

Lesson Plan - Session 3 – Sexual Purity Issues, Part 2

Time	Activity
0:00	<p>Opening Prayer</p> <p>Plan for the session</p> <p>Questions/Comments from previous session</p> <p>Share False Beliefs exercise</p> <p>Discuss Readings</p> <p>Assignments</p>
0:05	<p>Questions from prior session</p> <p>Catch-up sharing, if any</p>
0:10	<p>Share False Beliefs exercise</p> <p>May go around the circle multiple times</p> <p>Encourage listeners to add false beliefs and/or verse to their own list – learn from each other</p> <p>More than 1 verse can be cited – however, more helpful to have scripture that can be easily recalled. (In a pinch, 1 verse is better than 1 chapter)</p> <p>Each man shares 1 false belief and scripture used to combat/replace it</p> <p>Each share should take 30-60 seconds</p> <p>If appropriate, more discussion can occur after everyone shares</p>
0:50	<p>Discuss Assigned Readings, p. 16-48 (see discussion notes)</p>
1:05	<p>Defining Sobriety & The 3 Circles (p.64-68)</p> <p>(see last section of discussion notes)</p>
1:20	<p>Assignments</p> <p>Review the assignments on the Overview for the next session.</p> <p>Read p. 51-68. Come prepared to discuss.</p> <p>Complete 3 Circles exercise. Come prepared to discuss the contents of each of your circles and listen for ideas from others.</p> <p>Final questions or comments (may defer to end of meeting)</p>
1:25	<p>Closing Prayer</p>
1:30	<p>Adjourn – may leave meeting open for additional discussion</p>

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Note to Group Leader(s)

As discussed in a note in the prior session, you will almost certainly not be able to discuss all the material printed below. Group discussion of every line in the book and/or every question/comment from a participant is not a reasonable goal or expectation. As leader of the group, you will need to both be observant to the group's readiness to learn about a particular topic as well as guide the group through the assigned material. As such, you must decide which material/topics/issues will be most beneficial to the group during each 1.5 hour session.

Accept, honor, and trust that each man can do as much exploration of recovery as they desire in the 2 weeks between each meeting. As the leader, you are guiding the group in what you believe will be the most beneficial use of the group study meeting time.

Again, the material can serve as a quick reference to you – as you prepare for each session and during each session - as you:

- Present a concise summary of the reading,
- Examine one portion of the reading in great detail
- Ask questions about the reading, or
- Respond to questions about the reading

You are under no obligation to use the entire outline, and in fact, it will likely be detrimental to the group if you try to cram all this information into the session.

Relax, make the notes your own, and enjoy sharing with others. Also, expect to learn from group members.

Discussion of Assigned Reading, p. 16

Withdrawal

Are there any withdrawal symptoms associated with sex addiction?

It is possible to experience withdrawal symptoms with the end of compulsive sexual behavior

Examples - headaches, mood swings (anger, anxiety, despair, depression, restlessness), insomnia, fatigue, frequent urination

What can you do about them?

These will fade as we continue recovery.

Supplement – Your Brain on Porn

Brain chemistry notes – layman terms

Frequently repeated actions or thoughts create a neuro-pathway

When no longer used, it recedes in prominence

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Then, this action or thought “comes to mind” less frequently

Analogy - neuroplasticity

We walk through a pasture of grass; Each successive trip it is easier to see the path each trip creates. If we use the same path each time, eventually, a hard-packed dirt trail with no grass can be easily seen and easily accessed, with each trip marking it even more clearly and making it easier to use. If we stop using that path, over time, the ground will soften, grass will begin to grow again, and one day the grass where the path formerly was, will be as tall and lush as the rest of the field. The path will be gone.

Spiritual Warfare

It is said that true recovery and healing cannot occur without a spiritual transformation.

What is spiritual warfare?

A 3-fold attack on us:

- Devil and demons
- World System
- The Unsanctified Self – the addict

How do we fight it?

- Share with others what we are experiencing (James 5:16)
- Put on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:10-18)
- Use our faith in Christ daily to defend from enemy attacks, regardless of the source

Pornography - Any media – written, audio, or visual – whose purpose is to sexually arouse the consumer

How does this affect the brain?

Brain scans of a porn addict are similar to those of a drug user. (We become addicted to the brain chemistry that occurs when we view porn.)

Over time, often the user needs a bigger hit to get the same brain chemical high. Can lead to desire to see or experience more – larger quantity; more unrealistic, unnatural acts.

What does God say about porn?

- Lev 18 – Do not look at the nakedness of others

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- Matt 5 – Everyone who looks at another with lust has already committed adultery
- Porn reduces other people into soulless sex parts and sex acts

Sexual purity is about establishing an intimate connection with our sex partners and with God. Sex is not the same as love. It is one expression of love we have for one another. (more when we discuss intimacy)

Masturbation

What is it?

Stimulating one's genitals for the intent of sexual pleasure

Concerns?

- May become compulsive, as a method to medicate stress or anxiety
- Secrecy, if we are not open with our partner; can lead to shame of secrets
- Feeds desire for instant gratification – easier than working towards an intimate sexual experience with our partner

What to do?

- Ease from compulsive, to non-compulsive, to abstinence
- Likely to rekindle the desire to be sexually intimate with our partner
 - Range – Minimum of 1-2 time monthly; Maximum of 2-3 time weekly

Intimacy - being able to see into one another and becoming one with each other

Three Types:

- Spiritual
- Emotional
- Physical
 - Non-sexual
 - Sexual

Rushing past the foundational types to get to sex can undermine the long term health (and even destroy) a relationship.

Couples recovery often involves returning to the first 3 before returning to sex

How to improve intimacy?

- Intimacy without Authenticity is impossible
 - Three Selves:
 - Secret
 - Private

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- Public
- When these 3 align, we are truly authentic
- Exercises
 - Share devotion together
 - Ask “how was your day?” and don’t speak for at least 5 minutes; listen for feelings. Don’t try to solve any problems or fix anything.
 - Every day for one week, during a quiet time, say to your spouse – “One thing I love about you is _____”
 - Keep a list of these attributes – start it, add to it, be ready to share one with your spouse at any time
 - Examples:
 - You are a great mother to our children
 - You take great care of us with (the house, our clothes, grocery shopping, cooking, your career, etc., etc.)
 - You are a great friend to _____
 - You plan great (outings, vacations, etc.)
 - Your smile
 - Your sense of humor
 - Your kindness
 - Your prayer life

Other Thoughts:

Surfing for God – Michael John Cusick

Included a quote from Phillip Yancey: In one sense, we are never more godlike than in the act of sex. We make ourselves vulnerable, we risk, we give and receive in a simultaneous act. We feel a primordial delight entering into the other in communion. Quite literally, we make one flesh out of two different persons, experiencing for a brief time, a unity like no other. Two independent beings open their innermost selves and experience not a loss, but a gain.

Cusick then commented: If we are never more godlike than in the act of sex, should it come as any surprise that the evil one would make the destruction and desecration of sex a primary target in his war against all that is good and glorious?

Single and Recovery

Not many individuals are willing to explore the possibility that they struggle with sexual purity while single. Congratulations for your bravery and honesty!

Difficult – Holy sex is not available to those who are single.

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Single people must establish the motivation of a strong, accountable, and loving relationship with Christ as the foundation of our recovery.

Time management is important when we are alone.

Acceptance gives us the freedom to be who God made us to be.

Marriage and Recovery

Important to understand the amount of trauma that our spouse will endure upon discovery or disclosure

Possible, helpful to work personal recovery and couples recovery at the same time

Efforts in recovery should focus on our own healthiness; this will help make our marriages healthier. We must rely on the Lord to save and restore our marriages.

Clinical Disclosure?

- Recovery for our spouse cannot begin until they know all our secrets
- Recommended that disclosure occur under the guidance of a trained counselor

Additional Guidance?

- Lying must end
- We must be humble and grateful
- We must not expect our spouse to meet us halfway; we need to do whatever it takes to keep the marriage alive
- No major decisions during first year of recovery (sell the house, change jobs, move to a new city) – If unavoidable, use Rule of 3 for input and guidance
- Be willing to do whatever it takes to facilitate God's healing of our spouse; paramount that our spouse feels safe staying married to us.
- We have damaged trust; rebuilding trust will likely be slow
- Spouse recovery is typically 3-5 years behind the husband – patience!
- Expect lots of emotions:
 - accept the emotions as valid; spouses need to release them;
 - affirm their emotions – “you are right to be angry at me”, “I was wrong when I did that”
 - do not try to prove you were right; even if right, we do not need to voice it
 - thoughtfully consider if the words are true; mentally reject the lies
 - share these experiences with a friend in recovery; pray for your wife and her recovery

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- Our actions in recovery speak louder than words
 - Do what we say we are going to do
 - Our words are meaningless to our spouse until they repeatedly see our actions match our words
- Summary: 100/0
 - Give 100% to the relationship and expect nothing back
 - Become the spiritual leader of your home

Other Thoughts

- Part of recovery with spouse is submitting in humility – I need to have less pride, be less defensive, do less justifying.
- It is bad when she gets hysterical; worse when she gets historical.

Codependency

- A core fear of abandonment or being alone where we attempt to control others, particularly our spouse or close relationships, to attempt to feel safe (or create a false sense of safety)
- Usually developed in a dysfunctional childhood
- Coping mechanisms/behaviors – sex, lies, manipulation, coercion, crying, passive/aggressive comments, gaslight, abuse (spiritual, emotional, physical), etc.
- Most times we do not recognize co-dependency is rooted in fear of abandonment or lack of unconditional love
- Use of self-shaming or self-harm
- Goal – interdependence; not independence or codependence

Childhood Sexual Abuse

- Any unwanted sexual contact obtained by force, threats or when a victim is unable to consent. Overwhelmingly, people who experience sexual abuse report know the abuser.
- Sometimes immediately traumatic; sometimes covert; sometimes we don't even recognize the activity as abuse.
- Usually distorts the way we view sex and the boundaries of what is safe and healthy.
- The abused often later abuse others
- Discuss abuse with a trained therapist
- Understanding our past can be an important part of our healing
- Survivor, not victim

Dealing with Emotions

- Powerful force, God-given

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- “Comfortable/Uncomfortable”; not “good/bad”
- Key is not to react to every emotion, but to allow them to lead us into thinking about how we will react
- Contrast 2 cycles:
 - Distorted Process: Feel – Act – Think
 - Appropriate: Feel – Think – Act
- In recovery, Distorted process replaced by Appropriate process
 - Moment of clarity
 - What we don’t talk out, we act out
 - Our emotional state is a choice; the only thing we can control and change is our own being. We choose our actions.
- Recommended techniques:
 - Identify our emotions – see Feeling Words list (p.315-16)
 - Step away – take a pause, do not respond immediately
 - Identify why we feel the way we do – think
 - Identify what outcome we intend to occur that will reduce our emotional state – think/plan a course of action (Over time, feelings grow out of a consistent course of action.)

Self-forgiveness

- Struggle for many in recovery
- Not possible to self-forgive until we accept God’s forgiveness for what we did
- When we accept God’s forgiveness and unconditional love, peace and serenity are possible

False Beliefs – discussed last session and in exercise

Once an Addict, Always an Addict

- Widely used stereotype.
- Distinguish between an active sex addict and a recovering sex addict
- Healing takes time and abstinence; the more we abstain, the more we will be transformed
- With time in recovery, “Once an Addict, Always Vulnerable”

Sobriety and the 3 Circles (p.64-68)

What is sobriety?

Sobriety means abstaining from sexually impure behaviors that are destructive and demoralizing to us, our loved ones, and our relationship with Christ.

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The behaviors that align with this definition may not be the same for everyone.

One recommendation – porn is a baseline activity for sexual impurity

What are the 3 Circles?

Developed by SAA

Inner – Middle – Outer

Red – Yellow – Green

Inner – 3 Ds – lead to Divorce, Disease, Death

Obsessive, Compulsive, Destructive

These are a breach in sobriety

Middle – caution zone, “no fly” zone

Not helpful or constructive, but not a breach in sobriety

From here, easier to slip into Inner Circle

Reach out for help

Outer – where we want to live

Healthy, wholesome, constructive activities

Physical, emotional, spiritual

Repeated daily, regularly, periodically

The healthier we become, the more we live in the outer circle!

The more we live in the outer circle, the healthier we become!

Review circle lists with sponsor and therapist. Over time, some items can move in or out among the circles, with the review and blessing of our sponsor and therapist.

Many people can provide good ideas for Outer Circle activities. Listen carefully during shares of this exercise. Other people have good ideas.

Supplement – Fun Things to Do – from Dr. Magness – 30 Days to Hope and Freedom