

Sexual Integrity: Six Habits for Young Men

Practical, Spirit-powered ways to honor God, your future spouse, and every person you meet

Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2 TIMOTHY 2:22

AT A GLANCE

BIG IDEA	Sexual integrity isn't just avoiding sin; it's living for something better. Six habits help: respect your future spouse, bounce your eyes, stay busy doing good, see people as God sees them, stay connected to godly men, and pray for the Spirit's strength.
SCRIPTURE	1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 · Job 31:1 · Colossians 3:10-15 · Titus 3:14 · Colossians 1:28-29 · Philippians 3:17 · Ephesians 3:16-17
LENGTH	About 25 minutes
BEST FOR	High school and older middle school guys, in a guys-only setting led by a man
YOU WILL NEED	Bibles. Plan time afterward for anyone who wants to talk privately.

BEFORE YOU TEACH THIS

Teach this in a same-gender group with a trusted adult leader, and let parents know the topic in advance. Speak plainly but never crudely. Many students already struggle with pornography; lead with grace, not shame. If a student discloses abuse or that someone has harmed them, follow your church's child-safety and reporting policy immediately. These habits apply to young women too; a female leader can easily adapt this talk for a girls' group.

Start here: not just "don't"

Most of what guys hear about sex from church is a list of don'ts. God does say "flee" (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22). But notice the other half of our key verse: "pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace." Integrity means being the same, whole person in public and in private. It's not just running *from* something; it's running *toward* Someone.

"For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). Here are six habits that help.

1 Live to respect your future wife

Paul says "each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust" (1 Thessalonians 4:4-5). Bible scholars discuss whether "vessel" means your own body or your future wife; either way, the call is to honor. If God has marriage in your future, your wife is alive right now somewhere. Live today in a way that honors her: what you look at, how you treat girls, what you joke about. And every girl you know is someone's future wife, or a sister in Christ to be treated "with all purity" (1 Timothy 5:2).

2 Bounce your eyes and refocus

Job said, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?" (Job 31:1). You can't always control the first glance, but you can control the second look. When something tempting comes into view, on a screen or in person, **bounce** your eyes away immediately and **focus** on something else.

Paul reminds us we have "put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him," and to "let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Colossians 3:10, 15). Train your eyes and mind to follow the new you, not the old habits.

3 Go about doing good

Idle time and boredom are temptation's best friends. God wants His people "to maintain good works, to meet urgent needs, that they may not be unfruitful" (Titus 3:14). Fill your life with purpose: serve, work, play hard, help others, build something. A guy who is busy doing good has less room for the wrong things.

4 See every person as someone to present complete in Christ

"Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." **COLOSSIANS 1:28**

Paul's purpose was to help every person become complete in Jesus. Make that your purpose with everyone you meet, including every girl. Lust sees a person as an object to use. Love sees a person made in God's image whom you want to help become all God intended. You can't do both at once.

5 Connect with other Christian men

"Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern" (Philippians 3:17). Find an older Christian man who will mentor you, and a couple of friends who will ask you honest questions. Secrecy makes temptation stronger; honest friendships weaken it. Use accountability software on your devices if that helps, and keep phones out of bedrooms at night.

6 Pray in tune with the Spirit

Willpower alone won't win this battle. Ask the Father to "grant you... to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith" (Ephesians 3:16-17). When Jesus is settled and at home at the center of your life, He gives you the power to say no and the desire to say yes to what's better.

When you fail

If you've already failed in this area, you're not disqualified. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). Confess it, receive forgiveness, tell a trusted man, take practical steps, and get back up. Jesus restores.

TALK IT OVER

1. Why is it important to pursue something good, not just avoid something bad?
2. How does thinking about your future wife (or a girl as someone's sister) change the way you act now?
3. What does "bounce your eyes" look like in practice, online and in person?
4. How does seeing people as God sees them fight against lust?
5. Who is one man you could ask to mentor you or keep you accountable?

TAKE IT HOME

Pick two of the six habits to practice this week. Make your own "covenant with your eyes" (Job 31:1) and write it down. Then talk with a trusted Christian man about it, and pray Ephesians 3:16-17 every morning.

Flee, pursue, and let Jesus be at home at the center of your life.

From fifty years of youth ministry by **Ron Whittam**. Share freely with your students and leaders. · The Youth Ministry Living Room · qrprogramming.com/livingroom

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