean?

Aaron and his girlfriend, Sarah, were 14. On their freshman homecoming football game night, Aaron and Sarah double-dated with Sarah's older sister and boyfriend. After the football game, the couples drove to a quiet office park. Sarah's sister and boyfriend began to make out and eventually had sex in the front seat. Aaron and Sarah, who had never had physical contact beyond hand-holding, sat silently in the back seat. Two months later, Aaron and Sarah had sex, and within three months, they broke up.

Growing up, Thomas spent three weeks every summer at his grandparents' farm in Wisconsin. One summer, when Thomas was nine, his 13-year-old cousin, Ronnie, visited at the same time. Ronnie was Thomas' hero. One afternoon in the barn, Ronnie "taught" Thomas about oral sex. Ronnie made Thomas promise not to tell anyone their "special secret." This event reoccurred regularly throughout Thomas' summer visit. Thomas has kept that secret throughout his life.

Peter's mother often referred to him as a "late bloomer." When he graduated high school, Peter was only 5'4" and 125 lbs. In school, he was not interested in girls. He loved sports but was too small to compete, so he managed the boys' basketball team. On his 18th birthday, Peter went with some friends to a "gentlemen's club," where he spent \$700 on "lap dances."

After struggling to earn a starting position on the varsity football team, Sam finally earned one. After practice, the team was showering in the locker room. Sam was toweling off when he became sexually aroused. Many of his teammates noticed and laughed at Sam. Sam didn't attend the spring practices that began the next season and told the coach he was quitting the team. Sam's mom and dad supported his decision even though they never understood why he quit. Sam still questions his sexuality and often wonders if this means he's gay.

Aaron's, Peter's, Thomas', and Sam's stories have one thing in common: They never spoke of these early sexual experiences. Many of us have untold stories like these. Some of our stories are more severe than these, and some do not appear as severe. The severity of the story is not as formative in sexual formation as is keeping the secret(s). "Keeping secrets" is often called "sweeping things under the rug." The only hope we have is to roll up the carpet and expose our dirt so that we may experience the grace the Father promised us through Christ.

*<sup>3</sup>For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. <sup>4</sup>For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. Selah <sup>5</sup>I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not cover my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord," and you forgave the iniquity of my sin. Selah.*

Psalm 32:3-5

1. David recorded what happened to him when he kept a sexual secret. The phrase “bones wasted away” refers to “essence.” In other words, David was suffering from a loss of his own identity. His “Davidness” was ebbing away, rendering him unable to live in freedom. Re-read the passage above and consider what keeping sexual secrets has done to you and your self-image and identity.
2. Think back to an early event where you remember having done something sexually inappropriate or sinful. How old were you? What was the nature of the sexual activity? What did you feel? Was this your first sexual experience?

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3. Circle the words below that best describe your initial learning experience.

CALM    BLISSFUL    HAPPY    JOYFUL    OPTIMISTIC    SATISFIED    CURIOUS

SMUG    LOVESTRUCK    CONFIDENT    ECSTATIC    INTERESTED    SYMPATHETIC

INNOCENT    TENDER    PLAYFUL    RELIEVED    INDIFFERENT    UNDECIDED

THOUGHTFUL    WITHDRAWN    PUZZLED    APOLOGETIC    CONFUSED    SHY    BORED

EMBARRASSED    RESERVED    DISTANT    FEARFUL    PROTECTIVE    HURT    ANXIOUS

MISERABLE    LONELY    SAD    GRIEVING    GUILTY    PARANOID    REGRETFUL

HARASSED    EXHAUSTED    DISAPPOINTED    CAUTIOUS    WORRIED    HELPLESS

HORRIFIED    SCARED    HOPELESS    SURPRISED    HYSTERICAL    DISGUSTED

SHOCKED    FRIGHTENED    POISONOUS    IMPOTENT    CRITICAL    ANGRY

JEALOUS    PRUDISH    SUSPICIOUS    DANGEROUS    SKEPTICAL    OBSTINATE

FURIOUS    AGGRESSIVE    ENVIOUS    IRRITATED    DETERMINED    BETRAYED

4. With whom are you most afraid of sharing this part of your story? What are your fears?

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## Week 4: Shortcuts

Boys have **big dreams**. They love dreaming of being a fireman, a superhero, or an astronaut. Then, somewhere along the way, wishes became more reasonable. Hopes became fantasies, relegated to becoming childhood daydreams that were dismissed as “silly” or “unreasonable.” Perhaps this describes you. You settled for more reasonable goals: teacher, accountant, businessman, chemist . . . you get the idea. Somehow, you learned as a boy not to dream so big. You figured keeping your expectations small, manageable, and reasonable is better.

God made you to desire deeply. You’re hungry for the experience of being fully alive. You ache to the core for a moment of complete freedom and acceptance. God designed you for **pleasure, delight, and joy**.

However, there is another equally powerful reality deep down: Life will kick you in the teeth. Jesus spoke of this very clearly:

*“In this world you will have tribulation...”*

John 16:33a

In the face of this truth, it is easy to back off and settle for safety and ease. It’s not practical to grow up and be Spiderman. You can’t get a degree in Superhero. But no matter how hard you try, you cannot stop hoping as an adult. You can’t short-circuit your heart. But how do you cope in a world where struggle, disappointment, and failure are inevitable? Surely there must be a way to overcome it? That’s where temptation comes in, and addiction “solves the problem.”

**Temptation** is a perceived shortcut that promises to satisfy a godly desire, longing, or hope while at the same time mitigating the risk of disappointment (sadness), abandonment (fear), betrayal (hurt), or failure (shame). In other words, we each want abundant life without the risk of pain, heartache, or choices. In other words, we desire to live fully without the pain of feeling fully.

Your sexual temptation is primarily based upon your relational woundedness. **Temptation is directly tied to your story**. Satan takes good or neutral things and entices us to leverage them for power. This is the strategy he used in the Garden of Eden. The fruit itself was neutral. The temptation and the lie was that “that thing” could make life full and satisfying. Temptation is rooted in meeting a legitimate need in an illegitimate way. Temptation that becomes sin is always an effort to satisfy the heart’s genuine desire.

Seeking relief through illegitimate means is called “**counterfeit fulfillment**.” Lust, pornography, affairs, and sexual fantasies are ways to get relief, but they are not truly fulfilling, thus “counterfeit.” Sexual sin is always an attempt to escape from life’s shame, sadness, and loneliness. Our heartache, betrayal, and powerlessness conditioned us to attempt to manage life.

Sin is much more about an attitude of the heart than behavior. To resist sexual temptation, we must know our heart's wounds and surrender their care to God.

- **FEEL WHAT YOU FEEL:** What is going on in your heart?
- **TELL WHAT YOU FEEL:** What needs to be brought into the light so that it can be dealt with?
- **SURRENDER THE STORY** (to God and others): How are you trying to manage your temptation/sin?

Channel your desire toward whatever is true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly—The God-honoring, not the shortcuts. Focus on these things.

What story is your life telling? Is it a story of courage and dignity, or is it a story of shame and sin?

## YOUR STORY

1. Below is a list of sexual behaviors. Circle all those you've done. Doing this exercise may be scary or shameful, but there is nothing that can separate you from the love of God in Jesus (Rom. 8:37-39).

FANTASY    PHONE SEX/CYBERSEX    AFFAIRS    EXHIBITIONISM    INCEST    RAPE

MASTURBATION    CHATROOMS    ADDICTED SEX IN MARRIAGE    BESTIALITY    MOLESTING

PORNOGRAPHY    SEX W/CONSENTING PARTNER    VOYEURISM    SEXUAL HARASSMENT

We are only as sick as the secrets we keep. Walking in the light means living in rigorous honesty. This requires intentionality and a willingness to be in pain for something greater than the pain. Admitting to this level of sin may be shameful, scary, and painful. Being honest about this content could be the bravest thing you've ever done.

2. Which behaviors are the ones that are most common to you?
3. What three ways have you tried to stop doing these but couldn't?

- a. ....
- b. ....
- c. ....

4. What has this behavior cost you? What consequences have you experienced due to your sexual behavior?

- Loss of primary relationships
- Loss of children (including abortion, deaths, loss of custody)
- Loss of significant friends and family relationships
- Unavailability to family
- Financial losses
- Guilt of having hurt others
- Loss of job
- Loss of integrity
- Loss of self-worth

# *Week 5: Anointed by an Unclean Woman*

## READ LUKE 7:36-50

The passage you just read tells the story of a Pharisee named Simon, who invited Jesus to dinner. As is Luke's habit, he included an interaction amid the story that is the point of the story itself! During the dinner, there was an interruption. A woman whom Luke describes as a "sinner" (v. 37) interrupted the dinner.

What she did is perhaps the most dramatic demonstration of adoration for Jesus in all the Scriptures. Upon hearing Jesus was visiting her town, she found the most expensive thing she could find to offer to him. "She brought an alabaster flask of ointment" (perfume)." (v. 37). The text not-so-subtly suggests the woman was a prostitute, so the ointment was clearly "part of her business." How ironic...the perfume she used as part of her prostitution business becomes the instrument of adoration and confession.

While Jesus was eating dinner, the woman fell at his feet, weeping and raining tears on them. She kissed his feet, anointed them with her perfume, and then wiped them with her hair. The fragrance of the oils filled the house, and her actions, as you would guess, caused a big commotion.

When Simon the Pharisee saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were the prophet I thought he was, he would have known what kind of woman this is who is falling all over him." (v. 39)

Jesus turned to Simon and said to him, "I have something to tell you."

"Oh? Tell me," he replied smugly.

"Two men were in debt to a banker. One owed five hundred silver pieces, the other fifty. Neither of them could pay up, so the banker canceled both debts. Which of the two was more grateful?"

Simon answered, "I suppose the one who was forgiven the most."

"That's right," said Jesus. Then, turning toward the woman who was still on the floor at his feet, Jesus spoke to Simon (while looking at the woman). "Do you see this woman? I came to your home; you provided no water for my feet, but she rained tears on my feet and dried them with her hair. You gave me no greeting, but from the time I arrived, she hasn't quit kissing my feet.

You provided nothing for freshening up, but she has soothed my feet with perfume. She was forgiven many, many sins, and so she is very, very grateful. If the forgiveness is minimal, the gratitude is minimal.”

Jesus then said to her with all the compassion of the God who made her, “I forgive your sins. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

This woman was desperate for life change and boldly (and humbly) went to Jesus with all her heart. All she had to offer tangibly was the perfume...but what she really offered was her feelings, longings, and hope for things to be different. She threw everything at the feet of Christ. She cried out, and Jesus met her right where she was.

## YOUR STORY

1. In light of the story you just read and consider your own story, circle the feelings you most identify with.

ANGER    FEAR    HURT    LONELINESS    SADNESS    GUILT    SHAME    GLADNESS

2. For the ones you circled, what needs and desires are connected to them?

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## *Week 6: Icebergs*

There is a great deal more of an iceberg below the water's surface than one can see above the surface. In fact, about 90% of an iceberg is below the waterline. The configuration of an iceberg is an accurate symbol of the heart. Like an iceberg, most of our humanness lurks below outward behavior. A deep desire for connection is the foundation of our humanness (the image of God in us). Understanding what that is can clarify how we relate with ourselves, others, and God. Below is a diagram that illustrates the iceberg model.



Heartache occurs when we receive wounds as we move through life. No one is exempt. We are each subject to heartache, which has three categories.

- **TOXIC SHAME:** If you really knew me, you wouldn't accept me.
- **BETRAYAL:** I've been let down by someone I trusted, and I've been hurt by someone I tried to help.
- **POWERLESSNESS:** It's not easy to trust a God who tells me He loves me but fails to protect me from the pain of life.

To cope with the reality of rejection (toxic shame, betrayal, and powerlessness), we live in ways that protect us from pain. The heartache of rejection is not the problem; what you do to cope with heartache is. Sin, especially sexual sin, is an effort to avoid, manage, and mitigate the heartache of life. Sin is our demand that says, "I will be in control." Or "I will create my own happiness."

One essential tool for beginning to live fully is learning to address the heartache of the past, cope with the heartache of the present, face the heartache of the future, and surrender it all to Christ.

## YOUR STORY

1. **PAST:** Looking over your life, think of 10 significant wounds that occurred in your story and list them below.

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

2. **PRESENT:** What are three current areas of heartache (toxic shame, betrayal, and powerlessness) you are dealing with?

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....

3. **FUTURE:** What are one or two wounds you have sworn will never happen again?

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# Week 7: Beginning to Live Free

You are created as an image bearer of God, by God, to glorify God. Being stamped in his image means you are created as a relational being designed to live fully. The only way you can live fully is in **relationship** with yourself, others, and God.

Living fully is an adventure that requires courage, wisdom, and the desire to live outside the cycle of relief-seeking and counterfeit fulfillment in which you have been trapped. Living fully is about glorifying God. The gateway to glorifying God is being ourselves. Irenaeus wrote, “The glory of God is man fully alive, but the life of man is the vision of God.”

The risk of living fully is recognizing that we have little control over life’s blessings or pain. Stepping outside the cycle of relief-seeking is a wild process that takes us beyond what is safe, comfortable, and ordinary. But it is the only way to find ourselves and experience the God who made us all in our being.

Look carefully at the list below and consider 5 components of healthy relationships and healing conversations. All components begin with the letter “A” and build upon one another. When these 5 things are practiced, people experience being seen, soothed, safe, and secure.

## 5 A’S:

**ADMISSION:** A request to be heard in vulnerability and to be accepted as a needy person that is manifested through confession. “Confession” is “homologeo” in the New Testament, which means “to say the same thing,” in other words, confession means to “agree with God” about what needs to be confessed and the need to confess it.

**ACCEPTANCE:** The outcome of grieving powerlessness well and doing so in a gathering of like-hearted, needy people (i.e., community).

**ATTENTION:** The heart must be attended to, as demonstrated through belonging (being accepted for who you are) and mattering (being appreciated for how you’re made).

Attunement is the emotional bond you develop with someone who will be there for you and truly knows you. It is often referred to as “being on the same page emotionally, whether we agree on the content or not.”)

A way to understand what “attunement” means is to learn this acrostic:

- **A** = Awareness: “I see that you’re \_\_\_\_\_ (sad, hurting, lonely, etc.)”
- **T** = Turning Toward: I will (literally and figuratively) face you to make sure you can see my face and care
- **T** = Tolerance: “I have room to experience your different experiences and feelings.”
- **U** = Understanding: “I am human and have been where you are emotionally.”
- **N** = Non-Defensive Responding: “I will be curious and seek relationship over compliance or winning.”
- **E** = Empathy: I might not know your exact situation, but I do know what it’s like to suffer, and I am with you.”

**ATTACHMENT:** Emotional attachment refers to the feelings of closeness and affection that help sustain meaningful relationships over time. Attachment is the emotional bond you develop with someone who will be there for you and who truly knows you.

Attachment involves three core components:

- **Attunement:** “I see you.”
- **Containment:** “I can deal with you having feelings and will stay with you.”
- **Repair of rupture:** “I will admit my mistakes, that I’ve harmed you, and make amends.”

A secure attachment to the parent(s) (care provider) provides the child with the resources to resolve trauma and mitigate the more disastrous consequences of trauma, regardless of how acute or painful the trauma is.

A secure attachment serves as a shield protecting the child from being overwhelmed by shame and distress.

**ALIGNMENT:** A person is genuinely aligned when he can receive feedback and be confronted. Feedback is often referred to as “having your blind spots pointed out.” Confrontation can be thought of as “with front,” i.e., one man’s heart being exposed to another. In confrontation and feedback, the man is willing to “have the mirror held up to his heart.”

## YOUR STORY

Galatians 6:1-5

As you read the Galatians passage, consider these components of telling your story:

- **WHO** will you share your story with?
- **WHEN** will you share your story?
- **WHAT PART** of your story will you share?
- **WHAT NEEDS** do you have before, during, and after you share your story?

# Week 8: Forbidden Fruit

*“...the young man who rings the bell at the brothel  
is unconsciously looking for God.”*

Bruce Marshall

**Eric** fantasizes about making love to a woman in an open field at night in a rainstorm. His fantasy always begins with a conversation in which he is charming, and she finds him irresistible and romantic. At some point in his fantasy, the woman turns the conversation sexual and makes her move.

**Dave's** fantasies usually involve a woman who is physically restrained and consistently involves scenes of violent physical abuse. Dave's fantasies are full of overwhelming self-contempt and feelings of shame and guilt—as well as pleasure and gratification. The most consistent theme of his fantasies is violence.

**Richard** regularly has fantasies of having sex with other men. Generally, his fantasies involve men he knows. Richard's fantasies often end with his wife walking in on him and catching him with his partner. The fantasies consistently end with the theme of Richard becoming very angry with his wife for interrupting him and his partner.

**Bill** often finds himself fantasizing about having sex with two women at one time. Bill describes his fantasies as more like watching a movie or a TV show rather than him being actually involved in the sexual acts. In his fantasies, Bill feels powerful and invincible.

How can we escape the power of sexual fantasy when sexuality is written into our *humanity* by God (not to mention all of the sexual cues that permeate our culture)? How can we hope to live with more integrity, more authenticity, and more purity when we cannot avoid the images that play in our minds? You will never be able to say “No” to sexual fantasy with any freedom unless you first say “Yes!” to something greater.

For most men, sexual fantasy is often the most challenging part of sexual sin to avoid. There is a difference between attraction and fantasy. Men are visually stimulated. Fantasy is the movement from attraction towards plan, possession, and satisfaction. Fantasy is a way of manufacturing gratification and avoiding the pain of not having our needs met. Our stories lend substantive hints about the fantasy themes. In other words, our stories significantly impact what kind of fantasies appeal to our desire for escape. If we listen to them, our fantasies will tell us what wounds need to be healed and what needs we desire to be met. When we deny our sexuality and ignore the message of our fantasies, we do great harm to ourselves and our hope for healing, authenticity, and integrity.



2. As you consider what you wrote above, what parts or themes of your story are you aware of?

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## Week 9: “We Band of Brothers”

In Shakespeare’s *Henry V*, the English armies are tired and ready to quit, yet the French armies, who outnumber the English five to one, are fresh and prepared for war. The English King, Henry V, rallies his exhausted, outmanned army to battle. As his speech draws to a close, Henry offers this hope and encouragement:

*We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;  
For he today that sheds his blood with me  
Shall be my brother, be he ne’er so vile,  
This day shall gentle his condition:  
And gentlemen in England now a-bed  
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,  
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks  
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin’s day.*

Henry V, Act 4. Sc. 3

One essential key to living a life of authenticity and integrity as a man is to be part of a group of men who know, support, and hold up each other. As men, we are made to battle the inequities of life together. We are made for war against injustice. We are made to be in a “band of brothers” who have each other’s backs and are willing to die for a cause greater than ourselves.

One of the most challenging parts of being a man in a broken world is that it is indeed broken. Life does not work. Along with the broken world, **God has marked us as needy creatures**. We can’t make it on our own. Jesus, God in human flesh, lived his earthly life with a group of men (a band of brothers) who knew each other well and could support each other in times of hardship and heartache.

### NEEDS

Dan Siegel, the founder of Interpersonal Neurobiology (IPNB), has written that everyone has these primary needs: The to be:

- **SEEN**: to have someone(s) truly pay attention to me.
- **SOOTHED**: to have someone come alongside me for comfort and strength when I am battle-weary
- **SAFE**: to know someone(s) is looking out for my welfare
- **SECURE**: to know I can struggle in front of another(s) without being rejected, humiliated, or abandoned.

## YOUR STORY

When was a time you had a band of brothers? When did you have a group of men who knew you and were for you, and fought for you? Briefly write that story.

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Read Ecc. 4:9-10, 12b; and Matthew 26:36-38. Discuss with your group how these verses speak to having a "band of brothers."

*"Whatever comes out of these gates, we've got a better chance of survival if we work together. Do you understand? We stay together, we survive."*

*Maximus, Gladiator*

To live a life of authenticity and integrity, we need to be ready to deal with moments when temptation seems stronger than hope. We can never outrun our neediness, imperfection, and desire for peace. To maintain integrity in those moments, you will need to prepare now for them, train every day, and practice using relationships as a tool for wisdom and maturity.

Here are some things to consider:

1. You need a band of brothers (4-6 men) in your life who know your story and are available to tell you the truth about you, the truth about themselves, and hear the truth about themselves from you. Who are they?

**NAME**

**PHONE**

|       |       |
|-------|-------|
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You need to practice calling them daily to check in so that when the time comes, you have built the bridges to reach out. Here is what that may sound like: "Hey John, it's me, Bob. I am calling just to check in and let you know about my day. How are things going?"

### FOOLS BELIEVE:

*No one knows or will know.*

*I must operate in secrecy.*

*I can change my behavior by myself.*

*I must isolate myself from others.*

*I can always figure out or force a way to handle problems.*

*I cannot give anyone the whole story.*

*No one is hurt by what I have done.*

*I have not been hurt by what I've done.*

*Chaos is the norm.*

### CRISIS:

When you are in need, these men need to be trained to ask you questions that will help you move into integrity and authenticity. Those questions might be:

1. Are you safe?
2. What are you doing?
3. Are you acting out now?
4. How can I help?

What is your plan for the next bit of time?

### NOBLE MEN KNOW:

*There are no secrets.*

*I must make a full disclosure and tell the truth.*

*I am powerless to change without the help of God and others.*

*I must create support networks.*

*Sometimes there are events that I can't control.*

*Trustworthy people get the whole story.*

# Week 10: Your Story

*“I love you, and because I love you, I would sooner have you hate me for telling you the truth than adore me for telling you lies.”*

Pietro Aretino

You can never have freedom from sexual sin if you do not tell those closest to you the truth about you. Telling the truth does not guarantee sexual integrity, but not telling it guarantees bondage. Disclosure and confession are both events and a process.

Even after you have decided to tell someone, think about your decision before going through with it. The issue is not how many people you tell...the issue is your rigorous honesty and the substance of the disclosure. You don't have to tell even when people ask or pry. **Most importantly, seek the advice of those you trust.**

As you consider how to break the news of your sexual sin to those who are closest to you, here are seven essential considerations.

## 1. Examine your motivation.

- What are you looking to gain?
- Do you want support, or are you seeking approval?
- Do you want intimacy, or are you just purging your sin?

## 2. Tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

- About your past
- About your current condition and actions
- Comprehensively and in one sitting (Piecemealed confessions cause more harm than telling all at once.)

## 3. Check your posture.

- Defensive explanation and manipulation—indicates you are still in denial
- Reporting the facts—shows intellectual understanding
- Expression of anger and fear—reflects taking responsibility

- Describing shame and embarrassment—means pride lifts
  - Sharing sadness and pain—shows emotional understanding
  - Admission of the depth of sadness—indicates acceptance
- 4.** Be prepared for questions and be ready to answer them honestly.

You don't have to answer them right at that moment, but you need to give an account for every question at some point.

**5.** Take responsibility.

- Avoid minimizing. Never say, "Well, it could be worse, at least I didn't do \_\_\_\_\_."
- Don't shift the blame. ("If you were only \_\_\_\_\_, it would have been different.")
- Don't compare yourself to others. (I am not as bad as Bob. He did \_\_\_\_\_.)
- Refrain from over-spiritualizing or philosophizing with phrases like "under the blood (of Christ)," or that it's time to "forgive and forget," or that "it's in the past."

**6.** Let whomever you are telling have their own experiences.

- Try not to tell them how they should feel or what they should do.
- Your right to privacy was forfeited with sexual sin. (You may, and need to, express your desire for discretion and discernment.)

**7.** Set up a safety net before you disclose.

- Be willing to participate in an ongoing dialogue.
- Identify counselors, pastors, and support groups.
- Share what you will be doing to get help.
- Ask them what they would like you to do to get help.

Unfortunately, most men and women snared by sexual sin don't volunteer their confessions. More often, their spouses, children, or colleagues find evidence of their double lives and confront them because they care. Because confrontation occurs instead of confession, tensions are often high, and relationships suffer more profound injuries.

Voluntary confessions are a strong indicator of a better prognosis where the addict and family can be cautiously optimistic for their future recovery. Ongoing secrets are a strong indicator that the addiction to sexual sin will be stubborn and resistant to change.

If you are having trouble preparing for the confession, confide in a mature, understanding friend, preferably a mature Christian, who can help bear your burden and pray for and with you. Walking through these steps with a close friend before talking to your spouse may be helpful. This friend should be someone who will stick with you through the entire healing process.

*So, get rid of all malicious behavior and deceit. Don't just pretend to be good!  
Be done with hypocrisy, jealousy, and backstabbing.*

1 Peter 2:1

*Since then, we do not have the excuse of ignorance; everything—  
and I do mean everything—connected with that old way of life has to go.  
It's rotten through and through. Get rid of it! And then take on an entirely  
new way of life—a God-fashioned life, a life renewed from the inside and  
working itself into your conduct as God accurately reproduces his character in you.*

Ephesians 4:22-25 (The Message)

What this adds up to is this: no more lies, no more pretense. Tell your neighbor the truth. In Christ's body, we're all connected, after all. When you lie to others, you end up lying to yourself.

So far, you have shared parts of your story with group members "bit by bit" under the guidance of the questions in each week's material. This week, you will have the opportunity to begin the process of broadening your network of support. Follow the guidelines presented this week and start the process of bringing other trustworthy men into your confidence. It is essential that you pay close attention to these guidelines and process your broadening of your network with your fellow group members before asking other men with whom to share your story.

# Week 11: Yeah, Baby!

*For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and  
be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.*

Gen. 2:24

Here is some good news: Sex is a profound and powerful mystery created by God to reveal His glory, express His character, and please His creation. It's a lot of fun, too.

## REVEAL HIS GLORY

God made our bodies with the potential to make visible the invisible. We are enfleshed to uncover the mystery of an unseen God. In our bodies, especially our sexuality, there is a promise that points to God's glory and our hope in God's redemptive heart.

As bodily creatures, we simply cannot see God. He's pure Spirit. But God wanted to make His mystery visible to us, so He stamped a sign of it into our bodies by creating us as male and female in His image (Gen. 1:27). The function of this image (maleness and femaleness joined together) is to reflect the Trinity, a perfect and divine communion (intimate fellowship) of three People.

## EXPRESS HIS CHARACTER

Theology's understanding of the Christian God centers on a picture of a relational being who is in, of, with, and enjoying the other perfectly. This way of existing/being shows us that we are to view life through the relationship lens. A man and woman who join together and are enfleshed express God's character and love very powerfully.

## PLEASES HIS CREATION

As an expression of His glory and character, this perfect fellowship is about pleasure, gratitude, and awe. The Trinity is a picture of enjoyment of the other and oneself simultaneously through an unfiltered showing and seeing that results in a mutual "Yes!" and a simultaneous "Thank you!" In a world bursting with heartache, death, and decay, Sex is gratifying, life-giving, and revitalizing.

## SO WHAT DOES ALL THAT MEAN?

All sexual expression comes down to a simple question: Does this behavior incarnate God's love and glory, or does it not?

Sin is a commitment to manufacture a way of escaping pain. Biblical hope is a willingness to accept pain but wait and expect a mitigating measure of pleasure. What God does is radical. He does not simply match our sorrow with joy. He gives us abundantly more riches than we could ever ask or imagine.

God created sex to be a relational act that transcends biology and transports us into the unseen of God's glory. Sex, as expressed in authentic intimacy, tells us that no matter how hard life might get, you are made as much for pleasure as for pain, and once you taste that pleasure, you will never forget it.

## IF YOU ARE MARRIED:

1. In what ways do you hold yourself back from giving and receiving pleasure with your wife?
2. How do you use sex as a tool as opposed to an expression of God's glory?
3. What does it mean to give yourself to another person? Are you giving everything you've got?

## IF YOU ARE SINGLE:

1. In what ways do you put off (medicate) your ache for sex?
2. How do you use sex as an idol? How do you put your hope in future sex?
3. What does it mean to give yourself to another person? Are you giving everything you've got?

## DEEPEN YOUR EXPERIENCE

Make a list of ideas about sex and relationships you have "operated under" since you were aware of being a sexual being. Bring the list back with you next week to process with the group.

Write a note to each of your fellow group members expressing your wish(es) for him in the future. For instance, if you have four other members named Rob, Jerry, Jack, and Rick, you will write a note to Rob, one to Jerry, etc. After you read a note to a member, hand the note to him.

## *Week 12: Amen.*

In an insightful article entitled “Saying Goodbye and Saying it Well: Consequences of a (not) Well-rounded Ending,” the authors write, “A well-rounded ending is associated with high positive affect, low regret, and an easy transition into the subsequent phase... ending a phase in a well-rounded way causally promotes positive affect and a constructive transition.” In other words, the best way to begin another chapter is to end the previous chapter well. That is our hope for this final week of the group!

1. To begin the group, have each group member read the list he wrote from last week’s session. After each member has read his list, the other group members will respond with what they felt as they listened to it.
2. After each group member has read his list and received feedback from the group, read the encouragement notes each group member wrote for the other members. After every man has received his card, he walks away with several notes of encouragement to look back on and be reminded of how worth it sexual integrity is when difficulties arise and when a reminder is needed!
3. Finally, read this aloud together as an act of worship and recognition of the importance of what you have done together:

*God of our beginnings and endings, we celebrate all we have shared together,  
and ask your blessing as we continue on our journey.*

*May the love that is in our hearts  
be a bond that unites us forever, wherever we may be.*

*May the power of your presence bless this moment of our leave-taking...*

*This we ask, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer, Amen.*

*“God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and  
to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of  
the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.  
Take away my difficulties, that victory over them  
may bear witness to those I would help  
of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life.  
May I do Thy will always!”*

### THE THIRD STEP PRAYER



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