

Break. Smash. Shatter the Cycle.

Written by Bill Perkins

Jesus told us to ask God to "And lead us not into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one. For yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen." "If you forgive those who offend you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive those who offend you, neither will your Father forgive your offenses. "And when you fast, don't put on a sad face like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces so people will know they're fasting.

I tell you, they've received their full reward." (Matthew 6:13). The Lord didn't mean that unless we asked him not to do so, God would tempt us. God cannot sin nor could he tempt anyone to sin. Instead, we should continually ask God to lead us away from temptation. In essence, we should pray, "Father, never give me the opportunity to sin when I have the desire, or the desire to sin when I have the opportunity." Why? Because when the opportunity and desire to sin intersect, most men will make a bad choice.

Control Your Environment

While we may not be able to always control our desires, we can usually control our environment. We can remove sexual rituals from our life so that when our lust craves a sexual outlet, none is to be found. A ritual, of course, is any seemingly harmless act that precedes acting out sinfully.

Men Who Removed the Rituals

I know a man who removed cable television from his home. As a further precaution, he refused to watch television after 10:00 P.M. unless his wife was present. Another friend who travels extensively refuses to turn on the television in his hotel room. By never turning on the TV, he avoids the ritual of channel surfing.

One man who used to sleep with prostitutes told me he takes an inconvenient route to work to keep from driving through a red-light district. I've got a friend who said the path to a woman's bed always starts with him checking out attractive women everywhere he looks. He said he's learning to look and then quickly bounce his eyes away.

Several years ago I signed up with Covenant Eyes, a company that sells a software program that keeps a non-erasable history of everyplace I've been on the Internet. It then identifies any questionable sites and emails the list to an accountability partner. I've discovered I'm as safe on the Internet without accountability as a peg-legged man in a forest fire.

Some guys make up their mind before going to the gym to work out that they won't check out the hot babes. Or, to work out at a time when fewer people are present. I know men who are players that must avoid flirting with women. They keep work relationships with women on a professional basis and in a social setting they're friendly but not flirtatious.

These are examples of the kinds of aggressive steps that you must take to bridle your lust.

Expect Internal Resistance

As you make your list of rituals and prepare to get rid of them, expect some internal resistance . . . especially if you've been acting out.

Harmless as a Kitten

Your lust may not appear as a fire-breathing dragon that's destroying your life. It may seem as harmless as a kitten. It might plead with you to keep one ritual--your favorite. It will promise never to ask for more. It will try to convince you that such actions aren't necessary. It will whisper in your ear: "It won't hurt to check out the babes at work. You don't need accountability on the Internet. There's nothing wrong with a little playful flirting."

You must anticipate such pleadings and refuse to allow them to dictate your plan of action. Make the list of rituals that feed your lust and ruthlessly get rid of them. Once you've done that talk to a friend and give him permission to ask how you're doing. These are the kinds of decisions that will keep you from making the same mistake over and over again. They are the kind of actions that protect your present and future. And they are the kind of decisions that please God.

You can sign up for Covenant Eyes [here](#).