

Articles and Sermons :: Strategies for Fighting Lust by John Piper**Strategies for Fighting Lust by John Piper - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/3 0:12**

I have in mind men and women. For men it's obvious. The need for warfare against the bombardment of visual temptation to fixate on sexual images is urgent. For women it is less obvious, but just as great if we broaden the scope of temptation to food or figure or relational fantasies. When I say "lust" I mean the realm of thought, imagination, and desire that leads to sexual misconduct. So here is one set of strategies in the war against wrong desires. I put it in the form of an acronym, A N T H E M.

A— AVOID as much as is possible and reasonable the sights and situations that arouse unfitting desire. I say "possible and reasonable" because some exposure to temptation is inevitable. And I say "unfitting desire" because not all desires for sex, food, and family are bad. We know when they are unfitting and unhelpful and on their way to becoming enslaving. We know our weaknesses and what triggers them. "Avoiding" is a Biblical strategy. "Flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness" (2 Timothy 2:22). "Make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13:14).

N— Say NO to every lustful thought within five seconds. And say it with the authority of Jesus Christ. "In the name of Jesus, NO!" You don't have much more than five seconds. Give it more unopposed time than that, and it will lodge itself with such force as to be almost immovable. Say it out loud if you dare. Be tough and warlike. As John Owen said, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Strike fast and strike hard. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

T— TURN the mind forcefully toward Christ as a superior satisfaction. Saying "no" will not suffice. You must move from defense to offense. Fight fire with fire. Attack the promises of sin with the promises of Christ. The Bible calls lusts "deceitful desires" (Ephesians 4:22). They lie. They promise more than they can deliver. The Bible calls them "passions of your former ignorance" (1 Peter 1:14). Only fools yield. "All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter" (Proverbs 7:22). Deceit is defeated by truth. Ignorance is defeated by knowledge. It must be glorious truth and beautiful knowledge. This is why I wrote Seeing and Savoring Jesus Christ. We must stock our minds with the superior promises and pleasures of Jesus. Then we must turn to them immediately after saying, "NO!"

H— HOLD the promise and the pleasure of Christ firmly in your mind until it pushes the other images out. "Fix your eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). Here is where many fail. They give in too soon. They say, "I tried to push it out, and it didn't work." I ask, "How long did you try?" How hard did you exert your mind? The mind is a muscle. You can flex it with vehemence. Take the kingdom violently (Matthew 11:12). Be brutal. Hold the promise of Christ before your eyes. Hold it. Hold it! Don't let it go! Keep holding it! How long? As long as it takes. Fight! For Christ's sake, fight till you win! If an electric garage door were about to crush your child you would hold it up with all our might and holler for help, and hold it and hold it and hold it and hold it.

E— ENJOY a superior satisfaction. Cultivate the capacities for pleasure in Christ. One reason lust reigns in so many is that Christ has so little appeal. We default to deceit because we have little delight in Christ. Don't say, "That's just not me." What steps have you taken to awaken affection for Jesus? Have you fought for joy? Don't be fatalistic. You were created to treasure Christ with all your heart—more than you treasure sex or sugar. If you have little taste for Jesus, competing pleasures will triumph. Plead with God for the satisfaction you don't have: "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days" (Psalm 90:14). Then look, look, look at the most magnificent Person in the universe until you see him the way he is.

M— MOVE into a useful activity away from idleness and other vulnerable behaviors. Lust grows fast in the garden of leisure. Find a good work to do, and do it with all your might. "Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord" (Romans 12:11). "Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58). Abound in work. Get up and do something. Sweep a room. Hammer a nail. Write a letter. Fix a faucet. And do it for Jesus' sake. You were made to manage and create. Christ died to make you "zealous for good deeds" (Titus 2:14). Displace deceitful lusts with a passion for good deeds.

-John Piper

Re: Strategies for Fighting Lust by John Piper - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/3 0:13

Quote:

-----Displace deceitful lusts with a passion for good deeds

I thought that this article would be beneficial to be read. ;-)

Re: Strategies for Fighting Lust by John Piper - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/12/3 21:50

Excellent brother.

"Casting down evil imaginations"

The '5 second rule', max!

Another one I like to call "Slammin Door's", it can be a good way to visualize the action of physically slammin a door and then walking away from it, no need to be polite about it -

One I picked up from the radio I believe, mainly for men and surely sister's could use is "bouncing the eye's" when you see that man/women coming toward you, in your periphreal and you know this is not where your eye's need to be going...'bounce' your eyes off to something else and take your mind with you.

Lastly, when you do go past the 'line', it's still not to late to remind yourself that whatever lust that is tempting you it's still just a gift wrapped LIE. Better not to get to that point and the flesh is strong, think of the consequences of giving in, don't reason with them.

Quote:

-----Be tough and warlike. As John Owen said, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Strike fast and strike hard.

We were told to "Put on the armor" and I don't recall reading anywhere about taking it off.

We are at war. 24 -7.

Re: strategies - posted by jouko (), on: 2003/12/4 5:17

The law of antagonism

To him that overcometh. . . . Rev: 2:7.

Life without war is impossible either in nature or in grace. The basis of physical, mental, moral, and spiritual life is antagonism. This is the open fact of life.

Health is the balance between physical life and external nature, and it is maintained only by sufficient vitality on the inside against things on the outside. Everything outside my physical life is designed to put me to death. Things which keep me going when I am alive, disintegrate me when I am dead. If I have enough fighting power, I produce the balance of health. The same is true of the mental life. If I want to maintain a vigorous mental life, I have to fight, and in that way the mental balance called thought is produced.

Morally it is the same. Everything that does not partake of the nature of virtue is the enemy of virtue in me, and it depends on what moral calibre I have whether I overcome and produce virtue. Immediately I fight, I am moral in that particular.

No man is virtuous because he cannot help it; virtue is acquired.

And spiritually it is the same. Jesus said—"In the world ye shall have tribulation," i.e., everything that is not spiritual makes for my undoing, but—"be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." I have to learn to score off the things that come against me, and in that way produce the balance of holiness; then it becomes a delight to meet opposition.

Holiness is the balance between my disposition and the law of God as expressed in Jesus Christ.

Chambers, O. 1993, c1935. My utmost for his highest : Selections for the year . Discovery House Publishers: Grand Rapids, MI

Re: - posted by laholmes, on: 2003/12/4 9:37

Galatians 5:16 "This I say to you, walk in the spirit and you will not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

All of these other things are excellent, but if you are not filled with the spirit, looking away will get harder and harder to do. Walking in the fullness of the Lord is all the strategy we need. It does not say attending seminars, quoting verses, or memorizing five steps. WALK IN THE SPIRIT

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/4 18:15

Quote:

-----Be tough and warlike. As John Owen said, "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." Strike fast and strike hard.

These men of God really had a determination to live Godly not because they were legalistic or thought they could earn their way into heaven. But they were so close to God's heart that they shared hatred God has for Sin and abhorred it just as much. How much do you strive against sin? it is surely poison to your soul.

Here are some quotes from John Calvin who shared the same spirit towards sinful practices:

Romans 6:22 (niv) - But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.

Ye have your fruit unto holiness... - As he had before mentioned a twofold end of sin, so he does now as to righteousness. Sin in this life bring the torments of an accusing conscience, and in the next eternal death. We now gather the fruit of righteousness, even holiness; we hope in future to gain eternal life. **These things, unless we are beyond measure stupid, ought to generate in our minds a hatred and horror of sin,** and also a love and desire for righteousness.

Re: Strategies for Fighting Lust by John Piper - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/12/5 0:24

Greg (wrtbooks) quoted John Piper as saying,

Quote:

-----I have in mind men and women. For men it's obvious.

I think this is the very first time in my two years of being Christian that a woman has ever been mentioned on the topic of the struggle with lust as not the object, but the one who is sinning.

I'm female (duh) and I believe that women have just as much trouble in this area as men do. Perhaps differently, and I'm sure an argument can be made on both sides as to "Who's got it worse", but really, who cares? Sin is sin, regardless of gender or severity or how big/small the struggle is.

I confess this was one of my hugest struggles, especially as a young Christian. It's easy to discreetly find help if you're a struggling Christian male -- I came across many a "Christian help website" for men struggling with lust, and many books too. But none for women.

Society makes it okay for men to sleep around, but when a woman does, she's a slut. And some women are okay with being known as promiscuous, as long as you don't use that "s-word" to describe them. And when a man needs encouragement to stop this sinful lifestyle, help is just around the corner. For a woman...we're not supposed to talk about such things.

Personally, 1 Corinthians 10:13 has been that pivotal verse. Because of my past, before Christ, I've "tasted" this sin, and I know that the enemy uses it against me. But that verse reminds me -- I don't have it worse than anyone else, and I've got God on my side, so there's no excuse for me at all to give in.

And with God on our side -- who can be against us? :-)

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/11 14:58

Quote:

-----I have in mind men and women. For men it's obvious. The need for warfare against the bombardment of visual temptation to fixate on sexual images is urgent. For women it is less obvious, but just as great if we broaden the scope of temptation to food or figure or relational fantasies. When I say "lust" I mean the realm of thought, imagination, and desire that leads to sexual misconduct. So here is one set of strategies in the war against wrong desires.

I think John Piper is just basically saying that in media there is an emphasis on lustful images of women which bombard men. That does not mean that women have it easier than men but at first look in our society it seemed men have it rougher, it seems more obvious.

Quote:
-----Society makes it okay for men to sleep around, but when a woman does, she's a slut. And some women are okay with being known as promiscuous, as long as you don't use that "s-word" to describe them. And when a man needs encouragement to stop this sinful lifestyle, help is just around the corner. For a woman...we're not supposed to talk about such things.

But that is society and the world and we are not of it and should not feel under the stereo type of what it labels people as

1 John 4:4 (niv) - You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.

Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/12/11 20:02

Maybe I wasn't clear. Lemmie try again.

If a male Christian is struggling with lusts, there are many resources out there to help him. Other Christians wait with open arms to encourage him in Christ.

When a woman struggles with lust, there are virtually no Christian resources to turn to.

In no way am I saying God is insufficient in overcoming sin. To imply such a thing would be blasphemy on my behalf.

Who typically struggles more with "bigger" or "more worldly" sins, such as lust? Newer Christians. As brand-new Christians, some don't know where in the Bible to find the guidance they need in resisting their temptation. i.e., I needed to go to a help-with-lust place for men just to come across 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Makes more sense?

On another note, I'm surprised there aren't more posts on this thread. Haven't we all experienced a struggle with lust?

Re: - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/12/11 21:44

Hi Mary,

A ministry I have been listening to on radio for a number of years hasn't neglected this issue with women (<http://www.everywomansbattle.com/>) <http://www.everywomansbattle.com/>

I agree with the statement regarding newer Christians, also it is still an assault on us all, young or old in the faith. The times we live in, the media saturation, is there a product out there that isn't tied to sex anymore?

The devil is very good at drawing out our past mistakes and thrusting them before our eyes. "I know in my flesh dwells no good thing."

The Big Three.

Surely it is different for everyone, of both sexes at different times. Not shortly after my reply here, you guessed it, got to practice what I preach. Interesting how that comes about...

Something I noticed is when there is an argument with my wife or some other perceived injustice to my so called 'rights', those are the times he will try and go in for the kill. "You deserve better, look how she's treating you, all this Christian stuff, where has it gotten you, blah, blah, blah" I know that voice, those lies. But I am no better than the best man or woman, there are times I begin to entertain those with a "I am fed up with *all this!*" I am gonna....no, I am not, I can't, I can't do this to You Jesus" Then ten minutes later, it's right back to the same thing all over again. Got to fight. Pray. "*Resist him and he will flee from you*"

It varies for me. There seems to be no particular reason a lot of the times, other times I can almost expect it and still other times, months can go by without any lusts tempting me whatsoever.

There are no easy answers, and I don't see it being any different for women other than they get more 'shame' for it, which is utter nonsense.

Maybe if men had a better condescending word attached to their forays they would be rightly shamed, instead of this ri

diculous idea that they get a 'pass' while the women get condemned.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2003/12/11 21:49

Quote:

-----When a woman struggles with lust, there are virtually no Christian resources to turn to.

I totally agree with you on that point Mary, I even just did an internet search for Christian resources for Woman who struggle with lust and basically found resources for Men not Women. I am sure alot of the info is generic but there is a need that you are definetly addressing here.

here is one encouraging webpage story I found:

(<http://www.multnomah.edu/voice/1102/1102cover2.html>) Woman escapes the bonds of lust

Quote:

-----Who typically struggles more with "bigger" or "more worldly" sins, such as lust? Newer Christians.

I think alot of older solid Christians could still find this an area of stumbling, I know there are statistics out there that show that there are many pastors who are falling into pornography online, etc. I remember hearing David Wilkerson share in one of the following 2 sermons how grieved he was to hear so many pastors writing him about this sin destroying there lives :(

these messages were delivered by david wilkerson at a pastors conference:

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid1703>) Zadok and Abaithar Priesthoods - Part 1

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid1704>) Zadok and Abaithar Priesthoods - Part 2

Has anyone tried out this Christian Pornography Software: (<http://www.netaccountability.com>) NETACCOUNTABILITY

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2003/12/11 22:53

I know that there are struggles for women in this area but from my experience I really see that men today (and probably always) have a bigger battle. My husband used to be addicted to pornography. His Dad kept it in the house, out in the open, ever since he can remember. It has been a HUGE stronghold in Dan's life to overcome. The bad thing is when it becomes a stronghold- it affects everything in your life.

A couple of years ago we read Every Man's Battle by Steve Arterburn. I was completely shocked at how easily some of these guys would get tempted. Lingerie ads in the newspaper?! Come on. A Commercial for women's volleyball?! I don't think many women get turned on by a simple commercial about football or jockey underwear, even.

Men are "visual". It's a proven fact and God must have known what He was doing here (I guess:) And women still may have some trouble with lust but when it comes to men- pornography plays a BIG part in how/whether they can handle these temptations.

Many more men are exposed, tempted, and addicted to pornography than women.

I am so, so grateful for Dan's healing and deliverance from this stronghold. Ironically, my stronghold stemmed out of his. Mine was fitness and my looks. I thought I had to look a certain way so he would be happy and never leave me OR look at anyone else. Praise God we are both FREE!

I do know that Dan did and still does take certain precautions such as taking a different route to go somewhere if he knows there is a store, etc... that is "bad news". When we go to the mall- he walks on the opposite side of the Victoria's Secret side. When he goes out of town- he calls ahead to make sure they don't have any x-rated movies. There aren't many anymore that don't. :(

I feel for anyone who has this problem - or their loved ones.

In His perfect love, Chanin

Re: - posted by moreofHim (), on: 2003/12/11 23:11

Mary, I don't want to downplay the temptations that girls have to fight. I just have seen the other side. I thought I knew what lust was- until I saw what some men's lust really is. Once I found out how easily they were stimulated (I hate to say that word) I even started dressing differently- especially at the gym! I never gave it much thought before.

Anyway, I don't want you to think I was downplaying your comments. Women do struggle with lust, too. I do think that most women have NO IDEA the extent of some men's problems with this, though. Many are in denial and some are just naive.

In His love, Chanin

Re: - posted by Chosen7Stone (), on: 2003/12/23 13:40

Hey Chanin -

I know you weren't downplaying my comments. :-) I grew up mostly around guys -- it wasn't until becoming a Christian that I had more than one female friends, and that was only because I realized guy-girl accountability isn't a good idea. Spending all of my social life with guys really shaped a lot of my thinking and how I act, the fact that I like football more than makeup, etc -- I was even bisexual for a time, and it was one more bond for Christ to break after being Saved. It is much easier for them to be triggered, and I see Satan play on that, though walking into an Abercrombie & Fitch (?) store for the first time in a mall a couple months ago and seeing triple-than-life-size posters of topless and tone young men -- girls are definitely starting to be targeted more, too. (They put those guys on the shopping bags of that store, too, by the way, so leaving the store won't let you escape it -- the bags travel with the buyers throughout the mall.)

On another note, I checked out that NetAccountability thing that Greg referenced below -- and it seems like a really awesome program, that can be used for, of course, both guys and girls.