

Encourage

Inspiration for IPHC Leaders

It's Time to
PRESENT ARMS

BY DOUG BEACHAM

CYBER-PORN Is
Seducing a Generation

BY J. LEE GRADY

The Awesome Power
of **SANCTIFICATION**

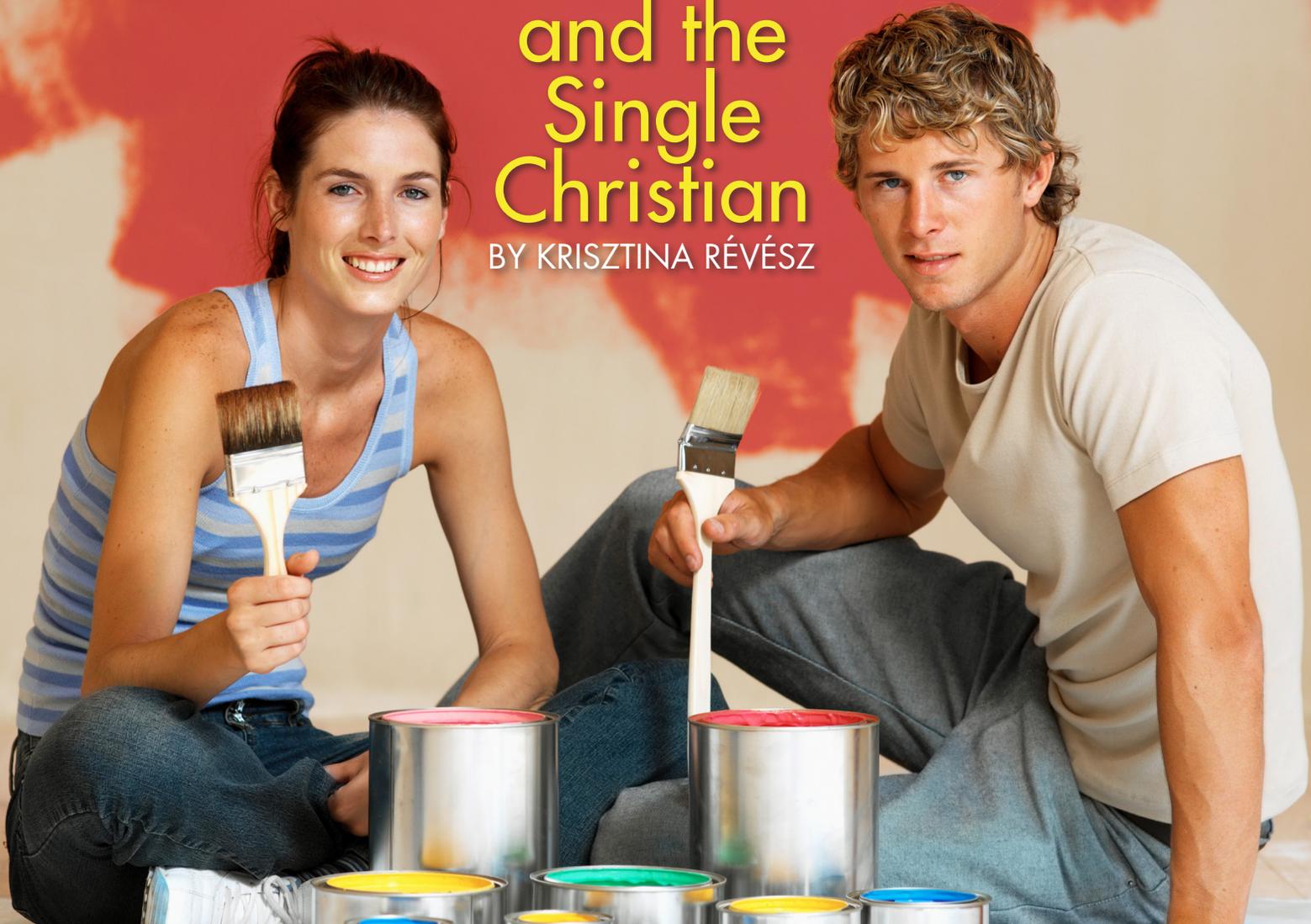
BY G.F. TAYLOR

Tips for Effective
TEAMWORK

BY TRACY REYNOLDS

PURITY
and the
Single
Christian

BY KRISZTINA RÉVÉSZ



It's Time for God's Army to 'PRESENT ARMS'

If we are to be effective in spiritual warfare, we cannot ignore the call to holiness.



BY DOUG
BEACHAM

DOUG BEACHAM is the presiding bishop of the IPHC. He has served in various roles in the church including Georgia Conference Superintendent, executive director of Church Education Ministries, and executive director of World Missions Ministries. You can follow Bishop Beacham on [Facebook](#) or Twitter [@DougBeacham](#).

Many of us have heard and seen the military command, “Present arms.” If unarmed, it indicates a salute with the right hand. If armed, there is a quick snap as a rifle is moved from the shoulder to a vertical position in front of the soldier. It is a sign of respect and flows from the soldier (or soldiers) already in a position of “attention.”

I think of this in light of our church’s continued stance of attention when it comes to holiness and sanctification. The apostle Paul appealed to Roman Christians “by the mercies of God” that they should present their bodies as “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1, NKJV). He followed with this admonition: “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (12:2).

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Paul referred to the “armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left” (2 Corinthians 6:7). In the same letter he referenced “the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ” (10:4, 5).

The goal of life is more than being delivered from the dominion of sin (although that is obviously important, according to Romans 6). The purpose of such deliverance is that we “present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Romans 6:13).

Paul's tenses in 6:13 are important. The first "present" in the first part of verse 13 (not printed here) is a present imperative. The second "present" (printed) is an aorist imperative. As people redeemed by Christ and set apart for His glory, we do not continue to offer our "members" (any part of our body, a word used of weapons) for unrighteousness.

Redeemed, sanctified people must make a conscious decision of mind and will to stop living according to the dictates of our flesh and the spirit of the age. Instead, we present ourselves (the aorist denotes a clear point of determination) as being people who do not live as the spiritually "walking dead" but as those who are "alive in Christ"; therefore, our life in every aspect is surrendered to righteousness and God.

That is an act of total surrender. There may remain pockets of resistance to be transformed, or areas in life where the long conformation of the world is being confronted and straightened; but in the sight of God and in our inner person, we have taken our stand and made our decision.

"It's time for holiness and sanctification to get our 'attention.' It's time for full surrender to the Lordship of Christ."

The goal and focus of sanctification in our lives is thus towards living as "new creatures" in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:7). We are a "new humanity" (Ephesians 2:15; 4:24; Colossians 3:10), manifested through the church, so that the principalities and powers of the world will know the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). God's sanctifying work in us is to reveal His glory and the glory meant for all in Christ.

This is not a life unaware of, and immune to, the temptations and vulnerabilities we confront in this life; rather, it is a life that is profoundly grateful for the mercies and grace of God that have delivered us from the power of darkness (Colossians 1:12-14). We are therefore no longer children of darkness but now sons and daughters of God who walk in the light (Romans 13:12; Ephesians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 5:5).

Our emphasis on holiness this year is a clarion call for us to "present arms." It requires our "attention" and ears to listen to the voice of the One who calls us. It requires us to have our spiritual "weapons" of truth, integrity, honesty, peace, grace and love ready to be used for the righteousness of God.

Over this summer several thousand IPHC teens and young adults from across the United States will gather in Daytona Beach, Florida. Hundreds from across Latin America will gather in Costa Rica, and many from Europe will gather in Hungary to pursue holiness.

Many of them are already struggling with patterns of the world that have ensnared them. Addictions from the chemical world and from the digital world have filled their minds, hearts and bodies. They long for genuine freedom, for authenticity, for hope and for love.

They long to know that God is real and alive. They long for more than a movie or catchy song. They, like all of us, want to experience

Encourage

A place of hope. A people of promise.

June/July 2016

Vol. 3 No. 6

Editor in Chief

Dr. A.D. Beacham, Jr.

Publisher

International Pentecostal Holiness Church

Executive Editor

J. Lee Grady

Communications Director / Associate Editor

Janese Bennett

Copy Editor

Deborah Delk Grady

Evangelism USA

D. Chris Thompson

World Missions Ministries

J. Talmadge Gardner

Discipleship Ministries

Thomas H. McGhee

Clergy Development / World Intercession Network

Lou Shirey

Encourage is published monthly except in July and December by the International Pentecostal Holiness Church, P.O. Box 12609, Oklahoma City, OK 73157. Digital subscriptions are available free of charge by contacting jbennett@iphc.org. Images courtesy of thinkstockphotos.com unless otherwise noted.

the wholeness, the genuine humanness of what we are meant to be in the redeeming, sanctifying love of God.

I ask you to join me in praying that these young people will encounter the life-changing power of the mercies and grace of God. They will inherit most of this century and it will be their generational assignment to speak truth and love to a world far different than the world for which our generations were prepared.

Their minds are already wired differently due to growing up in the digital world. But the human condition, longing, and hope remain the same: the wholeness that comes from the transforming life of the Son of God, Jesus the Lord.

It's time for holiness and sanctification to get our "attention." It's time for full surrender to the Lordship of Christ. It's time to "present arms" with weapons of righteousness. It's time. Regardless the language or culture, it's time. ☐

SEX, PURITY AND THE SINGLE CHRISTIAN

Let's be honest: Are you tired of hearing people in the church say that singleness is a "gift"?



BY
KRISZTINA
RÉVÉSZ

KRISZTINA RÉVÉSZ works for IPHC Hungary, and she is the administrative assistant to Dr. Linda Fannin, missionary to Hungary. She is a professional daydreamer and a bookworm. She also leads a home group in a small town called Ráckeve.

The words *singleness* and *purity* can paint different pictures for people. Some might vividly see spiritual life virtuously triumphing over carnal desires. Others might see constant spiritual struggle involving blood, sweat and tears. The truth is that the pursuit of purity for singles is often a mixture of both.

Purity and holiness is important to every believer, not just singles. So why does holiness and purity deserve a whole separate approach from singles' perspective? Well, singleness—especially long time singleness—is a unique way of living, and because of that it comes with a separate set of challenges.

I've heard it said many times that singleness is a gift. But frankly if you have been single for a long enough time, you probably know that more often than not, singleness doesn't feel like a gift. As a single person you have nobody to be intimate with, and that can leave you with unmet emotional and physical needs.

But there are exceptions to this. You may not desire to be married, and you can be perfectly satisfied without a mate. Your heart's desire is to be unmarried, and you're living your dream life. Or, you may want to get married, but you live in such a vibrant relationship with the Lord that you are fulfilled emotionally. And your mind is so full of Him that your sexuality is kept at the right place as well.

Of course, the majority of us singles struggle from time to time to guard that vibrant relationship with Christ. We are close to Jesus and feel satisfied, but then we drift from the deep intimacy with Him and we feel the struggle again.

Even if it doesn't feel like fun at times, singleness can be a gift. As a single person, you can be a unique gift to the body of Christ and to the world. You are free to go. You are free to volunteer. You are available to take risks that you

probably wouldn't take as a married person.

For many people, singleness can also be just a season. You can learn and grow without burdening somebody with the process. The best advice I've ever been given regarding this was to "become the person you are looking for." During the time I live as a single woman, God can do major groundwork in my life to prepare me to be a gift to my spouse when he comes.

Singleness can be a gift for you and Jesus. And this is the most important aspect. Singleness as we know it now, and marriage as well, will pass. They belong to this short life that we live on Earth. But our life is eternal, like our relationship with Jesus.

As a single person, we have an opportunity to really establish profound closeness with Jesus. These are things that we can learn in marriage, too. I hear from married friends that they learned a lot about becoming more Christlike after they got married.

But as the Apostle Paul said, "An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord" (1 Corinthians 7:32). And that goes for unmarried women as well. We have undivided attention, time and energy that we can invest in our relationship with the Lord.

But what about the temptations that can try to pull us away from holiness and purity? Obviously, there are sexual temptations, in all forms and shapes. This is a vulnerable area for most singles. I believe we have to be extra careful of what are we watching, reading or thinking about. The area of sexuality is the one we probably have to guard the most.

But there are other temptations too. Waiting a long time to find a mate can lead to unwise choices. If we get impatient and marry a non-believer, that doesn't necessarily come against our purity in the strictest sense, but it will distort God's plan for our lives. Getting bitter over singleness is a temptation too. Also, living alone for a long time can present the danger

S
"Singleness doesn't have to be a struggle. He has made a way for us to be satisfied and holy in this season of our lives regardless of how long it will last.

S
of becoming self-centered, thus becoming someone who is not even Christ-like, let alone a good future mate.

Purity means so much more than not getting into a sexual relationship before we say "I do." Holiness is not just about things we do and don't do. Holiness is about being separated for Jesus in every aspect of our lives. We are to be His. We must give up our presumed right to personal happiness so that we can conform to His Word.

I'm not writing these lines as someone who has got it all together. Even though I haven't had a major sexual failure as a Christian, I've fallen into things that were impure. I've battled bitterness and self-centeredness.

Every time I fall in some way or I kick and scream against my single state of being, I realize that God is speaking to my heart and offering His love to me. He wants me to receive it—to get rooted and grounded in it. He wants me to know He is enough for me.

He wants me to seek after His crazy, passionate love. If I really knew it as

I am supposed to know—not on an intellectual level, but on a heart level—then I would be satisfied and saturated with Him. I would be less likely to fall into temptation, and I wouldn't kick and scream that I don't want to be single anymore!

Holiness is a heart issue. The greatest force that fuels purity and holiness is to know that God is holy, but to also know His love and grace for ourselves. Then we love God more than the promptings of our flesh. And whether single or married, we strive to live in this place on a persistent basis.

Holiness is beautiful. It is full of strength, power and peace. God called us to be holy as He is, and He never asks of us anything that He hasn't made us capable of. He is cheering for us and interceding on our behalf.

Singleness doesn't have to be a struggle. He has made a way for us to be satisfied and holy in this season of our lives regardless of how long it will last. □

Download the
IPHC App

Home 12:34 100%
Home News Media Events Donate

IPHC
Place of Hope. People of Promise.

NEWS MEDIA
EVENTS DONATE

GET IT ON
Google Play

Download on the
App Store

iphc.org/app

Understanding the Awesome Power of SANCTIFICATION

BY G.F. TAYLOR

One of the fathers of our movement explains the biblical basis of Christ's sanctifying work.

Regeneration is to be born again, or anew, to be brought to life, to renew life. The word *sanctify* comes from two Latin words, meaning to make sacred, to make holy, to free from the power of sin, to purify, to consecrate. We are compelled to note a marked difference between the two. The Scriptures everywhere recognize the same difference.

Regeneration is the impartation of life to a dead soul. It denotes a change in a man's life so far as it reaches him. It translates him from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light, and puts into him a life from above, a life that reaches after God. It largely checks the dominion of sin over a person, but by its very nature cannot cleanse the soul from inward sin.

Sanctification is that which cleanses from sin. Sanctification does mean cleansing of the inward life. We admit that it often means consecration, that which is above cleansing, but *to cleanse* is one definition of it.

The point of difference between regeneration and sanctification lies in the time at which sanctification does or may take place. We are sanctified as a second definite work of grace, wrought in the soul subsequent to regeneration. *The Advocate* holds with the last school mentioned. [Here Taylor is defending the theology of the church expressed in its official publication.]

James recognizes two distinct classes in Chapter 4:8. He speaks of them as *sinners* and *double-minded*. The first class is exhorted to cleanse their hands referring to their outward conduct, while the second class are asked to purify their hearts, a more inward cleansing. If the heart is cleansed at the same time as the hands, there would be no need of the second exhortation.

“There is no Scripture that teaches sanctification obtainable except through the atonement, and such benefits of the atonement are for us in this life.”

There is no Scripture that teaches sanctification obtainable except through the atonement, and such benefits of the atonement are for us in this life. 1 John 1:7 tells us that “the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” We do not find any promise of cleansing after death nor at death. Growth is a development, not a cleansing.

[There follows a discussion of Romans 7 under the heading, “The Body of Death.” It is taken from “The Way of Faith” and was written by Dr. Beverly Carradine, editor of *The Way of Faith*. This attribution was not given until the next issue of *The Advocate* and Taylor apologized for failing to do it in this issue. But Taylor quoted it extensively and in it Carradine characterizes those born again but not made holy by sanctification.]

It is evident that Romans 7 presents sin as a nature, and not sin as an act that is discussed in this portion of the epistle. The sin that dwelleth in me is impossible in an act. An act is external; this sin was internal.

The body of death is one of the names Paul gives this aspect of sin in Romans 7. In other words, he likens the sin principle or nature that is in the soul to a dead body or corpse. He did not say that a number of transgressions put together made this dead body, but that it was a dark, dead something in a man.”

One feature of a corpse is its coldness. No regenerated person but recalls the chill that so soon followed the New Birth.

A second feature of a corpse is its offensiveness. There seems to be no human on earth that can endure the odor. In like manner we do not know a more disagreeable and offensive thing in the spiritual life and character realms than inbred Sin. It is with its arrogance, overbearing spirit and intolerance, simply unbearable.

A third feature of a corpse is its uncleanness. There is not only inward corruption, but it will invariably

manifest itself at the mouth.

A fourth feature of the corpse is that it is gloom producing.

A fifth feature of the corpse is seen in its dangerous nature. It is fatal to keep it in the house. It not only would breed disease, but occasion death to the living. And here is the explanation of the spiritual sickness and death that overtakes so many regenerated people. They kept the body of death too long in the life house. The corpse slowly but surely struck in, and slew God’s living child.

Growth, time, culture, suppression, death cannot remedy this corpse. How can time improve a corpse? What can growth do? It is a dead body!

But Christ can take it out. He is a greater Savior than most of His followers believe or know.

Paul, after a fearful description of the power of the sin nature that dwells within, after making manifest the utter hopelessness of human power in the struggle to conquer or to cast it out, cried out with a shout of rapture that Jesus Christ could do it!

Listen to his wail as he in the person of humanity studies the hopeless struggle, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” Then hear the cry of joy, the shout of victory in the next words “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord!”

In other words, Christ the Deliverer from the sin nature, can move the dead body out of the house. It need not be kept. There is no necessity in planning, worrying and exhausting one’s self in decking up the dead thing, in denying its hateful presence, or in trying to suppress what God calls corruption and that exhales foul moral odors disgusting to the regenerated man himself and sickening as well to others.

Christ will remove that dead body. □

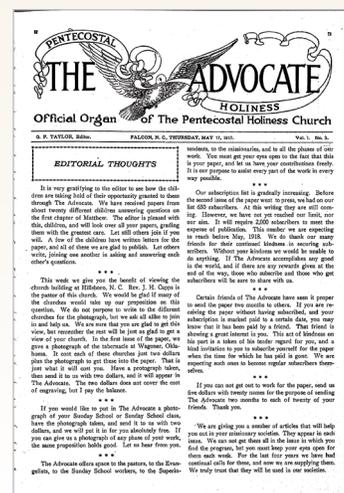
This article was written in 1917 and was edited by Bishop Doug Beacham for clarity and space.



REV. G.F. TAYLOR, the second general superintendent of the IPHC from 1913–1917, was an amazing man used mightily of God. He lived his life with a congenital birth defect that made it difficult for him to walk. Yet, with amazing faith, he allowed the power of the Holy Spirit to help him overcome numerous personal setbacks.

In 2019 the IPHC will commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Taylor’s efforts in establishing the Franklin Springs Institute, now Emmanuel College, the Publishing House of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, now LifeSprings Resources, and the Franklin Springs Pentecostal Holiness Church—all in a few months in 1919.

The first editor of the first official magazine of the IPHC, Taylor used his platform to inform, educate and inspire the growing denomination. The following is taken from the May 17, 1917 issue of *The Pentecostal Holiness Advocate*, published in Falcon, North Carolina, Taylor expressed the views of holiness and sanctification commonly held by us in these early years.



A timeless message: This article was originally published 99 years ago.

How CYBER-PORN Is Seducing the Younger Generation



If you want to disciple young people for Jesus, you must be willing to confront today's porn monster.



BY J. LEE GRADY

J. LEE GRADY is an ordained IPHC minister who serves as contributing editor of *Charisma* magazine and editor of *Encourage*. He also directs The Mordecai Project, an international missions organization based in Florida. He is a member of the IPHC's Sunshine Conference. You can follow him on Twitter at [@leegrady](https://twitter.com/leegrady) or visit his ministry website at themordecaiproject.org.

A few months ago a young man named “Jake” asked me to pray for him after I taught at a ministry school in a northeastern state. He is only 22—and he wants to serve Jesus with all his heart. But he struggles daily because he has experienced a level of sexual bondage that was probably not even possible a few decades ago.

I got really upset as I listened to Jake's story. It clearly shows how the devil is using pornography to systematically enslave today's younger generation.

Jake was abandoned at age two by his 16-year-old father. His teenage mother tried her best to raise him alone, but she couldn't provide the kind of protection or guidance that he needed. He was introduced to porn at age 13, and a friend taught him how to bypass the internet filters at his middle school so he could watch hardcore porn there.

Before long, he discovered gay porn and began watching it daily. He was hooked.

When Jake was still underage, he met a guy on Jack'd, a gay dating app. He gave the man his address and he showed up at his house—and the two had unprotected sex. Jake eventually had sex with 11 or 12 guys through other dating apps. He never used condoms because he secretly wanted to catch a venereal disease.

“I wanted to die,” Jake told me. “I felt like I would never be free from same-sex attraction and I didn't want to spend the rest of my life miserable like that.”

Eventually Jake progressed into the realm of cybersex. He learned that he could perform sex acts on camera for people who watched—and he made \$1,000 in extra cash that way every three months. He used Instagram, SnapChat, Skype and other social media to advertise for sex or to connect with prospective partners.

Thankfully, God's mercy intervened. Jake ended up in Pennsylvania, where he met some Spirit-filled Christians. He gave his heart to Jesus and quickly enrolled in a Christian discipleship program. His desires didn't go away overnight, but he began a journey toward healing that continues today.

"Since I gave my life to Jesus, I feel less and less satisfied doing these kinds of things," he says. "The more people tell me how much I am worth to God, the more I have become aware of how degrading these things are."

You might think Jake's story is extreme. But I have found that more and more young people today are being pulled into unimaginable depths of immoral behavior because they got hooked on porn, either gay or straight. Once porn becomes an addiction, it can lead to cybersex sites, voyeurism and endless hookups with strangers.

Meanwhile, unless there is some sort of Christian influence in their lives, these young people begin to think that unbridled sex is normal. The world celebrates it. Media encourages it—and is eager to provide ways to connect kids sexually.

What can people like Jake do if they find themselves struggling with lust and perversion even after giving their hearts to Christ? I will share here what I have been telling Jake regularly since I offered to counsel him long-distance. You can share these tips with any person who has been a slave to cyber-porn.

1. SEVER ALL TIES WITH THE PAST.

People who get involved in cybersex typically store dozens if not hundreds of phone numbers and social media connections with past sex partners. A porn addict cannot maintain those relationships. He must block every number and delete every app. Don't allow even one person to stay connected.

Paul wrote: "Flee immorality" (1

"Ultimately, freedom from pornography comes from the Savior. We must look to Jesus to break every chain."

Cor. 6:18) and "Flee from youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). Your disciple must learn to run as fast as he can from the temptations that enslaved him in the past.

2. GET RUTHLESS WITH SIN.

Jesus said: "If your eye causes you to stumble, throw it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell" (Mark 9:47). This means we must take radical steps to stop ungodly habits.

You can't take a half-hearted approach. You must encourage a porn addict to throw his phone away if he has to. He must starve his lusts. If you try to "manage" or "tame" a sexual addiction it will eat you alive. You must kill it.

3. ASK FOR HELP AND STAY ACCOUNTABLE.

No one is strong enough to defeat a sexual addiction alone. An addict must seek help from mature Christians. He or she must admit their sins fully—and never hide any aspect of the problem. Then they must ask for healing prayer.

Help your disciple to find a Christian counselor or join a ministry such as Celebrate Recovery that offers support groups for addicts. Allow others who have had similar struggles to encourage him in their journey to healing.

4. FILL ALL FREE TIME WITH HEALTHY ACTIVITIES.

Porn addicts waste hours every day looking at websites, chatting with potential hookups and engaging in online sex. The bondage that develops is as strong as a cocaine habit.

Most people who have a porn

habit cannot handle being alone—they will automatically sense a craving for sexual images if they have time on their hands.

If this is your disciple's problem, he must revamp his schedule and eliminate down time.

He must learn to spend time with friends, play sports, exercise, work hard, attend church activities and get plenty of sleep. He can't give himself the option of wasting another minute of his life on a porn site.

5. SEEK SUPERNATURAL DELIVERANCE.

Ultimately, a porn addict must cry out to God for freedom from bondage. He must fight for his freedom—and you can arm him for the battle and hold his arms up when he is weak. It's important for your disciple to read the Bible and pray on his own, but that is not enough. He must find a healthy church that believes in the power of the Holy Spirit and seek out prayer support.

If the church offers altar ministry after a service, encourage your disciple to share his struggle and let others pray for him. He will need prayer often. He should continually seek prayer until the habit is completely broken.

Ultimately, freedom from pornography comes from the Savior. We must look to Jesus to break every chain. Revelation 1:5 says Jesus "loves us and released us from our sins by His blood." When an addict believes in His amazing grace, the iron chains of addiction will melt and he or she will find the power to resist temptation. □



15 Timeless Tips for Effective Teamwork

Try these ideas to help your ministry team flow with the Holy Spirit.



DR. C. TRACY REYNOLDS

DR. TRACY REYNOLDS is the dean of the School of Christian Ministries at Emmanuel College and assimilation pastor at Grace Fellowship near Athens, Georgia. He and his wife, Lisa, have served for more than 35 years in the areas of student ministry, leadership development, discipleship, church growth, small groups, worship and other areas. You can follow him on Twitter [@ctracyreynolds](#) or on [Facebook](#).

Most of my days at Emmanuel College are invested in working with teams. These teams vary in size, function and membership. Some are student-led teams where I serve as a coach, others are composed of faculty colleagues serving together, and a few are comprised of team leaders representing a variety of teams, departments and functions.

In every case it is imperative that we learn to work together smoothly and effectively if we are to accomplish the mission of the college. Recently best-selling author [Michael Hyatt](#) released a podcast listing thirteen ways to frustrate your team. I loved the content so much that I decided to offer my own list of suggestions, but from the positive perspective of proactive habits to actually encourage your team and foster effective teamwork.

Be available and responsive to your team. Make sure the team knows that they are important to you and accessible to you. While it is imperative that you prioritize your relationships and guard your time margins, your team needs to know that you will be there for them when needed. Also, get back to them quickly. It is my goal to respond to texts the same day and emails within twenty-four hours if possible.

Hold regular, meaningful meetings and cancel only when absolutely necessary. While I often joke that the eleventh commandment is, “Thou shalt not committee,” meeting regularly with your team allows for a certain level of predictability, consistency, and monitoring. Avoid timewasters, needless trivia, and issues involving only a portion of your team. Create meaningful traditions. Avoid canceling meetings unless a quorum cannot attend or it is more beneficial for those involved to defer. Last-minute cancellations are only welcomed if they are infrequent.

Handle correction privately and protect their dignity. In most cases, conflict should be handled privately and within the scope of the offense. Even if the offense occurred within the team meeting context, it is typically better to ask for a private meeting rather than airing it out among the complete team. After meeting with the offending parties it may be helpful to allow them the option of apologizing to the team at the next meeting or encouraging them to see team members individually before the next meeting.

State your expectations clearly and clarify constantly. Job descriptions, lines of authority, deadlines, dress codes, protocols, and procedures need to be clearly established and communicated regularly. When you sense ambiguity or things begin to slip it is often advisable to rehearse expectations. Most conflicts result from frustrated expectations. Clear expectations may be your most preventative medicine.

Allow your team time to complete projects before launching new initiatives. Visionary leaders tend to process out loud and are typically thinking about the next big thing long before most of the team has strategically planned or successfully accomplished the goals from the prior meeting. If you must share vision and new initiatives constantly, provide your team with time to close the loop and let them know which projects are the higher priorities.

Choose your battles wisely. Some battles are simply not worth the cost. We may win the battle, but not have enough troops left standing to occupy the city when the smoke clears. Align your points of contention with your mission and values. Only fight the battles necessary and worthy of your best efforts.

Focus on issues of substance while avoiding trivial pursuits. Avoid micro-managing. When you delegate, give the team authority and resources sufficient to make the decisions and shoulder the weight of the decision-making process. Trust your team, make yourself available, and get out of their way. Step in only when it is truly necessary.

Work from an agenda, publish it in advance, and allow for input before a clearly stated deadline. Planning in advance helps focus the time, fosters creativity, and encourages efficiency. It communicates that their time is valuable and allows for their input if offered in advance. Send out the agenda and minutes from the last meeting twenty-four hours in advance, then allow for adjustments up until a few hours before the meeting is scheduled.

Do not routinely allow for additions to the agenda or last-minute items once the meeting has begun. This one practice may do more to reduce or eliminate controversial subjects being interjected into your meeting than anything else I can offer.

Facilitate discussion, value input, and listen more than you talk. Strive to reduce your input to no more than about twenty percent while structuring the meeting around team discussion for the other eighty percent. Ask good questions, clarify when necessary, and offer summary statements.

Provide items of information via written reports or attachments and only highlight the salient points. Do not read the report for fear of insulting their intelligence. If you want them to read it before the meeting, send the reports out with the agenda.

Celebrate wins and share success stories. This may be the most important regular feature of great team meetings. Ask for stories, wins, breakthroughs, victories, and inspirational input at each meeting.

Between meetings catch them being and doing good. Rather than harping on mistakes, failures, and negative reports based on observations between meetings, limit these while intentionally noticing teammates doing great work. Good leaders make this a habit.

Recognize and reward exemplary achievement, outstanding effort, and courageous endeavors. Now that you have noticed their achievements, draw attention to them. Everyone loves to have their name called when there is something positive to recognize about them. Be specific and think of ways to

reward behaviors you desire to see repeated. What gets rewarded gets done!

Let the best ideas win. Even if you think your idea is the most substantive, creative and stellar, there are times when the wiser choice is to defer your idea in favor of the idea generated by a teammate. Let the team work together in transforming good ideas into potentially great ones.

Own your mistakes, apologize when necessary, and model redemptive practices. When you blow it, own it. Openly admit when you are wrong. Avoid the tendency to make excuses or justify, simply assume responsibility and model asking for forgiveness.

Assign next steps for actionable items with clear expectations, deadlines, and regular reporting. The most important closing activity of any meeting is assigning and reviewing which next steps are to be completed, who is responsible, and when it is due. Towards the beginning of the next meeting have them provide an update on their progress with supporting data, when appropriate.

“While it is imperative that you prioritize your relationships and guard your time margins, your team needs to know that you will be there for them when needed.”

Whether you are the senior pastor, executive pastor, youth pastor, children's pastor, worship leader, or volunteer team leader, try out the tips that resonate with you and make sense for the types of meetings you lead. It will most likely help your teams flourish and function better. ☐