

Several years ago, I took a number of our Navigator leadership couples on a four-day whitewater rafting trip down the Green River in Utah. Just before leaving on that trip, I found out that a friend, a Christian leader known to many of us, had publicly confessed to sexual sin. I was greatly troubled. In spite of the pristine beauty of the place, the clear air, and the relaxing atmosphere, I couldn't sleep. In the middle of the night, I took my flashlight and walked out from the camp, sat down, and wrote the following letter to the men on my newsletter list:

*Dear friends,*

*As I lay awake for about three hours one night in June, I felt personally burdened to share some thoughts with the men on our newsletter list. This is neither a newsletter nor a prayer letter, but rather a simple expression of some ideas that I hope will stimulate your thinking.*

*In view of some recent events, I think we need to honestly discuss the issue of sexual purity. I am addressing men since I am a man and can only speak from that perspective. But as women read this letter, it will help them understand the issues from a man's viewpoint.*

*Sexual purity is a direct command of Scripture. "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3, nasb). There are no excuses. Repentance, yes. Forgiveness, yes. Excuses, no. And for some reason, the results of sexual sin, though sins are not graded by God, seem much more far reaching. Here are some principles . . . thoughts . . . observations:*

- 1. Sexual sin is always generated in the mind before it is acted out in the body. Thus, to guard one's thoughts is absolutely indispensable.*
- 2. A struggling marriage is never an excuse for sexual sin.*
- 3. A widowed person, divorced person, or sexually experienced man will likely have more temptation, mainly due to knowledge.*
- 4. In cases I have seen, some common threads emerge and seem characteristic of men who have fallen into sexual impurity:
  - The macho image and a sense of dominance*
  - A perceived failure in one's job or a blow to one's ego or pride*
  - A feeling of being "above the rules"*
  - Going easy on oneself . . . in many areas, like diet or exercise*
  - Carelessly allowing oneself to be in places or situations that boost temptation*
  - A roving and undisciplined eye**
- 5. Accountability is a major key to prevention, though not the only answer.*
- 6. Even with accountability, one who wants to sin sexually will find a way to lie and deceive others, and himself, to avoid the truth. Thus, we must uphold one another with prayer.*
- 7. Regardless of spiritual maturity or chronological age or the best of marriages, everyone is vulnerable to sexual sin.*

*How can I have accountability? I suggest having someone ask you direct questions at least periodically—perhaps monthly. Here are some possibilities:*

- 1. Are you involved sexually with anyone other than your wife?*
- 2. Are you using pornography?*
- 3. Are you masturbating? (This is certainly a controversial issue. I suggest you examine the chapter on sexual morality in my book *Honesty, Morality, and Conscience*. Many believe that masturbation is not a serious issue. I tend to view it differently.)*
- 4. Are you watching R- or X-rated movies or videos?*
- 5. Are you indulging in sexual fantasies about other women?*

*But after all of this, we might ask, “What are some of the best preventive measures against sexual sin?” Here are some suggestions:*

- 1. Daily time with God in His Word and a commitment to spiritual growth*
- 2. A commitment to the battle for winning the lost*
- 3. A committed accountability relationship with one or two other men*
- 4. A deepening marriage relationship with your wife*
- 5. A constant guard in your thought life and actions*
- 6. Determined and continually renewed commitment that you will not enter into sexual sin*
- 7. Defensive prayer*

*Yours in Christ,*

*Dr. Jerry White*

Over the years, thousands of copies of that letter have been reproduced and read in men’s groups. Why? Because every man recognizes his vulnerability and sincerely wants to prevent a fall. (Please feel free to reproduce and distribute this letter. And please reference this book as its source.)

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