

'Clean': Arm and Protect Yourself From the Enemy

Most of us don't want to be that warrior not using his God-given weapons. You, I hope, want to be a man who not only keeps himself clean but also protects his family and his brothers and leaves the legacy of a clean life. You deserve to be a clean man. Following are some characteristics of men who have their weapons facing the enemy, alert like Gideon's men at the water (Judg. 7).

1. Men who protect are armed and ready to commit to be clean.

A man aiming his weapons the right direction will have made a specific commitment to be clean. While speaking at singles and youth conferences, I often have young men and women come to the altar to commit their sexuality to Christ. Why do that? It gives them at least one point in time where they have consciously made a commitment to live a clean life. That moment, that physical separating from the crowd, regardless of past mistakes, gives them the anchor of having at least made a decision. You have committed to be clean.

The Bible says, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7, KJV). As a psychologist, I know we are the sum of our commitments and the discipline to keep them. As a man, if I commit to something, I will attract the people and things I need to fulfill that commitment. When a man makes a commitment, he is immediately confronted with distractions from keeping it. My son and daughter are both commitment-type people. When they decide to go for something, be it football, cheerleading, debate team or Tae Kwon Do, they are totally in, and that immediately pushes other things to a much lower priority.

When men commit to a clean sexual life, it attracts people, ideas and strategies, such as accountability software,

accountability partners, support groups and resource materials to help them stay clean. The commitment in your heart already may be the reason God brings these people and resources into your life. Your clean commitment clears your vision, and you will begin to see threats clearly as well. Prepare for them, and enjoy victory and a clean conscience after winning those battles.

2. Men who protect have a plan. When you carry weapons with you, it's easy to remember you are at war. The enemy is taking out a large number of our men and our male Christian leaders in this war. I remember having to fly out of town after my pastor fell because of sexual impurity. I sat on the plane with the proverbial napkin and wrote down the names of my pastors and their wives who had fallen specifically to sexual sin. I counted exactly 50 percent of my pastors or their wives who fell publicly to this attack.

I can't say it enough: This is a war on our sexuality and our families! Warriors should have a plan for staying pure in their various environments. Let's start at a warrior's home. The Internet is selectively blocked because he doesn't want a porn store attacking him or his family. There are clear boundaries and accountability around the cell phone and Facebook (real warriors have little time for this anyway). Accountability software reports are sent to his wife and accountability partner.

He has a plan for work—whom he can go to lunch with and appropriate boundaries for conversations. He has a plan for when he or his spouse travels. He has a plan for the opposite sex in general regarding hugs, touching and praise. He even has a proactive plan for entertainment—television, magazines, movies. He is thinking ahead of the devil, not thinking about what he can get away with but rather how he can get away from the world's filth.

3. Men who are armed and ready are honest and accountable. A

plan is great only if it is implemented. A couple that plans to have a million dollars in the bank when they retire at 60 is admirable. But if they never follow the plan or have others keep them accountable, they will have only created a plan and not reached their desired dream. It takes discipline every month to arrive at that dream.

A man whose sword is protecting himself and those he loves is honest and accountable. He still lives in an environment of temptation, as we all do. But if he opens an email and sees something inappropriate, he tells somebody immediately. He cooperates with his wife in telling her the things she wants to know, and he has a trusted man or men to confess any inappropriate thoughts to as well.

Let me give you an example. I was exhausted after three days in Canada speaking at a men's and marriage conference and doing professional training for Christian counselors on sexual addiction. I got on my plane and took out my tablet to write a chapter of a book. The woman sitting next to me reached into her bag and began to pull out a magazine. All I could see was the red letter *P*. I instantly knew it was going to be a *Playboy* magazine.

I looked the other way and sat facing the bathroom. I was angry. I prayed in my spirit, "Lord, if she'll put it away, I'll witness to her." I didn't have an "accident" and look; I stayed focused. She put her magazine back in her bag, went to the bathroom, and when she came out, she pulled an everyday magazine out of her bag. I tried to share, but she seemed more comfortable with silence. When I got off the plane, I immediately called my accountability partner and my wife. I hadn't seen anything inappropriate; I just didn't want to be slimed by her issues.

When you're at war, you utilize the weapons of honesty and accountability. A man that has a commitment and a plan for this is much more likely to be successful. If he drops his

weapons at a lust level and then gets honest and accountable, then he is really less likely to drop it on the sin level. He would have to choose to lie to get that far down the road.

Here is an idea that can literally quash inappropriate behaviors for those who struggle. Some men don't mind being honest about the occasional or even regular slip of lust, porn or masturbation, but they don't stop these behaviors. They do what I call "puke and go," then continue to go back to the vomit of their unclean behavior (Prov. 26:11).

The man in this situation may have a sex addiction, or he may just need to put consequences in his life for his behaviors. Most guys struggle because of classical conditioning. That includes positive conditioning for a behavior. To change a behavior, you might want to change your conditioning, from positive rewards for lust to setting up a negative reward for this behavior. If you look at something or do something inappropriate, have a consequence set up and enforce it. A consequence is something that hurts you (negative reinforcement). Let me give you a list of suggestions:

- No media for one, two or three weeks
- No cell phone for one, two or three days
- Walk to work
- Pick up trash for two to four hours
- Give money to a political or nonprofit organization you really disagree with
- Eat a raw onion
- Run two miles (if you're not in shape)
- Eat Ben and Jerry's at 10:00 p.m. (if you are in shape)
- Leg lunges for half a mile or one mile

*The preceding is an excerpt from **Dr. Doug Weiss'** book Clean, used with permission from Thomas Nelson Inc. A leading expert in sexual addiction recovery, Dr. Weiss is a nationally known author, speaker and licensed psychologist. He is the executive director of Heart-to-Heart Counseling Center in Colorado Springs, Colo., and the president of the American association for Sex Addiction Therapy (AASAT). He is the author of more than 20 books on marriage, men's issues, addiction recovery and self-help, including The Final Freedom; Sex, God and Men; Intimacy; and his latest, Clean: A Proven Plan For Men Committed To Sexual Integrity.*

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