

HOW TO HAVE PRICELESS CONVERSATIONS
ABOUT SEX, SIN, & FORGIVENESS.

BOUGHT AT A PRICE

An interactive Bible Study
for teens and adults.



**SIX 1-HOUR SESSIONS
FOR A LIFETIME OF GRACE**



BOUGHT AT A PRICE

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

A Bible study prepared by the Conquerors through Christ Team
Commission on Special Ministries
Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

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OPENING REMARKS

GOAL:

Through the power of the Holy Spirit working in God's Word:

- Equip users to start winning the battle against pornography use
- Equip friends and family of users to be effective allies in that battle
- Help both groups understand the vital role of the gospel in fighting the battle.

NOTE TO LEADERS:

In the sordid Old Testament record of King David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11 and 12), we have a timely and timeless depiction of the trap Satan sets for believers through sexual temptation and the rescue God gives freely through a trusted friend. This Bible study is for all the King Davids (whether male or female) who are “just looking,” and all the Nathans that desperately want to help them escape.

Conquerors through Christ is just that, a collection of Nathans and former Davids, men and women who desperately want to help brothers and sisters caught in Satan's web of deceit to find God's way out. We pray this Bible Study helps you see the power of God's grace in his Word and put it into practice in practical ways. Unfortunately, clear gospel forgiveness and motivation is lacking in many anti-pornography ministries. We truly believe it is only the gospel that rescues us from Satan and motivates us to fight back.

Many Bible studies are very helpful in giving participants knowledge about what the Bible says but lack in helping people put the words into practice. In the spiritual hand-to-hand combat that is the struggle against pornography use, knowledge alone is of little value. We know from experience and from talking with many other former users that knowledge of Christ's perfect life and willing death were comforting during the period of struggle, but taking action was required to find and use the “way out” God had provided all along (1 Cor. 10:13). While none of us claim to be without a lustful thought, we have found victory over regularly and deliberately seeking and finding sexually provocative or pornographic images so widely available today.

The goal of this Bible study is to use God's Word to help you Davids and Nathans know what to do, know how to do it, and motivate you to take the first steps of a lifelong struggle that results in blessings beyond your imagination. (For example, in the aftermath of David's and Bathsheba's sin, God blessed them with Solomon.) And no, you won't have to identify whether you are a David or a Nathan. Though some of the discussions may seem awkward initially, this passes over time.

The only way we can break Satan's chains of silent shame is to trust Jesus enough to talk about the problem, understand it, and fight it with Christ's power and wisdom.

Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. (James 1:22)

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21).

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES:

Each of the learning activities in this study is designed to be done either individually, in pairs, fours, or as a large group as practical. The preferred mode for each activity is noted. The following paragraphs describe the procedures for each type of activity.

These may be modified as necessary, but with care. The effectiveness of many activities will decrease without personal involvement of the individuals.

Individuals

These activities involve private or personal information where each individual needs to respond for him- or herself. It is noted in the activity that the information is not to be shared.

Pairs

Some activities are specifically designed for pairs. If an odd number of attendees is present, one group may comprise three individuals or the leader may act as one member of a pair.

Pairs or groups of four

The procedure for pairs or fours is as follows:

1. Each group assigns a Facilitator (keeps group on task), a Writer (records group's answers), a Relayer (speaks for the group) and a Timekeeper (keeps track of time). Roles may be combined for pairs: Facilitator/Timekeeper and Writer/Relayer.
2. Writer records the fruits of the group's discussion in the spaces provided. If responses are to be shared among the larger group, each relayer picks one or two items to share with the large group (without repeating items mentioned by other groups).

Large group

Large group sharing usually occurs at the end of an activity that is done in pairs or fours. The intent is to share the wisdom of the individual groups to the extent it is feasible.



INTRODUCTORY SESSION

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should have an overview of the battle against pornography use. We will do this by seeking to:

- Introduce the topic.
- See how Christ's love compels us to fight pornography use in spite of the awkwardness of the subject.
- Introduce the use of God's Word in the battle.
- Begin to explore the importance of God's people in the battle.

Today's video

Watch the "Introduction" video from the Conquerors through Christ website as a large group. Then form groups of 2-4 people.

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Brainstorm a list of about three items in each column below (some were mentioned in the video, but there are many others).

Burdens resulting from porn use	Blessings of conquering porn use

Have your relayer report one of your answers to the larger group (unless all of yours are mentioned already).

God’s Word in the fight

The first battle we likely have to face is the awkwardness of the subject. To receive the blessings of the victory, we trust Jesus to give us the desire and the ability to talk about the problem and his solutions.

Activity (Individual):

Consider these verses and complete the exercise below:

2 Corinthians 5:14-15 For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Christian love is an act of the will. Much like soldiers that are trained to act in spite of their fear of physical harm, we can learn to speak in difficult situations in spite of our fears of awkwardness. At the top of the next page, try to list two biblical examples and two examples from your life of a person who did something difficult or awkward out of love:

Biblical examples	Personal examples

Activity (pairs):

Take 60 seconds each to share your answers with someone next to you. A few willing individuals may share one example with the larger group.

Activity (pairs or fours):

Ashley is troubled somewhat by her use but thinks it’s just a way to learn things to spice up her marriage. Ben is mortified by his use but can’t stop or reach out to get help. Assume you are close friends with Ashley and Ben, and on different occasions each confesses the use to you.

Identify key phrases or thoughts you might share from the following Bible passage with each user. Note similarities and differences in your approach to each user:

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

Phrases or thoughts for Ashley	Phrases or thoughts for Ben

Relay one of your answers for each category to the larger group (unless it is mentioned first).

God’s people in the fight

Activity (pairs or fours):

The power to fight pornography comes through Word and Sacrament, but God often channels these blessings to us through fellow Christians. Almost universally the single most influential factor in escaping defeat and beginning the road to conquering pornography is breaking the silence of shame and seeking help from a fellow believer. Satan knows this and uses fears and lies to keep people silent and prevent them from getting the help they need. Consider the encouragements of James chapter 5 (the whole section from verse 13 through 20 is worthwhile, but we will focus on these two verses):

James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
James 5:20 ...remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

Develop a list of at least three fears or lies Satan uses to prevent people from confessing their sins to each other as God instructs. Counter each fear or lie with the truth.

Fears or lies Satan tells to get people to keep silent about their sins	The Truth God tells us about confessing to him and each other

Relay one of your answers for each category to the larger group (unless it is mentioned first).

Closing prayer

Dear Jesus, we know you bought us at a great price. All of us, whether we are caught in the sin of pornography or trying to help someone who may be caught, are on a long journey toward thankfully living for you. Send your Spirit through your Word to guide and direct us every step of the way. Amen.



STEP 1: GET REAL ABOUT THE WRECKAGE

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should be able to understand that, while Jesus has indeed won the victory over sin, pornography use is extremely dangerous to souls. We will do this by looking at: How widespread the damage is, the depth to which it affects users, the painful consequences that it causes, and the wreckage Christ endured because of our sin.

Usage is widespread and deep

Whatever the real numbers are, indications are that usage is high (<http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/>). One study indicated that for 68% of young adult men and 18% of women, watching porn is at least a weekly activity.

Activity (Pairs):

Turn to the person next to you and agree on two possible ways to complete this sentence: "Pornography use is so prevalent because..." This lesson is fairly heavy on the law with a gospel "preview" of the grace session that comes next.

First answer	Second answer

Relay one of your answers to the larger group (unless it is mentioned by another pair).

Today's video

Watch the "Get Real About the Wreckage" video from the Conquerors through Christ website. Form groups of 2-4 people. (video = 7:04)

Activity (pairs or fours):

Satan doesn't care how we fall, just that we do fall. He will push us whichever way we are already leaning. Brainstorm two lists, the first being lies Satan will tell to get some to justify or rationalize their sin. The second list will be lies Satan will tell to tempt others to despair that their sin is too great to be forgiven.

<p>Temptations to justify/rationalize/minimize porn use</p>	<p>Temptations to despair from porn use</p>
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The (not so obvious) victims of pornography use

Pornography is sometimes portrayed as “victimless.” Many in today’s society even think it is normal. But as Pastor Novotny states, pornography hurts the user and many other people.

Activity (pairs or fours):
 Identify an example of harm for each person, and note whether it is spiritual (danger to souls), physical/emotional (danger to physical or emotional wellbeing) or both.

Here we try to raise awareness of the ripple effects Pastor Novotny notes in the video.

Person	Harm or Danger	Spiritual	Physical/ Emotional
User’s children (current or future)			
User’s employer			
Other Christians			
Other non- Christians			

Relay one of your answers to the larger group (unless it is mentioned by another group).

The wreckage of the cross

As many have observed, the only place we truly see God's justice and God's love is at the cross. The words of Isaiah 53 can remind us of God's just and holy punishment of our shameful sins when Jesus suffered and died. Yet at the same time those words clearly reveal the blessings we receive because of what Jesus in love accomplished at the cross

Activity (Part 1, individually):

Read Isaiah 53:4-6 (printed below in Part 2), and apply the descriptions of sin to your own sin. If you are a "David" (porn user), identify specific sins listed associated with pornography use or hiding its use. If you are a "Nathan" (seeking to help a user), think of some other sins in your life that cause you shame.

Your responses are for private reflection and not to be shared.

"Infirmities" – List one or two recent sinful thoughts, words, or deeds you committed in weakness.	
"Sorrows" – List one or two recent sinful thoughts, words, or deeds that caused you great sorrow or shame.	
"Transgressions, iniquity" – Identify which of your sins you consider the "worst" violation of God's law.	
"Gone astray" – Identify one or two recent sinful thoughts, words, or deeds that led you away from God.	

Activity (Part 2, pairs or fours):

Underline word or phrases in the passage that indicate the awful price Jesus willingly paid for these sins.

Circle the words or phrases in the passage that express the blessings we get as a result.

Then share some ideas for a "Thank you" note to Jesus, and individually write a brief note below.

Isaiah 53:4-6

4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows,
yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way;
and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Dear Jesus,

Closing prayer

Stricken, smitten, and afflicted, see him dying on the tree!
'Tis the Christ, by man rejected; yes, my soul, 'tis he, 'tis he.
'Tis the long-expected Prophet, David's Son, yet David's Lord;
Proofs I see sufficient of it: 'tis the true and faithful Word.

Tell me, as you hear him groaning, was there ever grief like his?
Friends through fear his cause disowning, foes insulting his distress,
Many hands were raised to wound him, none would intervene to save,
But the deepest stroke that pierced him was the stroke that justice gave.

If you think of sin but lightly nor suppose the evil great,
Here you see its nature rightly, here its guilt may estimate.
Mark the sacrifice appointed; see who bears the awful load --
'Tis the Word, the Lord's Anointed, Son of Man and Son of God.

Here we have a firm foundation, here the refuge of the lost;
Christ's the rock of our salvation, his the name of which we boast.
Lamb of God, for sinners wounded, sacrifice to cancel guilt --
None shall ever be confounded who on him their hope have built.

Christian Worship 127 v.1-4



STEP 2: GET BACK TO GOD'S GRACE

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should know and trust that our sin cannot separate us from God's love. We will do this by remembering:

- Jesus loves us beyond comprehension;
- In that love, Jesus paid for all of my sins, including pornography use or other sins that bring me shame;
- God sees us as perfect because of Jesus' life and love;
- Jesus' gift of love motivates us to take up the fight against pornography use.

Today's video

Watch the "Get Back to God's Grace" video from the Conquerors through Christ website. Form groups of 2-4 people.

Activity (pairs or fours):

Skim John 4:4-26. Find attitudes and actions of the woman that she might have in common with a porn user. Find words and actions of Jesus which demonstrate that showing love to the woman at the well was the highest priority on Jesus' "To Do" list that day. Write down the fruits of this discussion below.

Commonalities between woman and a porn user	Jesus' great concern for the woman

Relay one of your answers to the larger group (unless it is mentioned by another group).

Jesus paid for ALL MY sin

Activity (individual/pairs):

To help us see that this message is fresh and personal every day, write your name on each blank in the Bible verses below. Then turn to someone next to you and take turns reading these verses with your own name in them (select the appropriate pronouns):

- Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for _____ in this: While he/she was still a sinner, Christ died for _____.
- Romans 5:20b But where _____ sin increased, grace increased all the more.
- Psalm 103:12 ...as far as the east is from the west, so far has [God] removed _____ transgressions from him/her.
- Jeremiah 31:34b “For I will forgive _____ wickedness, and will remember _____ sins no more.”
- 1 John 1:9 If _____ confesses his/her sins, [God] is faithful and just and will forgive _____ his/her sins and purify him/her from all unrighteousness.

Activity (pairs):

With the person next to you, each identify the verse(s) or Bible story you would use to comfort a sexual sinner and your reason.

The verse(s) or story I would use is...(pick one)...because...

Christ's love cleanses me

Jesus not only paid for our sin, he replaces our filthy rags of sin with his robe of righteousness. When God looks at us, he sees nothing but restored children clothed in Jesus' perfect life. There isn't even a speck of sin.

Activity (individual/pairs):

Privately read the verses below and underline every description or metaphor for the way God sees his restored children. After you finish, compare notes with the person next to you to see if you caught them all.

Psalm 51:7 Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

Romans 1:7 To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:2 To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be holy, together with all those everywhere who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ—their Lord and ours:

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Revelation 7:13,14 Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Christ's love compels me

A real and lasting change needs a change of heart and powerful motivation. This powerful motivation starts with Christ's love, which comes to us "unasked, unforced, unearned" (Vajda, CW54).

Activity (pairs or fours):

Read the verses that follow (including the next page). Then work together to rank the various forms of motivation to stop sinning according to long-term effectiveness. Be prepared to share your rationale for your rankings.

Genesis 3:8-12 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid." And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"

Proverbs 7:24-27 Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. Do not let your heart turn to [the adulteress'] ways or stray into her paths. Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng. Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

2 Corinthians 5:14,15 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

Ephesians 5:12 For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret.

1 John 5:3,4 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Rank from most effective (1) to least effective (4) motivations...

- _____ Avoid negative consequences such as divorce or a loss of a relationship.
- _____ Replace the shame of sin with the joy of obedience.
- _____ Live the way Jesus wants us to in order to give him glory and thanks.
- _____ Fear of getting caught.

Closing prayer

Were the whole realm of nature mine, that were a tribute far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.

Christian Worship 125 v.4



STEP 3: GET RID OF PORN

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should be able to:

- Understand the ease of falling into Satan's trap
- Understand the difficulty in getting out of a cycle of sin
- Identify what constitutes pornography in God's eyes (so we can know what to get rid of)
- Develop initial strategies to get out of the cycle of sin (for ourselves or another)

Satan's net is very wide

Three big factors in the epidemic of pornography usage are accessibility, affordability, and anonymity. Having abundant free or low cost images available anonymously is like pouring gasoline on the fire of sexual temptation. Millions are ensnared.

Activity (Pairs):

With the person next to you, identify the falsehood in each of the lies Satan is able to use to get even Christians to so readily violate their consciences because of the accessibility and anonymity.

Satan's lie...	The truth that exposes the falsehood...
1. It's so prevalent, everyone must use it. 2. This won't cost me anything. 3. No one will know I am using pornography.	

Satan's net is very deep

The physiological effect of pornography runs deep. Viewing causes brain changes that have similarities to drug usage. Carnes (92) refers to "cybersex as the crack cocaine of sexual addiction." Struthers (85) says "With each lingering stare, porn deepens a Grand Canyon-like gorge in the brain." These deep effects take great effort to undo, but with God all things are possible.

Paul writes to the Galatians (6:1) "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted." The phrase "caught in a sin" accurately describes those ensnared by the lure of pornography. For many, their behavior is equivalent to an addiction, which is typified by the four characteristics (often called the four C's of addiction) listed in the following table.

Characteristic	Description
Lack of control	The user repeatedly says, “This is the last time I’ll do this,” but fails to stay away.
Craving	Users have the urge to view either when they are under stress or as a way to feel good.
Lack of fear of consequences	Users view in spite of what might happen if they were to get caught.
Compulsion	Users feel powerless against this sin at times.

Activity (Pairs):

You discover that a Christian coworker “Charlie” has been visiting pornographic websites over an extended period of time at work. You confront him and he confesses, but says he can handle it himself. Use the listed passages and plan your responses to help Charlie realize he is “caught in a sin” and needs help with his fight.

Charlie’s Statement	Bible Passage	My Response
I got myself into this mess, I’ll get myself out.	<i>Ephesians 6:12</i> For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.	
I’m too ashamed to tell anyone else about this.	<i>Isaiah 53:6</i> We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.	
I can’t trust anybody with this.	<i>Proverbs 27:6</i> Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.	
I can’t afford counseling.	<i>Matthew 16:26</i> What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?	

God sets the bar high

Former Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart famously remarked that pornography was hard to define, but "I know it when I see it." Our opinions regarding what constitutes pornography are not what matter; rather, God's opinion is the one that matters. Read the following verses.

Job 31:1 I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

Matthew 5:28 But I [Jesus] tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Ephesians 5:3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Agree on at least five sources of images that American culture says are "okay" but that God says cause people to sin. Try to think of a wide variety of sources, including live (ex. beach), photographic (lingerie catalog), video (professional cheerleaders), imaginary (romance novel) etc.

Sources of images that cause people to sin...

Today's video

Activity (pairs or fours):

Watch the "Get Rid of Porn" video from the Conquerors through Christ website. (video=4:54)

1. Read the two Matthew selections. Jesus advocates extreme measures for fighting sin and Matthew records Jesus teaching the same lesson TWICE.

Matt 5:27-30 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."

Matt. 18:7-9 "Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell."

2. In your groups, make two lists. One of actions (no matter how challenging) that will reduce the opportunities to view and a second that will reduce the triggers that lead to viewing.
3. Then have each relayer pick one or two items to share with the large group (without repeating items mentioned by others).

<p>Will reduce opportunities to sin...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Use blocking software and have someone else keep the password from and for you. 	<p>Will reduce triggers that lead to sin...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ex. Avoid watching sexually suggestive TV shows or movies.
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Closing prayer

"Come, follow me," the Savior spoke, "all in my way abiding.
 Deny yourselves; the world forsake; obey my call and guiding.
 Oh, bear the cross, whate'er betide; Take my example for your guide.

"I teach you how to shun and flee what harms your souls' salvation,
 Your hearts from ev'ry guile to free, from sin and its temptation.
 I am the refuge of the soul and lead you to your heav'nly goal."

Christian Worship 453 v.1,4



STEP 4: GET ACCOUNTABLE

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should be able to:

- See the value of confession to another person in spite of the pain.
- Understand that allies significantly diminish Satan's power
- Identify and evaluate options for accountability
- Practice giving and receiving confession and forgiveness.

The cost of failing to confess

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Consider from the verses below the stories of three people who desperately needed to confess, and eventually did so to God and another person. Find one or more examples of physical, emotional, and spiritual pain endured by these men prior to confession. Then identify at least one similar example of each kind of pain endured by someone caught in the sin of pornography use. This activity is meant to prove that there are consequences for failing to confess. God willing, the participants will see the consequences of honest confession are actually less.

Examples of pain borne by biblical persons	Examples of pain borne by pornography users
<i>Physical</i>	<i>Physical</i>
<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Emotional</i>
<i>Spiritual</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>

- King David: *Psalms 32:3-5* When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"— and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

- The younger son: *Luke 15:13-19* “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.’”
- Peter: *Luke 22:60-62* Peter replied, “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: “Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.” And he went outside and wept bitterly. and *John 21:17* The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

Evaluate: The pain of remaining in sin must overcome the perceived pain of confession.

Today’s Video

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Watch the “Get Accountable to Others” video from the Conquerors through Christ website. (video=7:32)

1. James explains (5:16a) “Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed.” Satan wants us to believe we can win the battle alone. We must stop listening to his lies. To help us do that, brainstorm two lists, one of drawbacks to confessing and one of benefits or blessings. See the examples to help get you started.
2. Have each relayer pick one or two items to share with the large group (without repeating items mentioned by others).

Drawbacks	Blessings...
Loss of a (false) reputation...	Relationship built on true honesty; someone to pray specifically for us...

Evaluating possibilities for confession

Activity (Pairs or fours):
Consider the following options for confession. Identify practical reasons for choosing or not choosing each person. If you are a user wrestling with taking this step of confession, privately rank the choices from first (1) to last (4) based on your specific situation. This activity is meant to help participants brainstorm the best person (or people) with whom to share their struggle.

Potential Confession Partner	Advantages	Disadvantages
Pastor		
Gracious Friend		
Professional Christian Counselor		
Spouse		

Write (and practice) the script

Activity (Pairs):

For both users and those trying to help users, this may be one of the most important and challenging activities. Though no one needs to identify where he or she stands, this will likely hit close to home. As you use this time to actually plan what you might say and practice saying it, trust that the Lord can make this experience powerfully effective in helping to conquer this sin through Christ.

Below is an abbreviated script of a conversation in which one person confesses pornography use and seeks help. With the person next to you, complete the portions of the script which are in parentheses in your own words. After you complete the script, practice using it at least twice (with each person taking a turn playing each role at least once).

Finish the script:

User (U):	Hey _____ I really need to talk to you.
Confession partner (CP):	Okay. What's up?
U	(express that you need to confess something and get help):
CP	(express willingness to help):
U	(explain that you have been struggling to stop looking at pornography):
CP	(express your concern for the person's struggle and that Jesus forgives that sin, too):
U	(explain how you've tried to stop but can't):
CP	(acknowledge that the nature of this sin makes it very difficult to stop):
U	(ask for help to stop):
CP	(promise to pray for the person, to check in regularly, and to help him/her get additional help if needed): U (thank the CP for their willingness to help):
CP	(express your desire to live up to the trust the user has put in you, with God's help):
U	(suggest a schedule for ongoing communication):
CP	(confirm the time/date for when you will talk again; offer to pray with and for the user):
U	(agree to time/date and prayer):

CP (close conversation with a quick prayer for Jesus to forgive user and give him or her strength to fight back against Satan's lies).

U (Thank the CP and say goodbye):

Closing Prayer

Dear Jesus: This step is likely the most difficult and yet the most important for people who desire to conquer pornography use. Remind all of us, whether we are the one struggling or the one trying to help the struggler, that you have promised to never leave us or forsake us. Give each of us the courage and wisdom to act according to and in response to your love . We pray this, knowing that your victory over Satan is already complete and final. Help us to live up to the status of redeemed children of God that you achieved for us. Amen.



STEP 5: GET READY FOR BATTLE

Objective:

By the end of today's session, the participants should be able to:

- Understand that the battle is against both “external” and “internal” enemies.
- Develop a strategy to handle triggers.
- Plan to feed on the gospel good news every day for strength.
- Remind ourselves God gives us the strength and the tools to fight the battle.

Recognize the internal enemy

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Even after 25 years as a Christian, Paul struggled painfully with sin. Read about his struggle in Romans 7:14-25, where he so vividly describes the battle between our old sinful nature (that sticks with us until we die) and the new nature which loves what God loves.

Romans 7:14-25 We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!

1. An aged Apache Christian once described the struggle this way: “I have two dogs fighting in my heart. The dog I feed the most wins.” Brainstorm two lists, one of actions that feed the new nature (that we need to do more often) and a second of actions we need to stop because they feed the old sinful nature.
2. Relay one of your answers for each category to the larger group (unless it is mentioned by another group).

Actions that Feed the New Self	Actions that Feed the Old Self

Handling the external triggers

Regarding fighting against sin Martin Luther commented: “You can’t stop birds from flying over your head, but you can stop them from building a nest in your hair.” His point being that we can’t stop all temptations from reaching us, but we can control whether or not we let them become part of our lives.

Activity (Pairs):

Practice bouncing the eyes.

1. In pairs, create a series of "images" that one person shows to the other. (Take several blank sheets of paper and use a marker to write “XXX” on a few of them.) As each person pages through the sheets showing them to the other person, each time an XXX sheet is shown, immediately look away until the next image is shown. (Note: this activity is good for all of us, because lust lurks in all our hearts, not just those of the user.) This activity is an innocent way to practice bouncing your eyes from suggestive material.
2. In your pairs, complete the following lists. Identify potential additional stressors and strategies to avoid or counteract them.
3. Relay one of your answers for each category to the larger group (unless it is mentioned by another group).

Potential Stressors Leading to Pornography Use	Actions that Can Help Users Avoid or Counteract
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loneliness 2. Stress 3. Etc... 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.

Today’s Video

Activity (Pairs or fours):

Watch the “Get Ready for Battle” video from the Conquerors through Christ website. (video=6:58)

1. Read the following verse. Lamentations 3:22,23 Because of the LORD'S great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Pastor Novotny suggested notecards in the video. As a group brainstorm several ideas for how you might remind yourself of Jesus’ forgiveness EVERY day. This activity takes us back to our gospel motivation even as we brainstorm helpful things that we can do in the fight.

1. Ways to be reminded of sin and forgiveness every day...
2. Then have each relayer pick one or two items to share with the large group (without repeating items mentioned by others).

Put on the full armor of God

Activity (large group AND pairs):

1. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. As a large group, list at least one specific use of each piece of soldier's equipment in the fight against pornography use and write it in the table below (see example).
2. With the person next to you, agree on wording to complete the sentence at the end of the table. If you are willing, share your sentence with the larger group.

Uses for each piece of equipment...

1. Belt of truth – I will not believe the devil's lies about how this doesn't hurt anyone.
2. Breastplate of righteousness
3. Combat boots of the gospel of peace
4. Shield of faith
5. Helmet of salvation
6. Sword of God's Word
7. Even if I lose a battle here or there, the war is already won because

Closing Prayer

Ephesians 3:16-21 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP (EPILOGUE)

We've spent all this time studying what God wants to do and practicing how to do it. We've reviewed all Jesus has done for us that motivates us to want to do it. Now comes the hardest part, actually doing it. This epilogue outlines strategies for individuals to undertake after the final lesson to either:

- Break the silence and ask for help, if one is a David (user).
- Offer help to another, if one is a Nathan (someone trying to help another caught in this sin).

For Davids (Current users)

The action that former users have found to be the most helpful in beginning the road to recovery is telling someone else about their problem and seeking help to conquer it. Below is a list of steps that can help you conquer Satan's barriers through Spirit-given grace, motivation, and action.

1. Review the "Evaluating possibilities for confession" section in "Step 4 Get Accountable." Write down the name of the person you select to whom you will confess your struggle with sin.

2. Go to ConquerorsthroughChrist.net web page and click on the link "the next step" or use this link: (<http://goo.gl/bJgDrE>). Watch the video.
3. Say a personal prayer asking for strength and courage to follow through and for Jesus to walk with you every step of the way.
4. Be reminded once more of Jesus' promises:
James 5:16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.
Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
Hebrews 13:5b God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."
5. As soon as possible, call or go see the person identified above. Some may find a telephone conversation easier to do than an in-person conversation or vice versa. Whatever it takes to make it happen, do it.
6. Keep praying during and after the conversation that Jesus would, with the help of your confession partner, find whatever help is necessary (pastoral care, counseling, etc.) to enable you to conquer this habitual sin.

Don't be afraid

Over 300 times in the Bible, God repeats these words: "Don't be afraid." What fitting words for you right here and right now. Porn may have forced you into a corner of fear, but don't be afraid! God's grace is bigger than your sin. You may be petrified of confessing this, but don't be afraid! The family of God is waiting to help you get better. You may have thought you could never change, but don't be afraid. Nothing is impossible with God. Remember - Jesus has conquered your sin. Remember - Jesus wants to help you break its pattern in your life today. So, take the next step. We can't wait to see what God does next!

For Nathans (Friends or family of a user or suspected user)

The action that former users have found to be the most helpful in beginning the road to recovery is telling someone else about their problem and seeking help to conquer it. Your desire to help may be the key that unlocks the road to recovery for your friend or family member. Here is a list of steps you can use to attempt to begin that process. Keep in mind, however, that we have no control over change in another person. The timing and “success” of any life change is between the other person and God.

1. Write down the name of the person you desire to help escape this habitual sin (or suspected sin).
2. Go to ConquerorsthroughChrist.net web page and click on the link “the next step.” Watch the video.
3. Say a personal prayer for God to help (specify the person by name) escape Satan’s web (some of the thoughts from Pastor Novotny’s prayer may be helpful) and for you to have the wisdom and courage, according to God’s will, to assist in any way possible.
4. Be reminded once more of Jesus’ encouragement and promises:
Galatians 6:1,2 If someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.
Hebrews 13:5b God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”
5. As soon as possible, call or go see the person identified above. Some may find a telephone conversation easier to do than an in-person conversation or vice versa. Whatever it takes to make it happen, do it. Because you are approaching the one either caught or suspected to be caught in sin (instead of he/she approaching you), your words need to be grace-filled and may or may not result in a confession.
 - *For a known user:* Even if you make it clear that you are motivated by Christ’s love and in no way consider yourself superior, the initial reaction may be a strong denial or rationalization. If this is the case, the Holy Spirit will need time to work on the individual’s heart. Perhaps just leaving a CtC business card or web address with an invitation to check out the web site may allow the person to encounter God’s Word to convict and then to forgive when the Spirit knows the time is right. Offer to be willing to talk if the other person is ever willing to do so.
 - *For suspected user:* A strong denial is very possible, in which case the denial may be valid or not. Because we cannot read hearts, the validity may be difficult to judge. Repeating your concern for the person as your motivation, your joy if porn use is NOT an issue, and your willingness to help in the future if porn use is an issue demonstrates your love.
 - On the other hand, the person’s heart may be ripe for being confronted with God’s law and God’s gospel. While we don’t minimize the sin at all, we also make it very clear that Jesus and his forgiveness are far greater than ANY sin. The practice conversation in Step 4 may be a helpful guide if the person is at the point of seeking help.
6. Keep praying during and after the conversation that Jesus would give you wisdom to assist the person to find whatever help is necessary (pastoral care, counseling, etc.) that will enable him or her to conquer this habitual sin.

Don't be afraid

Over 300 times in the Bible, God repeats these words: "Don't be afraid." What fitting words for you right here and right now. Porn may have forced your family member or friend into a corner of fear, but don't be afraid! God's grace is bigger than the sin. You may be hoping for the best (porn is not an issue) but fearing the worst (the suspected user is deeply caught), but don't be afraid. God already knows the truth and will help guide you to it. You may be petrified of approaching him or her, but don't be afraid! God is waiting to help and guide you. You may have thought he or she could never change, but don't be afraid. Nothing is impossible with God. Remember - Jesus has conquered all sin. Remember - Jesus wants to help you break its pattern in your friend or family member's life today. So, take the next step. We can't wait to see what God does next!

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword?

As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;

we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Romans 8:35-39)

