

Sexuality Talk Handout - Some Practical advice

No matter where you are at the moment, or what you have filled your heart and mind with, through unhealthy sexual experiences, God has an almighty plan for your sexuality.

FREEDOM is possible through God's amazing gift of forgiveness

"if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us" (1 Jn 1:9)

FREEDOM from unhealthy and sinful habits (lust, porn, masturbation, pre-marital sex) need not hold you down from being all God created you to be.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (2 Cor 5:17)

But it is not easy and it takes an on-going effort. The Church understands:

"Self mastery is a long and exacting work. One can never consider it acquired once and for all. It presupposes renewed effort at all stages of life. The effort required can be more intense in certain periods, such asadolescence" CCC2342

But God calls all to strive for Chastity:

"Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person..." CCC2337

With a warning that:

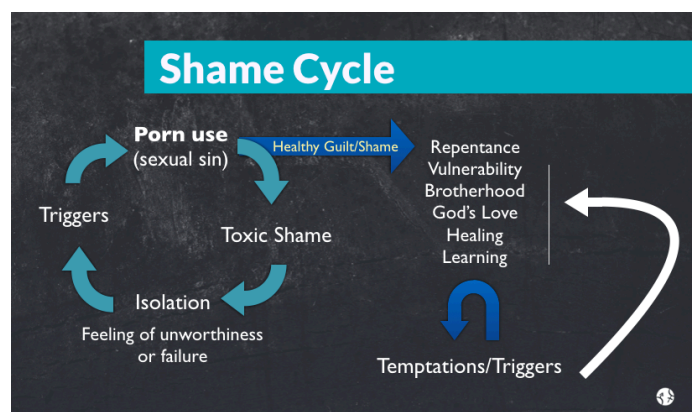
"either man governs his passions and finds peace, or he lets himself be dominated by them and becomes unhappy" CCC2339

John Paul II's teaching on the Theology of the Body reminds us of man's "original glory" and directs us to Christ's call for each person to try and re-capture how we were created to be as men and women "in the beginning". This was (and is) *God's plan for our sexuality*.

We are created as an *image of God (imago dei)*. In how we live out our *vocation* as singles, married couples, priests and religious we also reveal the glory of God. We do this by loving in a self-giving and sacrificial way as Christ did. In loving totally, unconditionally, faithfully and in a life-giving way we love as God loves. This is true of all vocations but is mimicked in a particular way in marriage. The sexual embrace of marriage re-affirms the wedding vows and says these four things through the *language* of the body.

The Shame Cycle:

For many people unhealthy shame can be the key barrier to breaking free from sexual sin. Having a healthy practice of repentance whilst maintaining good levels of support through vulnerable relationships is key. By seeking to understand our unwanted sexual behaviours we can learn, grow and seek healing for our woundedness. Through prayer and meditating on God's word you open yourself to God's love and grace which helps break the shame cycle.



The Battle for Sexual Integrity:

Strategies - PASS principle:

- Prayer
 - Accountability (authentic relationships with people of the same sex)
 - Scripture
 - Sacraments
- *Remember to use these strategies everyday and especially where possible *in the moment of temptation*.

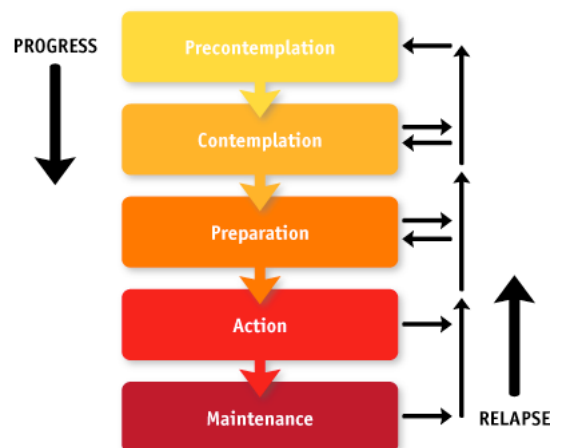
For progress in the area of sexual purity there are two main areas that need to be addressed:

1) Healing

- a. Sacrament of Reconciliation – Perhaps a general confession
- b. Personal Prayer - Inviting Jesus into this area
- c. Being prayed with/over – by leaders / appropriate people only
- d. Inner Healing Prayer
- e. Counselling/psychology/addiction programs
- f. Mentoring/spiritual direction
- g. Eucharistic adoration

2) Practical strategies

To change any habit in your life you need to actually make changes to how you act and think. It is difficult to make any progress without actually doing things differently. So if you want to get to stage 4 (Action Stage) in this “behaviour change model” you must do something! Other than PASS, strategies might include, bouncing the eyes, getting accountability software for your phone and computer, changing what you watch, writing encouraging scriptures on your mirror, doing something (like praying) when in identified situations of temptation (e.g. the shower, late at night, at the beach).



- Recognise the root of the struggle and the habitual pathways you go down.
- Identify “triggers” in your life – these are different for each person.
- Celebrate the victories and encourage each other.
 - “See to it brothers that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But *encourage* one another daily as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.” (Heb 3:12-13)
- Feed yourself good materials that untwist the worlds lies (books, scriptures)