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BATTLING SEXUAL TEMPTATION

A BIBLICAL TOOLKIT FOR CHRISTIAN GIRLS

1. ARE YOU PLAYING FOOTSIE WITH SEXUAL COMPROMISE?

His heart picked up the pace as he purposely walked down this dark street. It was nighttime, and nobody else was out. He knew she lived in this area. He was hoping she would come out to meet him. He glanced around to make sure no one saw him. He continued walking when she suddenly appeared in front of him. Without saying a word, she wrapped her arms around his neck and brazenly kissed him.

“My husband is gone,” she said in a seductive whisper. “Come with me and let’s have our fill of love until the morning!” Like an ox being led to the slaughter, he immediately followed the seductress inside.

Who is this man and woman? They’re the infamous “seductress” and “foolish man” found in Proverbs 7. This man had a serious case of playing footsie with sexual temptation. Take a quick pause and read Proverbs 7 in your own Bible.

There are so many valuable lessons we can take away from Proverbs 7, but I think the most important lesson is about the dangers of playing footsie with sexual temptation. The man in Proverbs 7 made several foolish choices which led him to ultimately commit adultery with a married woman. The road he chose to intentionally walk down led him on the path of temptation and in the direction of sexual sin.

FIRST: His slippery slope began when he decided to leave his house in the middle of the night. This wasn’t an emergency situation and there was no good reason he needed to be going out and wandering the streets alone. Going out at night was his first wrong “footsie move.”

SECOND: He made the choice to walk down the exact same street where the prostitute lived. We don’t know if he was going directly to her house, or simply hoping he would bump into her… but either way, he made the foolish choice of walking right near her house.

THIRD: Instead of running away from her smooth and seductive speech, he stood there and listened to every enticing word she had to say. The more he listened, the more she made sin sound irresistible. Without hesitation, he followed her to his doom.

One foolish decision at a time, this man played footsie with sexual temptation and ultimately gave in to sexual sin.

BEFORE we point fingers at the foolish man in Proverbs 7, many of us, as Christian girls need to recognize that we often choose a similar path of deception. We think we can walk down the street of compromise and play footsie with sexual temptation and not get burned.

Here are some common ways we might play footsie with sexual temptation today:

- Casually browsing on your phone/computer late at night when nobody else is around.
- Watching a movie containing sexual scenes and provocative behavior.
- Pursuing an ongoing texting conversation with a guy who you know is trouble.
- Reading romance novels filled with a sexualized and erotic storyline.
- Getting too physically involved with a guy in a romantic relationship.
- Downloading certain apps that you know will cause temptation for you.
- Browsing the internet randomly with no aim or purpose.
- Attending parties that you know are full of temptations and compromise.
- Following social media accounts that are filled with illicit and sexual content.
- Hanging around people who constantly pressure you to compromise.
- Dating a guy who isn't a solid Christian and doesn't really care much about God.

Although some of these things might seem like "no big deal," they can become the very thing that will lead you down a road you never intended to go. Giving in to sexual sin often begins by making the initial choice to play footsie with sexual temptation. That's why we must discern our direction in everything we do. We need to constantly ask ourselves, *will this help me move toward purity, holiness, and honor toward God, or away from it?* We need to become wise and discerning about what we choose to watch, engage in, who we hang out with, what we do on our phones, etc.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:18-20 says, "Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

Our hearts are bent toward lust. Our world is full of sexual temptation. Be ready to engage the battle. Be ready to flee.

Pause right now and take a moment to pray this prayer:

Dear God, I confess that I am a sinner in need of your constant grace and strength. I truly want to honor you with my heart, mind, and body, so please help me do that. I ask you to reveal areas in my life where I'm opening myself up to sexual temptation. Please convict me of where I'm lacking discernment. I ask for your strength to help me overcome sexual temptation today. May my actions, my thoughts, and my motives be pure in your sight. I need your strength. Amen.

2. CHOOSE TO BRING SECRET SEXUAL SINS INTO THE LIGHT.

My heart was pounding. My hands were sweating. I (Kristen) knew I needed to be honest about my struggle but it was the last thing in the world I wanted to do. Especially to my parents. However, as scared as I was of being honest, I couldn't bear the weight of my secret any longer.

As a teen, I had been really struggling with my thought life for a while and lust seemed to be my constant companion. These sinful thoughts and imaginations also lead me down the path of regular masturbation. I tried to stop many times, but couldn't seem to break the pattern in my life. I knew my thoughts and actions weren't holy, pure, or honoring to God, but nothing I did seemed to work. That's when I heard something that turned my world upside. I share the full story in our book, ***Sex, Purity, and the Longings of a Girl's Heart,*** but in a nutshell, here's what happened next.

I was at a conference and heard the speaker talk about the powerful act of bringing secret sins into the light. Exposing secrets had a way of breaking the bondage they had over us. I wanted that! I knew what I needed to do.

Choosing to bring my secret sexual struggle into the light was the turning point for me. God gave me the courage to be open and honest with my parents and ask for their help. From that point on, everything changed. My struggle was no longer mine alone to bear. I had support, prayer, encouragement, and accountability. The next few months and years looked very different for me. I didn't walk perfectly, but I walked in victory much more consistently.

If you're currently wrestling with a secret sexual struggle, I understand the weight and burden it can be. Whether it's pornography, masturbation, erotica, sexting, lustful thoughts, or something else, you don't have to fight this battle alone.

GALATIANS 6:2 says, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

God's good plan for His church is that we would bear one another's burdens by walking with each other through the hard stuff.

ROMANS 6:13-14 says, "Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace."

FOUR WAYS TO CONQUER SECRET SEXUAL SINS:

1. Pursue Genuine Repentance.

For each of us, the first step toward victory from lustful sin is to recognize that we have sinned against God and are in need of His forgiveness. 1 John 1:9 says, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Our God is full of grace and forgiveness, willing to receive and forgive any who seek Him.

2. Bring Secret Sins Into the Light.

Sin thrives in darkness. There is something powerfully freeing about bringing secret sins into the light. Proverbs 28:13 says, “Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy.” God promises to give us mercy if we expose our sin. Whether it’s porn, masturbation, erotica, or something else—if you truly desire freedom, you must expose it.

3. Seek Ongoing Discipleship from a Godly Woman.

After bringing your struggle into the light, don’t revert back into your own private world again. Breaking sinful habits is hard. Don’t fight your battles alone. Find a godly woman in your life and ask her to disciple you in God’s truth. Depending on what your specific struggle is (i.e. porn, masturbation, erotica, etc.), consider reading a biblically grounded book together on the topic. You could also pray together regularly. She could provide an “open door” of accountability where you text or call her any time you’re tempted toward your struggle.

4. Make Radical Changes.

Depending on the frequency and severity of your struggle, you may need to employ some radical changes in your life to avoid sexual compromise. For example, if you struggle with pornography, consider only using your computer or phone in public places, installing a strong internet accountability filter, and/or taking a break from technology for a while. If you struggle with erotica, be intentional to throw away any tempting books/movies, delete erotic content from your media devices, and avoid getting on technology when you’re alone. If you struggle with masturbation, evaluate where your temptation strikes the hardest. Maybe it’s in your bedroom, shower, or when you’re tired. Come up with a plan of action on how you’re going to handle this temptation.

Being honest about your secret sexual struggles may be the hardest thing to do, but it is the first step toward breaking its grip on you.

3. FIGHT SEXUAL TEMPTATION LIKE A GIRL WITH A SWORD.

It was late and I (Bethany) was exhausted. My head hit the pillow and I was ready for a good night of sleep. I closed my eyes and exhaled. Ahhhh Finally some rest. But then it happened. My mind was suddenly assaulted with sexual thoughts that came flooding in unannounced. Fantasies, imaginations, and sexual images filled my mind, and I chose to linger on these enticing thoughts.

I knew my thoughts weren't honoring to God, so I tried shutting my brain down, but my thoughts wouldn't slow down. As the temptations grew stronger, a gentle reminder nudged my heart — *engage in the battle.* I was immediately reminded that I didn't have to lay there and helplessly give into these sinful thoughts. I could fight against this lust with the power of God's Word.

And that's exactly what I did. I battled those thoughts with my invisible sword (God's truth), slicing through the many lies, lusts, and sins that wanted to claim victory. I chose to fight against the temptation with God's Word until the truth had won in my heart.

HEBREWS 4:12a says, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword…"

Just like a real sword, God's Word offers the same protection, defense, and power in our lives. There's only one catch. In order for this sword to work well, we have to know how to use it. As I've thought about this area of my life, my deepest desire is this: that I would be a woman who knows how to use my Sword well.

God's Word is living and active and has the power to change our lives. The Bible isn't just another religious book; it's a book about God Himself. It's a book that tells us the truth about who God is and who we are.

As author Jen Wilkin says, "The Bible is a book that boldly and clearly reveals who God is on every page. From beginning to end, the Bible is a book about God."

The more we read the Bible, the more we'll get to know God. And the more we learn about our perfect God, the more we'll see our own sin and darkness. And the more we see our own sin and darkness, the more we are driven to Him as the source for our victory.

Using our Swords in everyday life is the key to victory.

Here's one example of how the power of God's Word could work in your everyday life:

Imagine you just got off the phone after having an exciting conversation with your best friend. She shared some juicy information with you about a guy that you have a big crush on. You can't stop dreaming about him and can't wait for the next time you'll see him. You're feeling flirty and are tempted to send him a provocative text message. *I mean…why not?*

But - you've been studying God's Word and you're no longer fighting these battles in the flesh. Before jumping on your emotions, you decide to pause and open up your Bible (your Sword of truth) and turn to a familiar passage in Ephesians that you studied this week:

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:1-3).

God's Word reminds you of how you should treat this guy (as a brother in Christ), and why you should treat him in a way that honors him and God (i.e. walk in a manner worthy of the calling). God's Word changes your thinking in that moment, which redirects your emotions, and you choose to reject your impulsive feelings and instead honor God with your actions.

That is the power of the Sword in action.

Or how about this scenario: You're lying in your bed at night scrolling through your phone when you suddenly feel extremely tempted to look up pornographic images. In the past, this was always a losing battle for you. However, things are different this time.

You've been studying God's Word and you're no longer fighting these battles in the flesh. You quickly put your phone down and open up your Bible to Psalm 51:10 (a verse you recently memorized). *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."*

You repeat this verse over and over in your mind, praying it to God. You cry out to God and ask Him to give you the strength to overcome your sexual temptation. With God's strength, you conquer this temptation by using your Sword. That is the power of the Sword in action!

Instead of living our lives in helpless defeat, it's high time we picked up our Swords and lived as victorious women empowered by Christ's strength!

"…in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).

4. SIX VERSES TO HELP YOU FIGHT SEXUAL TEMPTATION.

Psalm 51:10 “Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Psalm 119:9 “How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.”

Romans 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desire.”

1 Peter 1:14-16 “As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

To win the fight against sexual temptation, we need to need to live every moment dependent on God. Praying constantly, reading the Bible daily, and pursuing humility. The more our heart is set on Christ, the more we will desire to please Him rather than our flesh.

As you wrestle with sexual temptations in your own life, we pray you will choose to fight the battle with the right weapons. Don’t chase after outward perfectionism, but rather pursue a daily relationship with the perfect Savior. Ask God for the daily grace and strength needed to walk in holiness and honor for His glory. Spend time with Him through His Word and prayer. Cultivate a genuine love for Him in your heart. The greatest weapon against sexual sin, is a greater love for the Savior.

If you desire to go deeper in your understanding of purity and Biblical sexuality, you will really enjoy reading our book ***Sex, Purity, and the Longings of a Girl’s Heart.*** We’re praying for you, sister!