

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Introduction

*Proverbs 4:23*

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

The purpose of this Bible study is to help those who want to break free from their involvement with pornography. It is the foundation for an accountability relationship, in which two or more people agree to be honest with one another about their online activities and to encourage each other in their goal of sexual purity.

The Bible study is designed to be used along with filtering software with an accountability feature. This software monitors the Web sites a person visits and gives a report of online activities to another person or group of people.

If you wish to use filtering and accountability software, contact a friend who will agree to be your accountability partner. Setting up an account with this friend is a good step forward in breaking your pornography habit. But you may want to go deeper in your relationship with your friend. This four-part Bible study is designed to help you do just that. The study follows Chuck Swindoll's ABCD plan to achieve moral purity, which he outlines in his article, "[Shield Your Eyes, Guard Your Heart: A Message to Those Struggling with Pornography](#)."

Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

Lesson 2: Break All Connections

Lesson 3: Communicate Your Need

Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

You can work through the following lessons by reading the Bible verses and answering the questions on your computer. Then you can e-mail your completed lesson to your accountability partner. In this way, you're taking your relationship to a deeper, spiritual level. You're opening up not just your computer log to your friend but your heart as well. Your vulnerability to pornography is really a heart issue, and it's at the heart level that you will begin to heal.

Our prayer in the Biblical Counseling Department at Insight for Living Ministries is that God will use this curriculum to lead you out of the shadows and shame and into the light and freedom of a lifestyle of moral purity.

Let's begin!

## Quotable

*Above all else,  
guard your heart,  
for everything you  
do flows from it.*

— *Proverbs 4:23 NIV*



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

Matthew 5:27–28

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Steve makes his living managing corporate pension funds at a large investment firm. Every day, he analyzes trends, weighs risks, and makes decisions that impact the financial security of hundreds of people. In his tailored suit and polished shoes, he is a pillar of trust for his company, his family, and his church.

Josh is in his final year at a Christian college near his home. He's a biology major with high grades and equally high ambitions for a medical career. Studying for the entrance exams keeps him at the library for hours each day. But he always manages time to hang out with his buddies in the campus café.

Brenda is a full-time mom of two young children and a part-time purchasing assistant for a department store chain. The word *busy* doesn't begin to describe her life. Work assignments, house chores, school activities, kids' sports, church involvements—all these balls she keeps in the air with the skill of a circus juggler.

Ordinary people. You would never imagine that any of them might have a problem with Internet pornography or sex chat rooms, but they do. Each of them has sunken deep into the Internet sex culture, and it's consuming their lives. It's poisoning their relationships and contaminating their hearts. Most of all, the shame is driving them away from the Lord, their true source of hope, satisfaction, and love.

You may be working through this study because you have also fallen into the Internet sex swamp and you're drowning. If so, let's take hold of God's Word for help and healing.



### DIGGING DEEPER

The path out begins with admitting you have a problem. In his book, *Sanctity of Life*, pastor and author Chuck Swindoll observes: "The first step to victory is an admission of the battle."<sup>1</sup>

## Quotable

*For God made  
Christ, who never  
sinned, to be the  
offering for our sin,  
so that we could  
be made right with  
God through Christ.*

— 2 Corinthians 5:21



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

Matthew 5:27–28



### Admitting the Problem

It's not easy to admit sexual sins. For most people, at least three barriers stand in the way of admitting the problem.

#### *Getting Past the Stereotype*

The first barrier is our mental image of a sex addict. This stereotypical person wears a trench coat and a dark hat shading his eyes. We imagine him skulking around back allies or creeping into peep shows in big-city red-light districts. *That's not me*, you may think.

The home computer, however, has shattered this stereotype. Now average businessmen, church-goers, ministers, senior citizens, homemakers, even children are hooked on Internet pornography and sex chat rooms. The face of sexual addiction has changed forever. Ordinary, upright people who would never venture into an adult bookstore are mouse-clicking into the world's most deplorable online pornography shops and handing over their credit card numbers.

You may be surprised if you knew who else has this problem. It may be easier for you to admit it when you realize how common the problem is.

#### *Getting Past the Excuses*

Another barrier is the list of excuses you may have used to minimize or rationalize your involvement in the Internet sex world. Perhaps you've heard these excuses tiptoe through your mind:

- Using pornography is a healthy sexual outlet for pent-up stress.
- It's okay. I'm not looking at the really bad stuff.
- Talking with people in chat rooms helps me feel better about myself.
- Cybersex can add excitement to my sex life with my spouse.
- It's a fantasy world. No one's getting hurt.
- I give to others all the time. I need something for me.
- If my spouse were more responsive, I wouldn't need this.



# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

## Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

*Matthew 5:27–28*

People in Jesus' day were excusing their lust problems just like people today do. Based on Jesus' comments in Matthew 5:27–28, what words of truth do you think He would say to you? We've provided some space for you to write down your thoughts.

Instead of minimizing lust, Jesus “maximized” it by putting it in the category of adultery. Why such a big deal? Why is looking at pornographic images or talking with strangers about sex as serious as having an extramarital affair?

The reason is, just like adultery, lust destroys the sacred principle upon which marriage is based: *exclusiveness*. You may say that you can keep your fantasy world separate from the real world, but according to Jesus' statement you can't compartmentalize yourself like that. You can make the pictures disappear by turning off your computer screen. But you can't erase the images and sensations that have been burned into the synapses of your brain. Whether the “other woman” or “other man” is real or imaginary doesn't matter. Through your mind and heart, you are bringing other people into your marriage if you're married (or into your future marriage). Your spouse has every right to feel violated.

Have you used any excuses to justify or minimize your online activities? If so, what are they? How are these excuses misleading you? Record your comments here.

### *Getting Past the Shame*

The third barrier to admitting you have a problem is shame. What would it be like to tell someone that you're hooked on cybersex? Embarrassing, right? You can almost see the stones of condemnation coming at you.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S01  
3

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

*Matthew 5:27–28*

Read about one woman's encounter with shame when a mob dragged her out of her lover's bed into the glaring light of the city square: John 8:1–11.

What was Jesus' underlying message to the condemning crowd when He said, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7 NASB)?

Jesus' message to the crowd must have had an equally powerful impact on the woman. Her sin of adultery was no worthier of condemnation than the sins of her accusers. Can you imagine the woman's relief as one by one their stones dropped to the ground?

Jesus refused to treat her as some social pariah, the object of humiliation and scorn. She was a person of value . . . a person whom Christ loved and was willing to forgive.

Take a moment in prayer and, if you're ready, admit to the Lord your problem with Internet sex sites and your sin of lust. Try to imagine yourself looking into Jesus' face as the adulterous woman saw Him, full of compassion and grace. In the space below, express to Him your sorrow for your sin and for the way it has alienated you from Him. Ask for His forgiveness, and thank Him for His love.



#### ACCEPTING THE FORGIVENESS OF GOD

Close this first lesson by reading about the forgiveness that is available to you because of Christ's atoning death on the cross. Jesus gave His life as a sacrifice for you, bearing the condemnation that you deserve. After you read these verses, personalize them. We've given you an example with the first verse. Try your hand at the others. Let God's grace and forgiveness heal your heart!



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 1: Acknowledge the Impurity

*Matthew 5:27–28*

2 Corinthians 5:21

*“God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for **my** sin, so that **I** could be made right with God through Christ.”*

Psalms 103:6–12

Colossians 1:13–14

1 John 1:9



#### MESSAGE TO MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

At the end of each lesson, we provide some space for you to write a note to your accountability partner. This person truly has your best interest in mind, and he or she is willing to listen to your thoughts. Try writing as if the person is sitting next to you. What would you like to say to your friend about what God is doing in your life?

#### ENDNOTE

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Sanctity of Life: The Inescapable Issue* (Dallas: Word, 1990), 74.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 2: Break All Connections

Romans 13:12–14

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

The world is constantly dropping seeds of sexual temptation in our minds through movies and magazines, television and radio. Temptation comes at us from everywhere, whether we're driving down the boulevard or cruising on the Internet superhighway. *The key to keeping these seeds of temptation from taking root is to remove the conditions in which they grow.*



### DIGGING DEEPER

In this lesson, we'll examine three conditions that make us vulnerable to temptation: availability, privacy, and sinful desire. We'll also offer some practical ways you can remove these conditions and break the patterns that have been giving life to your habit of sex on the Internet.



### Removing Availability

The first condition that may make you vulnerable to temptation is the *availability* of sexual images. The apostle Paul writes about the importance of taking away the possibility of sin in Romans 13:12–14. After you read the verses, record what you observe. *Observation* is a Bible study method of looking closely at the text and taking note of repeated or emphasized words, contrasts, comparisons, action words, and so forth. What do you see in these verses?

“Make provisions” means to plan out when and how you might satisfy your sexual appetite. Perhaps during the day, you think about how you are going to carve out time on the Internet. You have made the sin available to you . . . but what if you made it *unavailable*?

## Quotable

*Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.*

—James 1:14–15



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**



# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### Lesson 2: Break All Connections

*Romans 13:12–14*

STUDY

Instead of planning ways to gratify the desires of your flesh, think of ways you can *avoid* the desires of your flesh. You may be tempted to sin, but if you can't get to the sexual images you won't act on your temptation. Think through some ways to remove the availability of pornography. What do you need to do? How can you shut down the avenue of pornographic images or sex chat rooms that leads to your computer?



#### Eliminating Privacy

The second condition in which temptation takes root is *privacy*. Sexual sin is a seed that grows best in darkness. Bring it into the light of day where your deeds are open for all to see, and the temptation loses its power.

In Romans 13:12–14, Paul exhorts his readers to lay aside “the deeds of darkness” and to act “as in the day” (NASB). Continuing this theme, read Ephesians 5:8–13. Observe the action words in these verses, particularly in 5:11.

To expose something simply means to make it public. Think of some ways you can make public your online activities. Do you need to make “alone time” off limits for working on the computer? How about moving the computer into a public area? Or facing the screen toward an open hallway door? What ideas sound workable for you? What about your other devices, such as your tablet and cell phone? How can you eliminate privacy?



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S02  
2



### Lesson 2: Break All Connections

*Romans 13:12–14*

STUDY



#### Overcoming Sinful Desires

Human sexuality is a wonderful gift from God. In your struggles with sex on the Internet, remember that your enemy is not your own sexuality. Do not curse the gift God has given you. Rather, thank God for your healthy sex drive, and target your energy toward battling your real foe—your *sin* drive.

According to the Scriptures, we all have an inner passion to go our own way and express our sexuality in sinful, selfish ways. That sin drive has its source in our sin nature or “flesh” and is called “fleshly lusts” (1 Peter 2:11 NASB) and “the desire of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16 NASB).

According to the following verses, what are some ways you can battle your flesh and its sinful desires? Note the action words, comparisons, contrasts, or words that are emphasized. Also, note the Holy Spirit’s role and the role of community.

Galatians 5:16

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Corinthians 6:18–20

Theologian Frederick Buechner gives us perhaps the most accurate definition of lust: “Lust is the craving for salt of a man who is dying of thirst.”<sup>1</sup> Is your heart crying out with thirst? Are you lonely? Angry? Empty? Discouraged? Tired? Bored? Your flesh whispers in your ear to soothe yourself through sinful indulgence. But, tragically, sexual sin leaves you lonelier, more discouraged, more hurt—more parched for the things that really satisfy.

The Scripture you just read says, “Flee from youthful lusts” (2 Timothy 2:22). Fleeing is good, but where do you run?



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### Lesson 2: Break All Connections

*Romans 13:12–14*

STUDY

*The key to overcoming your sinful desires is to embrace your Lord in your pain rather than escape through sin. No one can embrace sin and Christ at the same time (1 John 1:5–6). You must decide which is more precious to you—the pleasure of Internet sex or intimacy with Christ. It comes down to a choice between the two.*

As you close this lesson, read prayerfully the account of one woman's encounter with Jesus and how He satisfied the inner longings of her soul in John 4:1–26.

The Samaritan woman had given herself to one sinful relationship or indulgence after another, perhaps like you, and still she could not satisfy her thirst. What might you be thirsting for through your cravings for sex on the Internet?

The woman's encounter with Jesus set her life on a new path. What do you think you can find in Jesus that you can't find in Internet pornography or sex chat rooms?

Have you come to a decision point about your online activities? The only way to overcome your fleshly lusts is to flee from lust and run into the embrace of Christ. Is that your desire? If you wish to make a commitment today, record your thoughts in the space below.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S02  
4

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 2: Break All Connections

*Romans 13:12–14*

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### MESSAGE TO MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Write a note to your accountability partner in the space below. What can you tell this person about the wounds in your life and how you've been using online sex to satisfy them? Are you ready to remove the availability of Internet sex? Eliminate the privacy? And overcome your sinful desires with a fresh commitment to Christ?

#### ENDNOTE

1. Frederick Buechner, *Wishful Thinking: A Theological ABC* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 54.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S02  
5

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 3: Communicate Your Need

2 Corinthians 7:8–13; Galatians 6:2

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

When Adam and Eve sinned, their first response was to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. Then, when they heard God approaching, they hid behind some trees (Genesis 3:6–8). We may not sew fig-leaf loincloths or cower behind trees, but our basic response to sin is often the same: *cover* and *hide*.

Even the most respected and powerful people in society are vulnerable to the cover-and-hide syndrome when they sin. American presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton are famous for their cover-ups and half-truths. We shake our fingers at them, but we've all followed their trail of deception to avoid accusation. It's just human nature.

Why do we do it? For one reason, we want people to think we are as good on the inside as we appear on the outside. We also fear the shame of being caught and the hurt we would cause those we love if they knew our true nature. So we mask our weaknesses and sins, and we suffer through them alone.

Have you been covering up and hiding some of your sinful activities? If so, you're not alone. Imagine, though, what it would be like to be totally transparent. Imagine inviting a friend to rummage through your browsing history and print a list of every Internet sex site you've ever visited. What would it be like to be completely *found out*? On the one hand, it might be terrifying. After all, people might be shocked by what they see. On the other hand, it might be liberating, particularly if the person doing the looking models the mercy and grace of God.



### DIGGING DEEPER

The primary reason to open your life to another individual is to communicate your deepest need so he or she can help bear your burden (Galatians 6:2).

## Quotable

*Share each other's  
burdens, and  
in this way  
obey the law  
of Christ.*

— Galatians 6:2



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

### Lesson 3: Communicate Your Need

2 Corinthians 7:8–13; Galatians 6:2



#### The Process of Communicating Your Need

Your habit of Internet pornography or sex chat rooms is like a crushing weight on your shoulders that is too heavy to lift on your own. If you're willing, your friend or mentor can give a hand to lifting your burden and help free you from it.

#### Confession

The way to begin communicating your need is through confession. What are the types of Web sites that you have been viewing? How much money have you spent on Internet pornography? Have you been involved in other sexual sins, perhaps watching adult movies or going to strip clubs? What is the extent of your chat room activity? Have you arranged any meetings with individuals through the Internet? You need to tell your accountability partner everything that you've done on the Internet and whether that has led to other sexual immorality.

You may ask, *Do I need to reveal all these details? Isn't it enough to admit I have a problem and leave it at that?* Admitting a disease is a good first step, but surgery must follow. Every cancerous cell of sin needs to be exposed and removed. This careful, truthful examination is at the heart of James' command, "Confess your sins to each other" (James 5:16).

What advantage does confession bring, according to Proverbs 28:13?

Through confession you reveal your secret sins, but instead of condemnation you receive the healing medicine of mercy from your friend.

#### Expression

After you've told your accountability partner the details of your sin, express your feelings about yourself and what you've done. Talk about the shame you may feel or sorrow or even anger. Paul speaks about the emotional impact of confession in his letter to the Corinthian believers. When Paul exposed their sins, they



# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

### Lesson 3: Communicate Your Need

2 Corinthians 7:8–13; Galatians 6:2

immediately responded with sadness. But through confession, they progressed beyond the sorrow to zeal. Write down the positive emotions in 2 Corinthians 7:8–13. What good came of their repentance?

As you confess your sins to your accountability partner, watch for your emotional transformation. Express what you're feeling to your partner, and let God work through those feelings to produce a zeal for righteousness.

#### **Petition**

The last step is petition. Considering all you've expressed, what are your deepest needs? Perhaps you just need to ask your accountability partner to pray for you in certain areas of your life. Or perhaps the confession process has uncovered some issues from your past. Maybe your Internet sex habit was masking some feelings of anger, anxiety, or depression that are your core problems. You may need to speak with a Christian counselor who can help you get to the issues that are driving your habit. Your accountability partner can help you find a competent counselor.



#### **The Practice of Communicating Your Need**

If you're ready to work through the process, we've provided you some space to do so here. First, take a moment to pray for the Lord to guide you and fill you with His peace. Then spend some time telling your accountability partner the details of your online activities.

#### **Confession**

Describe when you first started using Internet sex, and simply tell your story. When you finish, ask yourself, "Is there anything else I need to confess?" Perhaps the Lord will bring other sins to mind that you need to include.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

### Lesson 3: Communicate Your Need

2 Corinthians 7:8–13; Galatians 6:2

#### Expression

Reread what you've written and try to capture your emotions as you see yourself in this mirror of truth. Tell your accountability partner what it feels like to let him or her know about the secrets you've hidden for so long.

#### Petition

Finally, communicate your needs in the form of a petition. Begin your sentences with, "I need . . ." Then arrange a time with your partner when you can meet and talk about what you've shared. If you wish, you may invite your pastor to join you so he can pray for you as you seek to lead a pure life.

As you close, take a few moments for a prayer of gratitude to the Lord before you e-mail this lesson to your partner. Thank Him for His Son, whose blood cleanses us from all our sins. Thank Him for His patience and grace. Also thank Him for the relief confession brings and for providing a second chance for all who seek His righteousness.



### MESSAGE TO MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Write a note to your accountability partner in the space below. Tell this person what it felt like to bare your soul and reveal your secrets. Be sure to thank your friend for his or her mercy and grace to simply listen and share your burden.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S03  
4



# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

# SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

## STUDY



### LET'S BEGIN HERE

Most people who try on their own to quit a sinful habit go through relapse cycles. Feeling ashamed because of their sin, they promise themselves and the Lord that they will never look at pornography Web sites again. With gritty resolve, they stay pure for a few days, a week, or even a month or two. Sometimes this white-knuckle approach works long term, but without accountability or removing the source of temptation, many people fall again. Along with the return of the sin come the familiar feelings of shame and self-disgust and a more troubling feeling . . . hopelessness.



### DIGGING DEEPER

How can a person break this cycle? The apostle Paul recommended a plan for abstinence to his pastoral apprentice, Timothy:

Now *flee* from youthful lusts and *pursue* righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. (2 Timothy 2:22 NASB, emphasis added)

Fleeing lusts summarizes the process of getting pure. Pursuing godliness is how we stay pure. And Paul adds a third vital principle: *mutual support*. You are more likely to succeed when you “flee” and “pursue” with others who are on the same path. Let’s take a closer look at these three ideas.



### Abstain by Fleeing Lusts

Fleeing simply means separating yourself from the source of temptation. Joseph literally fled from temptation when Potiphar’s wife grabbed at him lustfully (Genesis 39:7–12). Take a moment and read Proverbs 5:1–14. Observe this passage carefully, noting the vivid images and powerful metaphors. How do you interpret the meaning of these metaphors? What wise advice does Solomon give

## Quotable

*Now flee from  
youthful lusts  
and pursue  
righteousness, faith,  
love and peace,  
with those who call  
on the Lord from  
a pure heart.*

— 2 Timothy 2:22 NASB



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.  
Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

to young men regarding how to respond to adulterous women? What might happen if a young man ignores Solomon's warning?

In the Internet world, the door to the temptress' house is as close as the screen. "Get away!" cries Paul, when you hear her tapping. "Don't even go near in the first place!" adds Solomon. Radical separation is the only way to succeed against lust.

What does this mean in specific terms? It means that you must delete every last byte of pornographic material on your computer or other device. Sweep out every e-mail, link, image, or document that may tempt you. Change your e-mail address, if necessary, so the spam from pornographic Web sites can't find you. Cut up the credit cards you were using to buy pornography on the Web. Subscribe to an Internet filtering service. Throw out your secret stash wherever it might be, and if you can't do it yourself, ask your accountability partner to help you.

Sometimes we say to ourselves, *One more time, and I'll quit*. But we can never stop a negative behavior by doing it one more time—there will always be another "one more time." You must accept that the last time you indulged in Internet sex *was* the last time.

Another self-deceptive thought is this: *I'll get rid of everything . . . except this little bit, in case I really need it*. That would be like a person trying to quit smoking while keeping a pack of cigarettes in the glove compartment. Or an alcoholic trying to stay sober while keeping a small bottle of whiskey in a drawer. As long as the person knows where the stuff is, he or she will never quit. There will always be a reason to "need it."

Are you ready to remove every source of sexual temptation from your life? If so, let your accountability partner know what you've done or plan to do by writing your thoughts here.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S04  
2

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

Getting pure is the first challenge; perhaps the greater challenge is staying pure.



#### Abstain by Pursuing Godliness

Sometimes people flee one sinful habit to embrace another—simply trading addictions. Paul says that it's not enough to run from sin; you must *run to* righteousness, faith, love, and peace. In other words, you must invest your time in activities that give your life meaning and purpose.

*The key to staying pure is to replace your negative habit with positive habits.* To develop positive habits, you need to gain control of two areas of your life: your time and your thoughts.

#### Reinvest Your Time

What are you going to do with the time you used to spend surfing Internet sex Web sites? Managing a schedule can be a real problem for many people whose sexual indulgences ruled their free time.

Take a moment to evaluate your daily schedule. In the space provided, write down how you spent your time last week. Tell your accountability partner what you did each day.

Can you see some space in your schedule for new, healthier activities? What are some life-enriching activities that you can do to promote righteousness, faith, love, and peace?

Here are just a few ideas: Get involved in a church ministry or program. Start an exercise program. Get out of the house, and join a community club or sports club. If you are married, take up a hobby with your spouse. Dive into a good book, and meet with a friend to talk about it. What do you think you would like to do?



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S04  
3

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

##### *Refocus Your Thoughts*

The Internet sex culture consumes not just your time but your thoughts. For most people involved in Internet sex, when they aren't surfing the sites, they're thinking about surfing the sites. How can you regain the mental territory that you've given over to sin? Take a moment and read the following verses. What is the message that each passage teaches about your thoughts?

Romans 8:5–7

Romans 12:1–2

Set your mind on the things of the Spirit, and let Him transform your thought life. What does this mean to you practically? What helps you refocus your thoughts? You may try sowing Bible verses in your mind. Keep verse cards handy, and read them when you have idle moments. Any other ideas?

Often, negative habits are set off by “triggers”—situations, thoughts, and feelings that lead to sin. For example, boredom may be a trigger that sets off a chain reaction of self-indulgence. Feelings of loneliness may signal your flesh to seek quick satisfaction. Other triggers may be thoughts that no one cares about you or that you deserve pleasure. What tends to trigger your sin cycle?



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S04  
4

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### STUDY

#### Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

Identify these triggers, then counter them. For example, if boredom triggers sin, plan activities for your down time that keep your mind busy. If negative self-talk triggers sin, counter those thoughts with God's truth. If you have trouble finding just the right verse to help, perhaps your accountability partner can give you some ideas.



#### Abstain with Mutual Support

Paul's final principle in 2 Timothy 2:22 is that we should "flee from youthful lusts" and "pursue righteousness" in the company of "those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (NASB). How essential is the mutual support of fellow travelers!

What does the Bible say about the power of fellowship in overcoming sin? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12–14; Hebrews 10:23–25; and James 5:16, and record the point of each passage.

The writer of Ecclesiastes warns of the danger of going it alone in this world: "Woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:10 NASB). Can you think of people you trust who can share your burden? Your accountability partner is one person. Are there others? Perhaps there is a support group at your church or a men's or women's small group you can join. What can you do to strengthen your base of support?



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S04  
5

# SHIELD YOUR EYES, GUARD YOUR HEART BIBLE STUDY

## Lesson 4: Determine to Abstain

2 Timothy 2:22

SEARCHING  
THE  
SCRIPTURES

STUDY



### MESSAGE TO MY ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

Share some final thoughts or insights with your accountability partner in the space below. You may wish to write a prayer request or make plans to meet regularly, encouraging one another in your walk with the Lord. Or you may simply like to say thanks. The space is yours!



### A FINAL WORD

This lesson marks the end of the *Shield Your Eyes, Guard Your Heart* Bible study—but not the end of your journey of purity. Jesus reserved perhaps the highest of blessings for those who strive for a pure heart: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8 NASB).

Growing in intimacy with your heavenly Father who created you and loves you—what could be a greater motivation for guarding your heart from the contamination of the world? No soul can be satisfied until it is satisfied in knowing God.

Our prayer for you is that as you shield your eyes from the sensuality of this world, God will open your eyes to Himself in a way you may have never experienced before. You may fall again to temptation, but we urge you not to give up your pursuit of purity. Be open with your accountability partner, and keep moving forward. The goal of knowing Christ is worth the journey.

*Shield Your Eyes, Guard Your Heart* Bible study was developed by Biblical Counseling Ministries staff members.



[www.insight.org](http://www.insight.org) | [www.insightworld.org](http://www.insightworld.org)

Copyright © 2018 by Insight for Living Ministries. All rights are reserved worldwide.  
Duplication of copyrighted material for commercial use is strictly prohibited.

**Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application**

S04  
6