

# **THE BATTLE ON, BATTLE OVER WORKBOOK**

**A Guide to Helping You Find Permanent and  
Total Victory in Your Battle for Sexual Purity**



**Fred Stoeker**

***The Battle On, Battle Over Workbook: A Guide to Helping You Find Permanent and Total Victory in Your Battle for Sexual Purity* by Fred Stoeker**

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# Questions You May Have Regarding the *Battle On, Battle Over Workbook*

## **Why is the *Battle On, Battle Over Workbook* important to me?**

This workbook will navigate you through some significant, meaningful Bible study, an extreme inspection of your inner life, and a practical personal application of biblical principles to help you to transform your view of manhood and femininity to defend your heart from sexual temptation and to rebuild your dreams as a married couple. Moving through the workbook is critical to using the material in *Battle On, Battle Over*.

## **If I study this workbook, will I also need to read the book?**

While it's true that you'll find featured quotes from *Battle On, Battle Over* in this workbook, we have written this resource as a "companion workbook," not as a stand-alone Bible study. That's why each workbook chapter begins with a chapter or two reading assignment. Simply, you're expected to read the book, if only because you can't find the most substantial transformation as a man, woman, or married couple unless you read and study the entire book *Battle On, Battle Over* together.

## **Must I work through everything in each lesson?**

This workbook is designed to promote a thorough exploration and understanding of *Battle On, Battle Over*, even though you'll be tempted to focus your study time and interpersonal discussions on certain sections because of your own character issues or specific difficulties in your relationship as a couple. Take the time to work through the entirety of each lesson.

To help you with your pacing, we've given the workbook a twelve-week structure. Of course, if you are working through it as an individual or as a couple with your spouse, you may choose to use a slower or faster pace.

As humans, we tend to hasten through workbooks to accomplish our goals quickly and get on to the next thing. We feel that would be a mistake here. Remember, this workbook is meant to mentor you into the practical, daily application of the biblical truths taught in *Battle On, Battle Over*. The many questions in each weekly exercise will help you apply these truths, but only

through relaxed, focused reflection and self-examination, either as an individual or as a couple. By slowing down, you'll allow sufficient time to contemplate each question prayerfully and to allow God to counsel you on the changes necessary in your soul and your relationship as a couple.

### **Is this book only for married individuals or couples?**

Not at all, although for simplicity's sake, you will see that the workbook material is addressed to married men and women and married couples. Unmarried couples and those planning to get married will benefit from going through the material together or as individuals, so please use the *Battle On, Battle Over Workbook* for a better and stronger relationship starting today.

### **What's the best way to use this workbook? Should I work through it alone, or should I go through it with my spouse or some other guys?**

You'll get the most out of this workbook if you go through it with your spouse or a small group of like-minded people. In fact, it would be best to do both.

If your church doesn't do "life groups" or other small group connections, start a group of your own. Just take a copy of *Battle On, Battle Over* and show it to friends you know. Most will indicate a strong interest in the topic, and some will want to delve into the material every week, especially since it doesn't require a long commitment from them. As you've already seen, the workbook is set up to be able to be finished in only twelve weeks.

However, we strongly suggest you not go through the *Battle On, Battle Over Workbook* with a small group of married *couples*. Most husbands will be unable to open up about their impure thought lives in front of other women, and most wives will not be able to discuss their attitudes about sex and pornography in front of other men. Such a discussion format would not thrive and could easily lead to deeper sin and impurity. Men should meet with men; women should meet with women.

Your meetings can be scheduled anytime during the day or at night, whatever time is mutually convenient for the people involved. Just make sure you select a location where others won't easily overhear your discussion. People must feel safe and comfortable if they're expected to share openly, honestly, and frankly.

This workbook is designed simply, and it's easy to use. Each person in the group will be expected to complete each week's lesson at home. Then, when you gather back together, you will discuss the group questions provided under the heading "A Couple's Talk." Depending on your schedule, you can also dig into any other questions or topics in that week's study. It's also likely that the group members will bring in their own related questions for consideration by the group from time to time.

Choose one person to be the group's facilitator. This "leader" should not dominate; he or she is not to be a lecturer or teacher but is simply responsible for keeping the conversation going and ensuring that no one in the group is left behind. Each person must have the chance to enter the discussion freely and regularly. As a point of practical truth, the facilitator must also be the one to

“go first” when developing a safe and honest place to share. Most people need someone else to “go first” before sharing *their* dirty laundry with the group.

From the start, remind everyone that anything shared in the group *stays* in the group—everything’s private and off the record. Build an open environment of trust so that everyone will feel safe enough to share authentically with each other.

We have created a ten-minute YouTube video for each week’s lesson featuring Fred Stoeker, and you’ll find links on the BattleOnBattleOver.com website. These are to be played at the beginning of each group session to simplify the weekly preparatory work of the facilitator and to quickly bring the minds of the group members into one accord to focus on the discussion and tasks at hand.

Finally, promote and reinforce prayer together as a group by allowing time for it during each week’s meeting. Many don’t feel comfortable praying in group settings, but we urge you to try to help these to clear that hurdle in an understanding way.

Also, encourage each group member to pray for a deep hunger for sexual purity to develop inside every member of the group throughout the week. Pray for God’s insights for each one. Give God a wide-open opportunity to answer your cries.

# Week 1

## The Stealth Trap in Our Sexuality (Part A)

This week's reading assignment: the Introduction and Chapter 1 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

It doesn't matter if your friends or your teammates or your favorite podcasters are saying something different. You have a faith as precious as that of Simon Peter, and you have Christ's divine power that, when coupled with a deep knowledge of Jesus Christ and His precious promises, should end your battle. If your battle is still raging on, then you're lacking one thing—you haven't added knowledge, self-control, and perseverance to your faith.

—from the Introduction to *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

As you begin this week's lesson, ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand His personal direction for you in this battle for purity. Contemplate the following Scriptures regarding God's gift of salvation and His call to pursue holiness and obedience. Note that the Lord calls you to purity because He has your best interests at heart. Be reminded that He delights in you as His child, one who is growing into His likeness day by day.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:3–5)<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming. As obedient children, do not conform to

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1. These Bible verses are from the New International Version (NIV), and the NIV is used throughout this workbook, unless otherwise noted.

the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy." (1 Peter 1:13–16)

Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. (1 Peter 2:11–12)

1. What do Peter's words tell you about God's deep concern that you maintain hope? How does hope affect your battle for sexual purity? Have you set your hope on His grace in this battle?
2. When it comes to a believer's sin, how would you distinguish between rebellion and ignorance? What is God's attitude toward us as we grow and stumble in our attempts to walk in holiness with Him? (Consider your relationships with your children if you have them.) To what extent do you long for holiness and purity in your life?
3. How does Peter define the phrase "living such good lives among the pagans"?

### A Couple's Choice

#### Questions for Individual Reflection and Shared Examination as a Couple

##### Excerpts from the Introduction:

You cannot wage a war for purity in a climate of lies and justifications that cause doubts to pile up ceaselessly and bind your heart and feet. So don't accept these lies surrounding you. Don't focus on the failures of those surrounding you or the difficult times we're living in.

Instead, find the truth and fixate on that. Establish it in your heart and mind.

. . . If you launch from a position of truth, your battle can soon be over. Your battle may be on, but it can also be over. You can be free of sexual sin, despite the lies proclaimed throughout the milling, teeming throngs of failing men surrounding you. Your faith is equal in worth to the faith of Peter, and this faith, which was delivered freely to you with the Lord's divine power, has given you everything you need to escape your own illicit sexual desires.

You. Can. Be. Free.

1. Why do you think the lies and justifications surrounding sexual integrity are so broad and strong? How realistic is this pursuit for you?
2. Freedom from sexual sin is possible. That's the truth. Have you personally established that truth in your heart and mind? Why or why not?
3. If we've been given everything we need to escape our illicit sexual desires, why is there still a milling, teeming throng of failing men and women surrounding you?



## A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 1:

You're not losing this battle because you're a rotten pervert [or a fake Christian]. You're either losing because you haven't yet consistently applied the knowledge that you have, or you simply don't yet understand your vulnerabilities and how you need to defend yourself in this battle. That is where I [Fred] was. I really wasn't a rotten person. In fact, I already had everything I needed inside of me to win this battle, just like you do. I was simply missing a critical piece of the puzzle.

... Was there some other common crack in a guy's sexual defenses out there that I wasn't aware of yet? Well, there was, and by now I was fully enlightened. There is a second vulnerability in a man's sexuality (and in a woman's sexuality, for that matter). I'd finally connected enough dots in my life for a huge and life-changing revelation to blast through my brain: My late-night masturbation habit wasn't a sexual issue at all! It was a financial trust issue! It was an identity issue, a manhood issue!

This revolutionized my approach to purity. For the first time, I understood that not all sexual sin is sexual at its root. Unequivocally, this is the most important truth I ever picked up on purity's battlefield.

1. When trapped in sexual sin, how common do you think it is for men and women to see themselves as rotten, creepy people? If that isn't true, then what is true?
2. Think about Fred's late nights in his office for a moment. What painful incidents stand out to you at the moment? How much have your own illicit sexual desires fed off your wounds and stresses when alone?
3. Fred's sexual purity was especially vulnerable to financial stress. What kinds of stress leave you most vulnerable? What steps did Fred take to abstain from these sexual desires?
4. In Chapter 1, Fred said he didn't really understand manhood and didn't know where he fit in the world of men. Can you relate to what he wrote? How does that affect your ability to stay pure? In your life, what affects your purity the most? Is it your stress or your view of your own manhood?
5. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
6. What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
7. If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
8. What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?



## A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

#### Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together

##### Excerpts from Chapter 1:

Another jarring surge of emotions crashed back over my heart, harshly sweeping my smile away. *Then why do you masturbate when you're not with her?* I [Fred] jeered scornfully. I had no answer. But the urge wouldn't let up.

... Sure, I could *pose* as a man with the best of them, just like you can. But for years, I never really felt like I measured up. Since I'm convinced that many of us men live this way, this too might accurately be called every man's battle—the fight to finally feel that genuine sense of manhood and find a sure and settled place in the world of men.

... This lack of affirmation of my manhood was a primary driver of my masturbation, along with intense financial pressure. I simply didn't feel what real men feel. Deep down, I had no calm assurance that I had what it takes to make it in this world of men. I had no specific knowledge that I could come through in the clutch with a paycheck every two weeks. I was alone. An outcast from the world of men. An imposter on a man's stage.

##### Discussion Questions

1. Which facts or principles from the Introduction and Chapter 1 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were the most beneficial or reassuring to you, and why?
2. Which elements of the apostle Peter's teachings in the Introduction profoundly impacted you? Why?
3. Which parts of Fred's story in Chapter 1 were most helpful or hopeful to you? Why?
4. Do you agree that not all sexual sin is sexual at its root? What experience in your own life backs this up?
5. How easy would it be to convince your wife that some sexual sin is not sexual at its root? What experiences from her past would make this truth more challenging to swallow? What could you do to help eliminate that obstacle?
6. Honestly, have you ever truly learned to give financial and/or emotional stress over to God in prayer? If so, share a story from your life that serves as an example.
7. Have you ever turned your stress over to God in prayer to prevent sexual sin? Have you ever even made the connection between stress and your sexual desires?
8. Did you have a great relationship with your dad or a disappointing one? How did that impact your view of your own manhood?



# Week 2

## The Stealth Trap in Our Sexuality (Part B)

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 2 and 3 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

As a Christian husband, it's your birthright to live a sexually pure life. Purity is normal for each of us in marriage—or should be. In essence, it's our default position as sons of God. If you aren't living purely today, it simply means that there's an undiscovered reason why you're missing the mark these days. You and I [Fred] will discover that reason together, and let me assure you, it's always there. It could be in your heart, it could be in your mindset, or it could be in your relationships, even if it doesn't seem obvious to you right now. Still, it's always there.

— from Chapter 2 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Read and consider the following Scriptures, which deal with how our ignorance of the Truth creates traps that ensnare us by our wayward actions. As you study, note that guarded, steadfast, and careful thoughts and actions preserve your safety and keep you free. Your wisdom dies when you reject the Word of the Lord, and your freedom vanishes when you pursue your evil desires.

The wise will be put to shame; they will be dismayed and trapped. Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have? (Jeremiah 8:9)

The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires. (Proverbs 11:6)

Since they hated knowledge  
and did not choose to fear the LORD.  
Since they would not accept my advice

and spurned my rebuke,  
they will eat the fruit of their ways  
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.  
For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,  
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;  
but whoever listens to me will live in safety  
and be at ease, without fear of harm. (Proverbs 1:29–33)

Above all else, guard your heart,  
for everything you do flows from it.  
Keep your mouth free of perversity;  
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.  
Let your eyes look straight ahead;  
fix your gaze directly before you.  
Give careful thought to the paths for your feet  
and be steadfast in all your ways.  
Do not turn to the right or the left;  
keep your foot from evil. (Proverbs 4:23–27)

1. What do God's Word and His wisdom mean to you? Be honest. Do you live out the Word as if your life and future depended upon it? If so, share a story from your life to prove it.
2. One claim from the first chapter of Proverbs above is that complacency toward God's teaching will destroy you. Have you experienced that in your own life? If so, give an example.
3. "For the waywardness of the simple will kill them, and the complacency of fools will destroy them; but whoever listens to me will live in safety and be at ease, without fear of harm." Compare these words from the Old Testament proverb to the following New Testament teachings of the apostle Paul, as laid out in Chapter 3 of *Battle On, Battle Over*. This is where Paul explains that all your behavior must be beneficial and helpful, and it must always edify you and build you up, while also imploring you to avoid all behavior that enslaves you or hinders the spiritual growth of a brother or sister in Christ. What, if any, are the difference between these Old Testament and New Testament teachings?
4. Consider these words again: "Since they hated knowledge and did not choose to fear the LORD. Since they would not accept my advice and spurned my rebuke, they will eat the fruit of their ways and be filled with the fruit of their schemes." How do these words strike you concerning your sexual sin? Have you eaten the fruit of your own ways? Take a moment to meditate on this.



## A Couple's Choice

### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

#### Excerpts from Chapter 3:

Whether or not you can imagine doing so at this moment, the bottom line is simple: You can *easily* live without porn and masturbation indefinitely, and you can *happily* live without porn and masturbation indefinitely.

... Christian author John Piper once said, "You can find God as beautiful, all satisfying, and the highest treasure of your life. There are more treasures at His right hand, more eternal joys in His presence than you could have in ten thousand sexual trysts. The question is, do you know that? Because if you know that, sin will lose its dominion in your life."

1. Can you currently imagine living *easily* without porn and masturbation indefinitely? Why or why not?
2. Can you currently imagine living *happily* without porn and masturbation indefinitely? Why or why not?
3. What would it take to *really* know that there are more treasures at His right hand, more eternal joys in His presence than you could ever have in ten thousand sexual trysts with yourself or another? What must happen for you to know that so that sin would lose its dominion in your life? What has kept you from making that happen?

## A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 3:

"Fred, now that I know how the stress and the temptations are connected, I don't fear them anymore. When the temptations come, I say to myself, *Hey, this is not a porn issue; it's a trust issue*, or *Hey, this is just a work-stress issue*. I can now deal with the temptations immediately and recognize them exactly for what they are."

... In my [Brenda's] mind, Fred made a life-changing connection for the guys reading this book: Sexual sin is often nonsexual at its root, and the act of masturbation has a lot more to do with loneliness, disconnection, wounds, and pain than it has to do with lust.

Making that connection is vital for you as a woman too. Orgasm releases pleasure chemicals in your brain as well. Once you understand that, you can change your approach

to loneliness and painful emotional wounds and find freedom in God, just like Fred did, instead of using masturbation to cope with your pain.

... Simply, the same surge of dopamine that thrilled you in the short term also strengthens and consolidates the synaptic relays involved in your porn use and masturbation for the long term. Newly enlarged and strengthened, the synaptic connections associated with your actions will actively drive you toward future episodes with porn and masturbation.

1. What kinds of hidden prices have you paid by using masturbation to cope with your pain and stress rather than relying on your relationship with God and with yourself? (Take a few minutes to meditate quietly over your regret and sorrow over this. Invite the Lord's presence into your reflections.)
2. If you've recently learned that sexual sin is often nonsexual at its root, you now know that it has far less to do with lust than you may have imagined. How might this truth change your sexual experiences with your spouse? How might it change your spiritual growth and the spiritual growth of your spouse?
3. The neuro-chemical work of dopamine rewires your brain toward deeper addiction. Discuss how self-sex has impacted you personally over time. Discuss how your decision to masturbate has impacted your spouse through the years.
4. Prayerfully consider what it will take to restrain your sexuality in the weeks and years ahead. Think about any changes in your self-image and/or God-image that may be required. Also, consider what forms of accountability you may need to establish.
5. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
6. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

### **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Highlights from the Book for Reading Aloud and Discussing**

#### **Excerpts from Chapters 2 and 3:**

These were the questions I [Fred] asked myself:

*Will I be exposed?*

*When it matters most for my wife and kids, will I come through with a sale and put food on the table?*

*Am I a real man or an imposter, just posing in the world of men?*

For many of us, such anxious questions shape the nonsexual roots that drive our sexual sin. Find the wounds in your manhood, and there you'll find the lack of trust and the emotional disconnection that feed your porn and masturbation.

. . . Like you, I've heard people say, "Hey, since masturbation isn't expressly named in the Bible, it must be okay for us to do it. It must not matter to Him either way." That is a ridiculously simplistic and very risky assumption. It obviously matters to Him whether you are stimulating yourself sexually! He made you. He understands perfectly the chemical and emotional impacts of the practice far better than you do.

. . . Scientific studies confirm that porn and masturbation twist our sexual focus inward while erasing our more normal and natural concern for our partner's pleasure and a mutual connection. Our personal, sexual intensity in the experience becomes more important to us than our shared intimacy. This is not beneficial to any married couple and certainly brings no glory to God.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which facts or principles from Chapters 2 and 3 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were the most beneficial or reassuring to you, and why?
2. Consider and discuss how the above "anxious questions" about manhood have shaped the nonsexual roots in your life, or those of your spouse. How can a couple work together to tear up these roots? How will this knowledge change how you build your relationship with your sons?
3. What are the keys to building a non-sexual relationship with yourself? Brainstorm together about the practical steps men and women can take, based on your experience or what you've studied so far.
4. What will and will not happen if you continue your sexual drug dependency? What will and will not happen in your marriage?
5. What are the differences in how men and women experience the "stealth trap" in their sexuality?
6. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous week. Comment on one or more of these final questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 3

## The Stealth Trap in Our Sexuality (Part C)

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 4 and 5 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

Here is another way to look at it. Every Christian child—everyone “born again”—has his Father’s DNA. That comes from God. But only the *mature* child has his Father’s character. That comes from you yearning and learning to think and act like Him. This is what Christianity is all about, and I [Fred] never would have developed His character had I not personally chosen to push past the threshold of the Christian life.

— from Chapter 5 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Read the following Scripture verses about undisciplined sexuality and how that impacts your efforts to “work out” your salvation practically. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see where your poor attitudes and lack of discipline toward sex and your sexuality in the past have affected your freedom, your soul, and your manhood. As you contemplate these truths, realize that God’s goal is to deliver abundant life and fulfill His good purposes in you.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

Now then, my sons, listen to me;  
do not turn aside from what I say.  
Keep to a path far from her,  
do not go near the door of her house,



lest you lose your honor to others  
and your dignity to one who is cruel,  
lest strangers feast on your wealth  
and your toil enrich the house of another.  
At the end of your life you will groan,  
when your flesh and body are spent.  
You will say, "How I hated discipline!  
How my heart spurned correction!  
I would not obey my teachers  
or turn my ear to my instructors.  
And I was soon in serious trouble  
in the assembly of God's people...."  
For your ways are in full view of the Lord,  
and he examines all your paths.  
The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;  
the cords of their sins hold them fast.  
For lack of discipline they will die,  
led astray by their own great folly. (Proverbs 5:7–14, 21–23)

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose. (Philippians 2:12–13)

1. What are some hidden consequences of a father's failure to initiate his son into manhood?
2. Turning elsewhere for that initiation leads to a lack of sexual discipline that spins cords of sin that will hold you fast. Think back to your youth. If and when you personally "turned elsewhere," did it seem like great folly? Why, or why not?
3. Take a moment to read Psalm 112. This is how genuine men live. How did your father's life differ from this Psalm? How did your life as a teen and a young man differ from this Psalm?
4. Is your heart often groaning like these words from Proverbs 5:12–13? "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors." Be honest with yourself. Are they mere groans leading nowhere, or are you so sick of your sin they'll lead to wholesale change?

## A Couple's Choice

### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

#### Excerpts from Chapter 4:

When I [Fred] finally chose to get up and live out what I was meant to be in that battle, I found out that I *did* have what it takes, to my surprise. I *could* come through when it mattered most.

... If you are to defend yourself from these two vulnerabilities in your sexuality, you must go beyond "the threshold of the Christian life" and "construct a soul in accordance with the new life God has put within us," to use Oswald Chambers' words. Will you do that?

1. Have you ever before considered the connection between victory in the battle for purity and your view of your manhood? Take a moment to dream about that victory and how that will change your self-image.
2. Are you currently living on the threshold of the Christian life? Even more important, what would your spouse say about your Christian life? About his or her own? If you're both stuck on the threshold, discuss together what's kept you there.
3. Fred claims that "Real men train diligently to stand their ground in the grace and power of God in times of stress, in complete dependence upon Him." Do you personally know any man that lives like this? If so, meditate on his life and what makes him special to you.

## A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapters 4 and 5:

Fathers are meant to be critically involved in a son's developing manhood, but like many of us coming of age in this fatherless American culture, I [Fred] was forced to go elsewhere for my answers. Predictably, I turned to the same place for initiation that most of us do—to my sexuality and our culture's fast and loose sensuality—hoping to somehow cobble together my own jerry-built, makeshift initiation into manhood.

... The reason it doesn't make sense to you is because you live in a bogus cultural world that claims that having sex with a girl delivers manhood. Rejecting this worldview requires a paradigm shift: Sex *can't* deliver manhood, and God's call to control your sexuality is *not* unfair. In fact, a robust campaign for purity on your part could be the most glorious and wondrous adventure of your lifetime and help you cultivate the central core of your masculinity.

... Think about how one of the fruits of the Spirit is *self-control*. That fruit is undoubtedly *of the Spirit*, but the word "self" tells you something about your role too. I'm talking about a joint destiny where God's work and your work are inseparable. God won the victory at Calvary to deliver grace into your life, but in a very real sense, His grace merely gives you the *freedom* to run with God. You must still *choose* to run in the spiritual maturity that He expects of a son. You must still choose to construct a godly soul.

1. Growing up, what did you consider to be your ticket into manhood? Regarding your answer, where did that ticket take you instead?
2. Clearly, you have the freedom to run with God. The question is: Have you chosen to run in the spiritual maturity that He expects of a son? Honestly, your answer is not nearly as important as your spouse's answer since we easily fool ourselves. Would your spouse say that you have clearly chosen to run in spiritual maturity as a pattern of your life? Studying your life's map, what evidence could he or she bring that you've constructed a godly and biblical soul?
3. Looking back over your life, what was the most robust campaign you've engaged in to establish your manhood? Was there a big battle to fight? A great adventure to live?
4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

### A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

### Key Focal Points from *Battle On, Battle Over* to Read Aloud and Examine Together

#### Excerpts from Chapters 4 and 5:

Let me [Fred] bring this a bit closer to home. Think back to my earnest doubts about my manhood while buried under suffocating financial stress during those late nights in my lonely office. I didn't know who I was, and I sincerely doubted that I had what it took to make it in the world of men. That core question pounded away at my heart, echoing mercilessly in my soul.

*Will I somehow sell something to put food on the table?*

*Can I pull it off for my family when it matters most?*

Then, as a Christ-follower, I endured a *second* set of haunting questions slinking through the darker corners of my consciousness, where no one else can go:

*Can I come through under pressure, like a man, all on my own—just God and me?*

*Or must I limp along on my orgasmic crutch, medicating my way in shame?*

Such queries reverberate endlessly through a man's shaken soul in bleak and hollow tones. This isn't how it was meant to be for men.

... The urge to masturbate often has little to do with the release of *sexual* pressure and has everything to do with the release of *nonsexual* pressure since it's meant to medicate your pain, stress, and wounds.

This became clear to me when I was finally married. Since I had a wonderful and regular sex life with Brenda, I didn't even have any build-up of sexual pressure, but get this: I still ran to masturbation any time life's pressures got too high.

Sexual pressure, my eye! The real culprit was that I still had questions about my manhood and whether I had what it took to stand and succeed in the world of men. I was medicating my emotional pain from life's pressures in my young marriage, just as I had been doing with my emotional pain and life's stresses since puberty.

... Too many of us stop at the false finish line of salvation and refuse to move on toward a manifest spiritual maturity. That's why your soul can remain a servant of your body and be ruled by your physical and emotional appetites. Instead of shrugging off its importance and mopping away the evidence of your immaturity with a loud appeal to salvation's "grace" and "forgiveness," a repentant appeal to Christ's power and a responsible move past the false finish line will move you toward obedience and maturity.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapters 4 and 5 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. How do pornography and masturbation impact your manhood and, specifically, your ability to *fight* great spiritual battles, *live* great spiritual adventures, and *defend* your beauty spiritually?
3. Looking back, why do you think marriage didn't eliminate sexual sin for you?
4. Regular sexual sin suggests that your soul remains a servant of your body (as it was before your salvation) rather than your spirit (as it ought to be now). Why have you and your spouse stopped at a false finish line? What steps might you take together to push on to God's finish line?
5. Stopping at the false finish line of salvation costs you nothing because salvation is a gift from God. Pushing past that finish line to chase obedience and maturity costs you dearly, both personally and socially. Consider those costs and discuss them openly.
6. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous week. Comment on one or more of these questions:



- What can you thank God for because of this study?
- What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
- In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 4

## Rebuilding Your Soul— The Emotions

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 6 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

So last night in our small group, one of our questions was something along the lines of, "How does your worship at home compare to worshipping at church?" Dad, literally nobody understood the question. No one. The leader finally spoke up and said, "You know, I am not really sure what this question means, but is it referring to when I listen to Christian music in the car?" Everyone seemed so confused about the concept of worshipping the Lord at home, on their own. People need your new book.

— Recent text from one of Fred and Brenda's children

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Consider the following Scripture passages, which speak of the joyful willingness to worship the Lord daily. As you work through the rest of this lesson, ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into specific, practical applications of worship in your daily life.

Therefore, I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name.  
(2 Samuel 22:50)

But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your love; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. (Psalm 59:16)

I will sing of your love and justice; to you, Lord, I will sing praise. (Psalm 101:1)

I will sing to the Lord all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live. (Psalm 104:33)

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD, you his servants;  
praise the name of the LORD.  
Let the name of the LORD be praised,  
both now and forevermore.  
From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,  
the name of the LORD is to be praised.  
The LORD is exalted over all the nations,  
his glory above the heavens. (Psalm 113:1–4)

1. Name a person in your life that you would call a natural worshiper who's particularly expressive of a deep and passionate love of God. Scriptures call us all to look like this. What has been holding you back personally from living up to this example?
2. Consider the scriptures above. Personally, what would you say is behind the Psalmists' call to continual worship and praise?
3. Did your dad have a set time to worship the Lord daily, one-on-one, and even out loud? How about your mom? Your grandfather or grandmother? Did anyone set an example for you to make it seem normal? How has that impacted the level of one-on-one worship in your life and marriage? Are you setting that same example for your kids, or have you made changes?

### A Couple's Choice

#### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

##### Excerpts from Chapter 6:

Time for a pop quiz: Do you spend more time working out your body these days or working out your salvation? Which do you cherish and appreciate more?

... You *do* have a part to play here though. To heal, you must open your heart and emotions to the Holy Spirit *and* avail yourself of the help of professional counselors when needed. Men are often too prideful or blind to do this, but your wife or girlfriend will help you see where you need help if you'll listen. She's on your side.

... If your wife hasn't asked you that same stiletto question, allow me [Fred] the honor: *Dude, can you tell me how long you plan to stay like this so everyone can prepare for it? How long will you let your wounds from the past keep bruising your wife and kids? If you can change, why not do it in the present? Why not change today?*

1. How did you score on your pop quiz question? Are your spouse's answers different from yours? Now ask your spouse to answer that same pop quiz question about you. That answer will be closer to the truth than yours will be.

2. Name two things your spouse has tagged dozens of times in your behavior as things you must change for the sake of your relationship and the sake of your children. Are you willing to heal at the root of these things?
3. Be honest. What is your attitude toward professional counselors? Has your spouse been asking you to go out of desperation? Are you crossing your arms and digging in your heels? How long will you make everyone wait?

### **A Couple's Walk**

### **Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 6:**

Eventually, I [Fred] did connect the dots between my emotional pain and my sexual sin. I saw that my “pull” toward sexual sin was not sexual at its root. It sure felt like I needed sexual release, but it was merely a need for drugs and medication.

No more drugs. Through prayer and submission to God's ways, I decided to face my stress and doubts like men of God do and turned to the Lord with my financial stress and doubts about my manhood.

The strategy worked. Very soon the battle was over. Not just 85 percent of the way or 95 percent of the way. It was over. All over.

... Remember, the time it takes to find that intimate place with the Lord does not define your worth. Only Jesus defines your worth, and He says you're priceless. He wants intimacy together as much as you do. The best you can do is to soften your heart and turn toward the love of your life in relentless pursuit.

Forget about the time it's taking. Instead, pump up your daily consistency and fan the passionate desperation of your pursuit. In other words, worry only about the things you can control, down to the kind of songs you choose and the discipline to sing them out loud. That'll be enough.

1. What is your strongest motivation for achieving one-on-one intimacy with the Lord?
2. Deep down, do you really believe that the Lord wants intimacy with you as much as you want it with Him? Why or why not?
3. Fred wrote, “Through prayer and submission to God's ways, I decided to face my stress and doubts like men of God do and turned to the Lord with my financial stress and doubts about my manhood.” How does that make you feel when you think about facing your stress and doubts without your medication and drugs? Afraid? Empty? Happy? Ready?
4. In quietness, review what you have written and learned in this week's study. If further thoughts or prayer requests come to your mind and heart, you may want to write them down.



5. As you think of attaining the deeper intimacy with God that is His will for you, how do you envision your relationship with the Lord in the near future? Your relationship with your spouse?
6. Going deeper:
  - What was your most meaningful concept or truth in this week's study?
  - How would you talk this over with God? Write your response down as a prayer to Him.
  - What do you believe God wants you to do in response to this week's study?

### **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 6:**

Distilled down, it's a simple equation. Porn use and masturbation are more of an intimacy issue than a sexual one, used to medicate pain and disconnection in your life. Abiding in Christ's love spawns a companionship that naturally eliminates the disconnection driving your sin, so seek His face and experience His love and tight friendship.

... In short, seek Him and you'll find Him. Build out intimacy with Him and abide in His love. As you do, you'll stand stronger against sin. One-on-one worship locks down a genuine intimacy with God that eliminates isolation and replaces your yearning for the false kind you can conjure up with masturbation.

Worshiping the Creator also eliminates your shame. At its root, shame is an identity issue. Shame is not about what you've done but about who you are and how you see yourself. Shame is a negative identity, a residual humiliation from your past, either at the hands of your dad or someone else. It's a belief that you are damaged goods and that you'll never fit into the world of men. In your mind, shame makes you small.

Satan's master plan is to use your shame to freshen your wounds and to keep them from healing. He wants you to believe God's condemning you, but He's not. The Lord loves you and has taken your shame and rejection away. Condemnation should have no part of your life, and it won't if you abide in His love.

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which parts of Chapter 6 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. Is the concept of "abiding in Christ's love" still a mystery to you? Discuss that phrase with your

group or your partner. Does the concept of daily one-on-one worship simplify the mystery for you?

3. Is shame the central context of how you see yourself? Can you relate to “living in a residual humiliation from your past”? How deeply have you shared this with your spouse? With a counselor? Isn't it time to discuss this more deeply? What has kept you from doing it before now?
4. In your own words, describe how deeper intimacy with Christ weakens the draw of sexual sin naturally. Will it work for you, or are you somehow different from other human beings? What makes you so different?
5. Does one-on-one worship sound like an adventure? What do you feel as you think about it?
6. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous week.

Comment on one or more of these questions:

- What can you thank God for because of this study?
- What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
- In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 5

## Rebuilding Your Soul— The Will

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 7 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

What I [Luke] love most about fasting is that it brings a deeper awareness of the spiritual realm to my mind. Not only does it diminish the strength of the physical pull of temptation, but it also heightens the awareness of the spiritual. I became more aware of the value of purity from a spiritual point of view, especially in comparison to porn. Fasting helps me value the things of the spirit.

— from Chapter 7 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Consider and contemplate the following scriptural truth regarding fasting's power and the attitude you're to have when fasting. As you work through the rest of this lesson, ask the Holy Spirit to lead you into specific, practical applications of fasting in your daily life. The ultimate goal of fasting is to allow God complete access to your heart.

So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer. (Ezra 8:23)

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:4)

"When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." (Matthew 6:16–18)

While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." (Acts 13:2)

Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast." (Matthew 9:14–15)

1. Jesus said that His disciples should fast once He had left this earth. As a current disciple, has this been true of you? If you rarely or never fast, why not? What has kept you from fasting?
2. Among your family and friends, who fasts the most regularly? What is unique about his or her character in Christ?

### A Couple's Choice

#### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

##### Excerpts from Chapter 7:

I [Fred] understood why: obedience and suffering travel together by definition. You can't obey without suffering personal loss. Perhaps you've never thought of it like this before, but if you want to win your purity battle, you'll have to submit your will beneath God's and give up your rights and freedom to choose as an individual. That hurts, and you may feel diminished to a degree, but that's how God set it up as His required maturing process in His kingdom. I call this pain and suffering, spawned by your obedience, *developmental suffering*.

... The willingness to accept developmental suffering is not only central to any proper soul, but it's also a core element of genuine manhood. When you obey in the face of that pain, you grow and move from having God's DNA as His child to having God's full character.

The pain of submitting your will to the Father's will is critical to Christian growth and sanctification. It has been part of God's plan for His children since the dawn of time, even within the perfection of Eden. You can't grow into your potential as His child without building a complete willingness to embrace that pain because unless you do, you can't effectively resist temptation.

1. As a couple, have you been more focused on *appearing* to be Christian, or on *being* Christian, through obedience to His word? Do you roll your eyes at those focused on obedience?
2. Is your closest circle of friends more focused on their Christian image or on having God's full character as His obedient children? Do your children avoid friendships with those who're more focused on obedience? Do you hear them say things like, "I may not restrain my behavior like



they do, but I'm still a Christian"? Take a moment to meditate upon these things. What do these reveal about your focus on obedience as a couple?

3. Given what you've read so far in *Battle On, Battle Over*, why is the willingness to accept developmental suffering a core element of genuine manhood? Think back on your life to when you refused to accept developmental suffering. What was the result?

### A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 7:

A strong *will* alone won't stop this play. Satan never stops running his mouth, and he'll persuade you to take the obvious flight from pain most nights. But if you've built out your soul with a tenacious *willingness* to accept the pain of obedience as a normal part of your life, the negotiation is over before it starts. You don't need pain relief if you're okay with the pain. End of temptation, end of story.

... Let me [Luke] explain it this way. These days, if I ever feel even the slightest pull toward sexual sin, I'll say, "Let's throw a day of fasting at this." Before long, my spirit is swooning, saying, "Man, I can feel this wonderful communion with God! Why would I want to do anything sexually to ruin this?"

1. Have you ever felt sexual temptation and responded like Luke did when he said, "Let's throw a day of fasting at this?" Do these words of battle make your heart soar? Why or why not?
2. Would your spouse say that you've built out your soul with a tenacious willingness to accept the pain of obedience as a normal part of your life? If you don't know for sure, ask. What evidence would your spouse share to prove it, either way? If you're not sure, ask.
3. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
4. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

#### Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together

##### Excerpts from Chapter 7:

God must have agreed with me [Fred]. He'd been drawing me toward obedience in the nicest of ways for ten years, but even my long-suffering Father has His limits. After a decade of losing that argument with me, He got tough and honest with a clear message: *You can fast for your sake and the sake of your family and your business ventures. You can fast for Gwen's sake and for her love and imprint upon your children. But year after year, you refuse to fast for My purposes or for My desires and emotions.*

I was shot through the heart. God was right. I could fast for my sake but never for His sake. What did that say about my love for Him?

. . . I'd expected that my biggest struggle would be the lack of food, but the hit to my emotions was far more substantial. Until you fast, you have no idea just how much your social life revolves around food. I couldn't duck out with Brenda for lunch. At dinnertime, if Brenda and whoever was around were eating a full, delicious meal, I sat there sipping on my milk and juices, trying to feel like I was a part of things when I wasn't really a part at all.

I felt isolated not eating with my family. Crushed. Deeply humbled. Yes, I know how weak that sounds, but I was surprised by its impact.

The worst part of the fast was the terror that I would fail and have to start over from day one. So I broke things down into little chunks. Could I get through the afternoon? Yes, I could. And then I'd shoot to make it till bedtime. Step by step. That's how I did it until twenty-one days were over.

##### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapter 7 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. In your own words, describe how your willingness to embrace pain is tied to resisting temptation.
3. In your own words, describe the difference between fasting for God's sake and fasting for your sake.
4. It isn't the person who believes in the power of fasting that impacts the world. It is the person who fasts. It's high time that your battle be over. It's time to impact your world. Will this chapter strengthen your belief in fasting or move you to fast? This is not only the bottom line, but the only line. What will you choose to do?

5. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous week.

Comment on one or more of these questions:

- What can you thank God for because of this study?
- What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
- In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 6

## Rebuilding Your Soul— The Mind

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 8 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

You must always come to the Bible with the assumption that when you don't agree with God, He's right and you're wrong. You just haven't figured out why you're wrong yet. Once you take on that assumption, you will have the humility of mind necessary for God to reveal the truth to you. Do so by lifting up this prayer: *God, instruct me. Change my mind. Help me to be free.*

— from Chapter 8 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

As you begin this week's study, meditate on the following Scriptures, which deal with God's Word and how you must allow your mind to be tested and renewed by His truth daily. A lack of truth leads to futility in your thinking, a hardening of your heart toward God, and indulging in sensuality. Don't conform to cultural thinking. Instead, be transformed in Christ!

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their thinking. They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. (Ephesians 4:17–19)

Brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. (Philippians 4:8)

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not



conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. (Romans 12:1–2)

1. According to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:17–19, the Gentiles live like they do—indulging in sensuality and every kind of impurity—because of the futility of their thinking and their ignorance. Perhaps—or even likely—you're living in the same futility of thinking. After all, you've given yourself over to online porn, masturbation, cruising for hookers, and every other kind of impurity. You're darkened in your understanding and separated from a full life in God. The question is, do you even notice that? Bible study is an urgent antidote.
2. Paul insists that you offer your body as a holy and pleasing living sacrifice to God and that you renew your mind. Think back and consider your past life. Have you given the renewal of your mind the urgency it deserves? Why or why not?
3. If you are to carry out the apostle's command in Philippians 4:8, to what extent will your mind need transforming?

### A Couple's Choice

#### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

##### Excerpts from Chapter 8:

Perhaps you were expecting something more profound and innovative, a cutting-edge Stoeker original that devastates the enemy on purity's battlefield. Maybe you're thinking, *Fred, I know I'm supposed to read the Bible. I've heard it a couple of dozen times already. Enough! I get it!*

Here's the rub: even though you know that studying God's Word can neutralize the world's lies, you've been satisfied with living on the mediocre middle ground and muddling along without reading a daily dose of Scripture. You still aren't approaching your Bible as if your spiritual life—and your sexual purity—depends upon cracking open God's Word.

. . . I'm deeply concerned for believers who aren't hungry for more knowledge and understanding. I can vividly recall what it was like living without God's truth and wisdom. How embarrassing to think back to those days! When I lived by my own wits and desires, I made a huge mess of my life. But hearing from Him through His Word changed everything for me, and I've never found a better substitute for renewing my mind.

1. I [Fred] can vividly recall my days of futile thinking. Can you? Perhaps you still have futile thinking. Are you substituting something besides a daily reading of the Word to renew your mind? How's that going?

2. Why does living on the mediocre middle ground seem so attractive to us?
3. What would it take for you and your spouse to approach your Bible as if your spiritual life depended upon it?

## **A Couple's Walk**

### **Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 8:**

Now, I [Fred] get it. Reading goes against the grain for a lot of guys. Most men aren't inclined to read the back of a Cheerios box, let alone the Bible. Women are much better readers: studies reveal that Christian women read five times as many books as men.

But here's the problem: if you're not regularly reading God's Word, you can't align your mind to the truth. You can't meditate upon God's precepts to find practical applications of the Word for your life. Instead, you'll keep taking cues from a deluded, misguided culture, stacking up layer after layer of pain, wounds, and stress over time. When the lies remain, so do the chains. You'll never be free.

... Still, when it comes to renewing the mind and dumping the lies, it all comes down to this: Do you love God with all your heart? Do you require Him as a vital necessity in your life? If you don't, you need to turn and commit relationally so that the Spirit can rehabilitate your desire and form a normal heart in you. If you don't find time to search the Word, you won't find Him *or* your sexual purity. You need intimacy with Him for long-term victory over sexual sin.

1. Why do you think men read less than women? How does this impact husbands as leaders in their homes? As fathers leading their children? As a man, given these impacts, do you have a right to read less than your wife does?
2. Is it fair to say that if you aren't reading the Word and other enlightening books by Christian authors, you don't love God as you should? Why or why not?
3. Is it fair to say that you don't have a normal heart for God if you aren't reading the Word? Why or why not?
4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

#### Excerpts from Chapter 8:

What about you? When the going gets tough, do you naturally wait and rest peacefully in your meditations? Few of us do so, I reckon. For most of us, it's far more likely that when the going gets tough, the tough go masturbate.

We don't rest in our meditations. We rest in our *medications*. In short, we turn to drugs. I used to handle my battles that way, a reaction to life's stresses that never felt right to me, even *before* I committed my heart to Christ. I knew instinctively that real men don't fight their battles this way. I didn't like my responses to life's conflicts, even then.

Herein lies the crucial connection between Bible study and winning your battle for purity: If you don't consistently read your Bible, you won't have the deep, intimate relationship with God necessary to turn away from the false intimacy of masturbation when life becomes difficult; neither will you have the enriched understanding of God's Word necessary for you to rest peacefully in your meditations.

... Daily Bible reading is not only a *spiritual discipline*, but it's also a *relational commitment*. More like courtship, perhaps. For you guys, remember the days when your wife was your fiancée. You stumbled across the most amazing beauty and were determined to make her your wife. From that day forward, you never let the sun set without calling her or reading her texts and thumbing responses back to her each day.

It wasn't a forced discipline. No one crabbed at you to put it on your to-do list. You simply *committed your heart* to building a relationship with her. Those right actions, with time, brought about even deeper feelings as you got to know each other better. That's how great relationships are built.

#### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapter 8 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. How would you explain the process of renewing your mind as explained in this chapter? What encouragement does this simple process give you?
3. What do the authors mean when they say that Bible study is less of a "spiritual discipline" and more of a "relational commitment." How does this mindset impact you personally? Does it make you more or less likely to read the Word?
4. Fred said that even before he turned his life over to God, he knew instinctively that real men

don't fight their battles by turning to drugs and medications. How do you feel about your current responses to life's conflicts and stresses today?

5. Reading the Word regularly is much like a courtship. How so?
6. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous week.

Comment on one or more of these questions:

- What can you thank God for because of this study?
- What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
- In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 7

## Sexual Purity and Your Personal Destiny

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 9 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

I [Fred] think it's time—time for you to rise up and make everyone in your life forget your first half of play. It's time for you to come through as a man and as a warrior, regardless of what the guys around you may choose. Most of all, it's high time for this battle to be over.

So get out there, my friend. Make every disciplined effort. You won't regret it, not now, not forever.

— from Chapter 9 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

As you begin this week's study, contemplate Psalm 112. Your trust in the Lord and your delight in His commands dramatically impact your personal destiny as His child and your attitudes toward life in general.

Praise the LORD!  
Blessed is the man who fears the LORD,  
who greatly delights in his commandments!  
His offspring will be mighty in the land;  
the generation of the upright will be blessed.  
Wealth and riches are in his house,  
and his righteousness endures forever.  
Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;  
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous.  
It is well with the man who deals generously and lends;  
who conducts his affairs with justice.  
For the righteous will never be moved;



he will be remembered forever.  
He is not afraid of bad news;  
his heart is firm, trusting in the LORD.  
His heart is steady; he will not be afraid,  
until he looks in triumph on his adversaries.  
He has distributed freely; he has given to the poor;  
his righteousness endures forever;  
his horn is exalted in honor.  
The wicked man sees it and is angry;  
he gnashes his teeth and melts away;  
the desire of the wicked will perish! (Psalm 112)

1. Athletes believe, with tremendous faith, that putting in hours of ruthlessly hard work will impact their destiny in sports. Do you, as a Christian, believe that ruthlessly obeying His commandments will impact your destiny in life? According to Psalm 112 above, in what ways will your destiny change?
2. What happens to the desires of Satan and his minions when you fear the LORD and delight greatly in his commandments?

### **A Couple's Choice**

#### **Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple**

##### **Excerpts from the Part III Introduction and Chapter 9:**

So your destiny awaits. *Will you now make every effort?* That question hangs over the head and heart of every man and every woman. Sure, by this point of the book you've learned where you stand today, and you know the choices you must make to win.

But while that insight gives you a leg up here, the decisions won't make themselves, my friend. And admittedly, these are not easy choices. I know. I made these choices myself. The decisions to add knowledge, self-control, and perseverance to my faith required my every effort, right to my core, just as Peter suggested.

... It isn't too late. There's still plenty of time left in the game. It's only halftime, remember? Make your adjustments, and then teach your sons how to teach your grandsons. Hey, you've got this!

Remember, the New Life is in you, so get out of the locker room and back on the field of play. Halftime adjustments are *always* in order and are *always* yours to make at any time, at will, so make them. But first consider this: *What do you want for yourself as the second half unfolds from here?* I can tell you what I wanted. I wanted to be able to look God in the eye again.

1. What practical steps do you and your spouse have to take to truly “make every effort” to be found spotless before Christ in your sexuality? What teamwork will be required? What sacrifice for each other will be necessary?
2. As Fred made his “half-time adjustments” and engaged the battle for purity with everything in him, his great desire was to look God in the eye again. What is your dream? Why do you want to fight this battle?
3. What is your spouse’s dream? Why does your spouse want to fight this battle with you?

### **A Couple’s Walk**

### **Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 9:**

I didn’t know that a man *could* go decades without flipping through TV channels or surfing the Internet for something hot and sensual. I didn’t know that a man could successfully redefine his family name and trust his sons to cheerfully join him in that pursuit. I wasn’t aware that a man could go decades without offering the enemy a sexual beachhead in his life that would compromise his spiritual authority over his home. I didn’t realize that a man could stop crippling his connection with his wife for good instead of derailing their destiny together.

... You not only know now what’s possible to achieve in this battle, but you also now know how you’re made. Do you want to stay at the threshold of the Christian life, on the outside looking in? Do you want to keep putting your sin down to the devil’s account, or would you prefer to remove those addictions and corrupted neural pathways you have built with your own undisciplined actions over time? Do you really want to keep calling yourself names and blaming your actions on some imagined perversion in you, or are you finally ready to build your soul by following the new life God has put within you?

1. When you now know that so much more is possible on the purity front, are you encouraged? Or are you more than a little worried that you’ll fail to make every effort necessary to win your war and miss your destiny? Discuss this swirl of feelings.
2. Be honest. Are you tempted to stay at the outer threshold of the Christian life where it’s safe, peaceful, and requires no effort at all?
3. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week’s lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
4. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week’s study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.

- What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 9:**

The late Iowa Hall of Fame wrestling coach Bob Darrah once said, "You will always have pain in life, men, but at least you get to choose which kind of pain you'll endure—the pain of self-discipline, or the pain of regret. It's your choice, but always remember this: The pain of self-discipline lasts for a moment. The pain of regret lasts for the rest of your life."

Please, embrace the pain of self-discipline like a champion wrestler. When it comes to building your soul, leave it all out there on the mat. If you do, you'll never experience that lifetime of regret, wondering, *What might have happened had I just walked with God completely in my sexuality and my relationships with women?*

... I remember my days of battle well. I wanted to finally establish my manhood, once and for all. Men become men in times like these. What you do over these next months and seasons will define your manhood, your life, and your earthly impact. The battle may seem brutal at first, but it's momentary. You must choose one form of pain or the other, after all. So choose the right kind.

And that increase of sinfulness has many of us on our faces before God these days. Intercession groups and houses of prayer are popping up worldwide, crying out for revival and cultural renewal. I lead such a group at my local church.

But as my friend the late Bob Phillips once said to me, "People *want* revival, but they *need* holiness." So even as I'm crying out to God to send national revival, I'm also moving deeper into what I need to be as a man and what my family needs from me—holiness. You must move deeper too.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. Which parts of Chapter 9 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. In your own life, have you tended to choose the pain of discipline or the pain of regret?
3. Why can't you choose the pain of regret this time around?

4. Holiness is what you need and what your family needs from you. Why are people focused more on revival than they are on their personal holiness?
5. “What you do over these next months and seasons will define your manhood, your life, and your earthly impact.” How does this statement impact you emotionally? Does a roar arise in your heart?
6. Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve studied and discussed during the previous week. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 8

## Sexual Purity and Your Family Destiny

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 10 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

I [Patrick Middleton, a sexual addictions counselor] deal with a lot of men, and it never fails that the men with deeper sexual issues also have uninvolved or missing fathers. Their sexual issues are directly and severely impacted by their dad's failures as a father to connect with them. That's because there's a point in the development of a boy into a man—say from eleven to thirteen—when the boy needs to move into a deeper relationship with his dad. I know this sounds a bit weird, but I've never found a better way to say it: Dad has to be close enough to his son to be able to call the "heart of a man" out of the boy.

— from Chapter 10 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Consider and contemplate the following Scripture verses, which speak to how you must actively pass God's truth on to the next generation. You do that in part by living out His truth in your life as an example, which impacts your destiny and the destinies of each of your children. You also do it by teaching your children about sexual purity directly and personally, rather than depending upon your child's youth pastor to do the job for you.

Tell it to your children, and let your children tell it to their children, and their children to the next generation. (Joel 1:3)

But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,  
the purposes of his heart through all generations. (Psalms 33:11)

Even when I am old and gray,  
do not forsake me, my God,



till I declare your power to the next generation,  
your mighty acts to all who are to come. (Psalms 71:18)

Then we your people, the sheep of your pasture,  
will praise you forever;  
from generation to generation  
we will proclaim your praise. (Psalms 79:13)

One generation commends your works to another;  
they tell of your mighty acts.  
They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—  
and I will meditate on your wonderful works. (Psalms 145:4–5)

1. Considering all you have learned in this book and study, why is it so important that you be actively involved in telling the next generation about sexual purity?
2. Why do you think God's plan was to use one generation to declare His power to the next rather than some other method?
3. List some ideas of how you might better convey the blessings of sexual purity to the next generation.

### **A Couple's Choice**

#### **Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple**

##### **Excerpts from Chapter 10:**

It wasn't by luck. It wasn't by accident. It was a conscious choice I made. As a result, they never used the arena of their emerging sexuality to sort through their questions about manhood. Skipping that counterfeit path altogether, they stayed on the straight and narrow and never formed dependencies upon porn and masturbation. Instead, they found the genuine ticket into manhood, and it sure wasn't going to bed with a girl.

. . . Oh, my word! God's truth captured me, and my mind exploded with the possibilities right there in the pew. If I could just manage to win this battle and get my children to follow after me, my impact upon my family could last for centuries, not just a generation or two.

1. What are you actively doing and communicating to make sure your sons never have to use the arena of their emerging sexuality to sort out their manhood?
2. In your own words, how would you define a boy's or a young man's genuine ticket into manhood?
3. Going deeper:
  - Have you ever considered how your sexual sin can impact your family's destiny for generations?

- Have you thought about how your sexual purity could impact your family's destiny for generations?
- Does your choice in this matter to God? Discuss that.

### A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 10:

Suddenly, I was seeing every man's battle in an entirely new way. I wasn't just involved in some puny border skirmish over what I could or could not look at or what I could or could not touch. It wasn't about my grouchy Father asking me to show Him my hands to make sure they were scrubbed clean of sin. God had just shown me why He'd given me a son, and what's more, He'd just offered me a wide-open door of adventure and impact.

It was about my manhood and my destiny. It was about fighting a big battle to redefine my family name. It was about finally becoming everything my adoption into Christ promised I could be. It was about choosing to be my wife's hero and not her nightmare, defending my beauty Brenda and impacting my family now and into future generations.

... Finally my exasperated Father in heaven reached the end of His rope and challenged my manhood one morning in prayer with these chilling words to my heart:

***Are you going to be the one to drive that stake into the ground right here and change the direction of your family tree, or are you going to leave the job for someone better than you somewhere down the line?***

... You weren't just redefining your identity, but you were redefining your lineage, the Stoeker name. Your boys had a father's voice speaking into their lives, but it wasn't just a call to resist sin. You were building in them an identity: *Hey, you're a Stoeker. We're going to change the family name together.* For you, it wasn't about just resisting what was chasing you from the past. Instead, you kept talking about the *future* and who you all would be together. That was such an essential part of this.

1. So, here's a direct question that says it all: Are you going to be the one to drive that stake into the ground right here and change the direction of your family tree, or are you going to leave the job for someone better than you, somewhere down the line?
2. After what you've read in *Battle On, Battle Over* so far, are you passionate about redefining your identity and family name? What would it take to increase your passion?
3. What identity are you building into your sons and daughters? Is it conscious? Are you defining their future and the possibilities out there?

4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

### **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 10:**

In other words, the Lord's challenge to me that morning in prayer was not so much a tug on my guilt as a disobedient Christian son but a jarring yank on manhood's chain. It's crucial for you to see the difference. This battle is just as much about your integrity as a man as it is about your integrity as a Christian. God wants you to see things this way.

... And because I [Fred] won, an interesting thing happened when [my oldest son] Jasen entered his adolescent years. My decisions shaped his. Even though I agonized for a long time whether Jasen would follow me into this fight for our family destiny, I needn't have worried at all. Jasen stepped up early, at puberty, and joined me in every man's battle. He accepted the challenge without a peep of protest. Though there was overwhelming peer pressure in the world around him, he engaged the battle as naturally as breathing.

... To Jesus, there was only one ticket into manhood: being about His Father's business. That's the mark He sets for all of us, and that's your ticket into manhood as well. If you're a Christian, being about your Father's business is the *only* ticket in town. . . . Under those circumstances, Jasen naturally stepped up into manhood and helped me redefine the Stoeker name, and he carried that name well, all the way to his wedding day.

... It strikes me [Pastor James Christopher] that your sons don't let people define "normal" for them. It doesn't matter what people say to them, mocking or not, because you've so thoroughly defined their identity in Christ and as a family in the home.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapter 10 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. God's challenge to sexual purity is about your integrity as a Christian, without question. But it is also about your integrity as a man or as a woman. Why are both aspects so crucial for your family destiny?
3. Why do we naturally assume that our children will not join us in this joint family destiny?
4. Why do you think our culture's ticket into manhood—going to bed with a girl—dominates the thinking of the youth in our churches rather than Christ's ticket through obedience? Where have we failed?
5. Pop quiz: Do your children allow other youth to define normal for them?
6. Are you thoroughly defining their identity as a family in your home? If so, what specific, practical steps are you taking? If not, what practical steps must you take to start?
7. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous weeks. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 9

## Sexual Purity and Your Church's Destiny

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 11 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

I [Pastor Travis] had assumed that most of my guys were in the "normal struggles zone," but now I realized many of the guys lived far beyond that. They were deep in the "yielding to the flesh zone," and there was a significant percentage of men—nice, good guys—who were just flat-out "controlled by the flesh." I wondered how many pastors out there were as naïve as I'd been. That foolish assumption about my men was devastating to my call as a pastor and to our call as a church. It kept them from getting the help they needed from me.

— from Chapter 11 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Your faithful obedience in your battle for sexual purity will surely impact the destiny of your local church as your example grows, spreads, and multiplies. You are responsible for the health of your local church, and your obedience in the battle for purity will have an outsized impact. As you begin this study, take some time to consider and contemplate the following Bible passages.

So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers. (Acts 16:5)

Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you.  
(Acts 20:28)

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (Ephesians 5:25–27)



Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:1)

1. How would Paul define “infants in Christ”? Might a regular trip into porn and masturbation keep you infantile in Christ?
2. How would Paul define “people who live by the Spirit”? Think back to our discussion of the upper arm, the lower arm, and the elbow in Chapter 5.
3. Reread the Scripture verses above. What do you think it means when it says, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you”? Is the church responsible for us, or are we responsible for the church?

### **A Couple's Choice**

#### **Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple**

##### **Excerpts from Chapter 11:**

They knew what they were doing in private, so when I [Pastor Travis] would ask for men to step into leadership, they'd respond negatively in their hearts, saying, “There's no way I can do that, Pastor. Some things I can do. I can go out and make more money and I can give you that money. After all, that's what I know how to do, and God seems to smile on my ability to make money. I can help single moms with their cars or use my power tools to bless the church, but when you ask me to teach Sunday school, go on missions trips, or head up a small group, I can't do that. I'm not qualified to step above the threshold of usher. Sorry about that, but that's how I feel.”

... I [Pastor Travis] got open with [my wife] Hannah. She was shocked, but I also remember the unforgettable moment when she exclaimed, “Oh, Travis, our poor sons are growing up in a world that's even worse than your world! We have got to protect them from being tortured even now, as youngsters. And we've got to help the men in our church protect *their* kids too.”

1. Have you ever “self-disqualified” yourself from leadership at your local church? How did this make you feel?
2. Consider your current local church. Do women dominate the leadership positions?
3. What tactics are you using to protect your kids from being “tortured” by the extreme sensuality in their world? Or are you satisfied with an attitude of “I muddled through somehow, so they will have to muddle through on their own as well”?

## **A Couple's Walk**

### **Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths**

#### **Excerpts from Chapter 11:**

I [Pastor Travis] preached on this topic several Sundays and then started quite a few purity Life Groups, and boom, guys started stepping up right away. As they began to win their battles with sexual sin, they started realizing God could use them. It was the greatest breakthrough for our men's ministry that you could imagine.

. . . Let me tell you—nothing breeds complacency in Christians like sexual sin and the self-disqualification that follows. But transparency breeds relationships, and those relationships give us access to the freedom of the gospel. The secrets you hold to yourself are the very ones the enemy uses to lock down your life's destiny. He keeps you in hiding behind those secrets.

1. In your mind, will a purity sermon or two be enough to break the pattern of sexual sin in your church? What would you be willing to do as an individual to push for a breakthrough? As a couple?
2. Do you sense complacency in the Christians in your local church, especially in your men's ministry? Is there any sense of a desire to take the city for Christ?
3. As a couple, what secrets are you holding to yourself that are locking down your life's destiny? Is this all you hoped for from marriage?
4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together**

## Excerpts from Chapter 11:

And then an old axiom came to mind: *You can always tell the condition of a culture by the state of its men.* On that Saturday morning, I [Fred] could easily tell the condition of that church culture by the state of its men. They were flat-out manly.

. . . I [Pastor Travis] think the key moment was when I took a risk and explained my own struggles to some of the guys. I told them, "Guys, I lust too, and I have to repent of that." Another time, I said, "Yeah, I have to bounce my eyes every time I go to the gym." Basically, I opened up about myself first.

They were shocked that I did. They were like, "You do?" Like they just thought I could walk into the gym without noticing the women in skintight clothes and curvy figures in yoga pants. It was so comical, but that's what they thought.

. . . The first thing I [Pastor Travis] saw was immediate camaraderie building up among the men. They were no longer isolated. They no longer felt like they were the only guy struggling out there. That was huge! Then the next thing I saw was men stepping up all over the place. Men leading men, men leading Life Groups, and men going on missions trips. It was a stepping up across the board. Some guys were like, "Hey, now that I've brought my sin into the light, I can jump into leadership."

## Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapter 11 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. What is the state of your men at church? If Fred Stoeker walked into your church, would he find them flat-out manly? What do you sense when you walk into your church?
3. Have you allowed your pastor the room to be transparent about his own life? Have you been transparent with him in return?
4. What has hiding gained you or your marriage? Have you simply grown better at hiding or posing?
5. Why do you suppose most church attenders believe that pastors are immune to curvy figures in yoga pants?
6. Would you say that the men in your church have a broad camaraderie?
7. In your church, are men stepping up into leadership? Are men leading men? Are men leading Life Groups? And are men going on missions trips? If not, you can help change that. What are the first steps you should take?
8. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous weeks. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 10

## Establishing Interpersonal Intimacy (Part A)

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 12 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

His *first* step should be to sit down with his wife and to ask her to share the three worst ways he treats her—you know, the things that make him sexually unattractive to her. If he then sacrificially heals the relationship, I [Brenda] think the sex part will take care of itself. If he wants her to like to have sex with him *inside* the bedroom, she's got to like him personally *outside* the bedroom. He's got to quit trampling her heart.

— from Chapter 12 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Consider the following Bible passages and meditate on them. Your humility and concern for your spouse's interests, no matter how different they might seem, will determine whether you ever achieve true marital intimacy. Whatever the state of things in your marriage, today can bring the dawn of new beginnings if you'll genuinely humble yourself, dropping your defenses in open transparency.

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children. (Ephesians 5:1)

Do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. (Philippians 2:4 AMP)

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? (Matthew 7:3–4)

So I, the prisoner for the Lord, appeal to you to live a life worthy of the calling to which you

have been called [that is, to live a life that exhibits godly character, moral courage, personal integrity, and mature behavior—a life that expresses gratitude to God for your salvation], with all humility [forsaking self-righteousness], and gentleness [maintaining self-control], with patience, bearing with one another in [unselfish] love. Make every effort to keep the oneness of the Spirit in the bond of peace [each individual working together to make the whole successful]. (Ephesians 4:1–3 AMP)

1. The sacrificial way Jesus expressed His love for us is an example of how we should live for the sake of others. As a couple, which of you is currently best at looking out for the interests of your spouse? If you're currently in second place, why is that? What would it take to catch up?
2. In your own words, describe what it means to make every effort to keep the oneness of the Spirit in your relationship.
3. What does keeping your focus on the plank in your eye have to do with establishing intimacy in your marriage?

### A Couple's Choice

### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

#### Excerpt from Chapter 12:

And the truth is, no husband should have to masturbate anymore if the couple, together, ensures that three things are taking place in their marriage:

1. The husband is taking on his wounds and learning to deal with the pain and stress in his life in partnership with his wife and the Lord.
2. The wife is graciously taking on the privilege of providing the interpersonal intimacy he earnestly desires in bed.
3. The husband is making himself sexually attractive to his wife by setting out to romance her again and by ceasing to trample her heart with rigid or lazy attitudes in the home.

Moving ahead will require courageous, transparent, heart-to-heart communication from both sides and tremendous respect for the natural differences between the husband and wife in their temperaments and emotional makeup. These differences must be honored.

1. What are the signs that you have a deep respect for what happens naturally between you as a couple sexually? What are the signs that you don't?
2. Historically, have you been able to talk about the differences and disappointments with your sex life with open, courageous, and non-defensive dialogue? Or does it always end in defensive finger-pointing? The conversations in *Battle On, Battle Over* show you how it can be done.
3. Have you, as a husband, begun taking on your wounds and pain effectively? Has your wife noticed that enough to mention it?



4. Have you, as a wife, begun taking on the privilege of providing the interpersonal, sexual intimacy he earnestly desires? Has he noticed that enough to mention it?
5. As a husband, have you ever been accused of being rigid and lazy around the home? If so, why are you so willing to make it harder for your wife to find you sexually attractive? After all, that shows little respect for the natural differences in her sexuality, which is based on relationship.

## A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 12:

The truth is, I [Joe] don't think married women understand that their husbands are visual and *want* to see them naked and are delighted by their bodies. I also think there's a second reason women can't see that, and it's because many of them are not happy with their own bodies.

... But remember, the Bible also talks about husbands loving their wives sacrificially until they blossom and shine, just like you've done for me. As a woman, I [Brenda] am puzzled that these men are so rebellious about *that* bit of Scripture. If they loved their wives sacrificially, I assure you that it would make them very sexually attractive to their wives. But I want to make the point that this whole sexual equation isn't quite as simple as you and Joe are making it out here. When a wife holds back on sex and says she doesn't even want to talk about it anymore, it isn't always her fault, and it isn't always rebellion either."

1. In your marriage, would you say that the wife truly understands that her husband wants to see her naked body? Would you say that the wife is not happy with her body? Rather than stick your heads in the sand, what are you both willing to do to improve things in this regard?
2. When people look at your marriage, do they see a husband loving his wife sacrificially until she blossoms and shines? Looking in the spiritual mirror, as a husband, have you been rebellious about *that* bit of Scripture?
3. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
4. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

#### Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together

##### Excerpts from Chapter 12:

After the Bible study, some of the wives went home and brought up what I [Joe] said to their husbands. When a few of these guys confessed and agreed that *they* didn't want to masturbate anymore, their wives stuck their heads straight into the sand.

*Don't talk to me anymore about this, and let's just pretend this conversation never happened. You just do whatever you've got to do because I don't want to deal with it.*

These guys were naturally devastated by this response. They were stunned that their wives could seem so cold-hearted.

. . . Even though my [Joe's] wife [Megan] responded well to this situation, she was still freaked out by how visual guys are. I think all the other wives were too. Megan said, "You mean all those years when I was a teenage girl and I didn't think anyone was looking at me . . . now you're telling me that they *were* all looking at me?"

When I nodded, she could barely take it in. "Wow! Why did God make us so different?" she asked. Then she just sat there mesmerized, shaking her head.

. . . If only every wife could see how delighted her husband is in her! If she could only believe that she is secure in his sight, I [Joe] think she would be more abandoned in love and sex because she would realize, *Hey, he really does delight in me. I'm not this imperfect thing that he had to settle for.* I badly want the women in my church to understand that.

##### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapter 12 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. It has become common knowledge over the past few decades that men are vastly more visual than women are sexually. What have you learned in this study about the viscosity of men that takes your understanding deeper?
3. In your marriage, what changes would the husband have to make to truly liberate your sexual connection? What changes would the wife have to make?
4. Your husband is delighted with your body, and this delight has vastly less to do with your current weight than you can imagine. Do you believe that? If not, why not? Discuss this together as a couple when you are alone, with mercy and humility.

5. Women: Have you ever dreamed of being more abandoned in love and sex? For you personally, are you less abandoned because you don't feel secure in his sight? Or are there other reasons?
6. There's always time to make halftime adjustments. Is now the time to make any halftime adjustments in your sexual relationship? Is this the right moment to get all this out on the table and chart a new course together?
7. Take a moment to reflect on what you've studied and discussed during the previous weeks. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 11

## Establishing Interpersonal Intimacy (Part B)

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 13 and 14 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

It probably won't surprise you that a wife's support is the best predictor of success that Fred and I [Brenda] have ever found in the battle for purity. Even if you live in this lesser world, I urge you to find your way to your husband's side. His success in the battle depends a lot on you.

— from Chapter 14 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Read the following Scripture verses, which cover Christ's definition of true love for Him and emphasize kindness and understanding in your relationships. Doing what is good and providing for your spouse's needs, even if you don't have those exact needs and even if you don't personally understand them, is profitable for everyone.

But if they do not have [sufficient] self-control, they should marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. (1 Corinthians 7:9 AMP)

The person who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who [really] loves Me; and whoever [really] loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and reveal Myself to him [I will make Myself real to him]." (John 14:21 AMP)

For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. (Galatians 5:14–15)

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of

passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone. (Titus 3:3–8)

1. Considering all we have learned in this book and study, why is obedience a far better proof of love than emotions?
2. In marriage, devoting yourself to doing good includes devoting yourself sexually to your spouse and devoting yourself to a regular sacrifice of your own needs for the sake of the other person. What are the good things you do for your spouse that seem easy in your life? What good things do you do for your spouse that seem hard? Share with each other.
3. What things does your spouse hate to do around the house that you could do for him or her instead?

### **A Couple's Choice**

### **Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple**

#### **Excerpts from Chapters 13 and 14:**

Jim practically apologized to Samantha for expecting to get his sexual needs met in marriage. God makes no such apologies because one key reason marriage exists is so that both of you *can* get your sexual needs met in a holy and honorable way.

... You can help him connect the dots between the nonsexual roots and his sexual behavior. You can intercede on his behalf for the Lord to heal those wounds. You are a woman. You know how to love. How to support. How to nurture someone in pain.

... In my [Brenda's] experience, every man's battle is best fought as a couple. The common goals behind this great adventure can draw two together like nothing else.

1. What were your dreams for your relationship in marriage? In what ways can embarking together on this great adventure to win every man's battle end up fulfilling your dreams?
2. When it comes to your husband's wounds and stress, how much do you currently intercede on his behalf to heal and protect him? Have you helped him connect the dots between these non-sexual roots and his sexual behavior?
3. By nature, a man's native language of sharing intimacy is sexual. Consider how demeaning it



would feel to be forced to apologize for who you are by nature. Imagine how you would feel as a wife if you had to apologize every time you desired to share the events of your day with your husband. Enter into a discussion on this topic.

### A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapter 13:

Regular frequency arises naturally when (1) your heart aligns with 1 Corinthians 7:2–5 and (2) when you realize that sex is not just an act of individual desire or romantic passion but also an act of kindness and mercy from God's point of view. Physical intimacy is a mutual act of relational healing and bonding, delivering protection for your spouse.

... Now, I [Brenda] am not forgetting that Fred plays a part in helping my moods. For instance, he no longer tramples my heart *outside* the bedroom with his bad temper like he did early in our marriage, so my moods can more easily change *inside* the bedroom. He never forces me to do anything inside the bedroom that I find sinful or demeaning because doing so would drive my heart away and kill my mood. He also never uses me as an interactive toy on which to explore his selfish pleasures unilaterally on his own, somewhere in his mental fantasies. He studies my heart, and it's clear that my desires are as important to him as his own. In short, he honors my female sexuality in the same way I honor his unique male differences.

1. What would it take for you to see sex as an act of kindness and mercy like God sees it? What would it take to see sex as an act of loving your spouse as you love yourself?
2. What would it take for you to see sex as a mutual act of relational healing and bonding rather than just an act of individual desire and romantic passion? What would it take to renew your mind and align it with Christ in this regard?
3. Do you ever ask your spouse to do something in the marriage bed that the other person might find sinful or demeaning? Is that an act of loving your spouse as yourself? Why or why not?
4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:
  - What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
  - If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
  - What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

## A Couple's Talk

### Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple

#### Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together

##### Excerpts from Chapter 13:

Now, I [Brenda] can ignore these truths and even hate them, but I can't change them. My sexuality has never been just mine, and neither has yours. It doesn't matter whose podcast says otherwise. God crafted my sexuality for Fred and his pleasure every bit as much as He created it for me and my pleasure. Biblically, I have never had the right to only use my sexuality at my discretion.

... I [Brenda] fully understand that your husband may still have a lot to learn. While your sexuality belongs to both of you, he may still think that this means you must service him like some call girl on retainer and that your sexuality is to be used only at *his* discretion. Sigh.

It isn't easy to craft the right attitudes regarding sex in marriage. Men are as obtuse about female sexuality as we are about theirs. They are especially blind to the relational nature of our sexuality because they simply don't experience it that way. The statement I made earlier would never occur to them naturally on their own: *If you want me to have regular sex with you, sit down with me and ask me how you can treat me better!* But that doesn't mean your husband is incapable of learning.

... Building a great marriage bed together takes study and great humility. It gets no easier as the years pass and new challenges are added to the mix, like children, weight gain, menopause, hysterectomies, and other medical issues. But even though these obstacles may slow us on our path to sexual connection, we must never move God's finish line or change the target He's set for us. Throughout your days together, God wants you to pursue each other sexually as husband and wife.

##### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapters 13 and 14 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. Husbands, pay attention to this: "If you want me to have regular sex with you, sit down with me and ask me how you can treat me better!" You are a man, and genuine men do not fear a good inspection of how they treat their wives. Do you have the courage and humility to receive this inspection from your wife? If not, you'll still have problems in your marriage bed.

3. Wives, remember this: God crafted your sexuality for your husband and his pleasure every bit as much as He created it for you and your pleasure. Biblically, you have never had the right to only use your sexuality at your discretion. In practice, is your attitude toward your sexuality and its use aligned with this statement and aligned with Christ, or is it more aligned with the phrase “my body, my choice?” Would your husband agree with your self-assessment?
4. Sexually speaking, have you personally moved God’s finish line or changed His scriptural targets? Be honest. Did you make those changes consciously or unconsciously? Either way, you must now reestablish His targets consciously, by choice. What can your spouse do to make these choices easier?
5. Consider this sentence from Chapter 13: “Throughout your days together, God wants you to pursue each other sexually as husband and wife.” Why do you think that rebellion is often the immediate response to such a sentence?
6. Building an excellent marriage bed together gets no easier as the years pass, and new challenges are added to the mix, like children, weight gain, menopause, hysterectomies, and other medical issues. Discuss the physical impact of these changes. Discuss best practices in dealing with them.
7. Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve studied and discussed during the previous weeks. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Week 12

## Establishing Interpersonal Intimacy (Part C)

This week's reading assignment: Chapters 15 and 16 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

Refuse to fail. Soon, the ability to control your mind, will and emotions, and the actions flowing from a disciplined soul, regardless of your wounds or stress, will set you apart . . .

— from Chapter 16 in *Battle On, Battle Over*

### A Couple's Truth

#### Your Exploration of God's Word

Love always perseveres and protects the other in marriage. Love never fails. Consider and contemplate the following Bible passages, which call us to learn what is pleasing to the Lord when it comes to helping carry our neighbor's moral burden.

Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. (Galatians 6:1–3) (See notes below)

For once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of Light [live as those who are native-born to the Light] (for the fruit [the effect, the result] of the Light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn [by experience] what is pleasing to the Lord [and letting your lifestyles be examples of what is most acceptable to Him—your behavior expressing gratitude to God for your salvation]. (Ephesians 5:8–10 AMP)

Therefore see that you walk carefully [living life with honor, purpose, and courage; shunning those who tolerate and enable evil], not as the unwise, but as wise [sensible, intelligent, discerning people], making the very most of your time [on earth, recognizing and taking

advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence], because the days are [filled with] evil. Therefore do not be foolish *and* thoughtless, but understand *and* firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is. (Ephesians 5:15–17 AMP) (See notes below)

1. In Galatians 6:1–3 above, the Greek word for the verb *restore* is used elsewhere for setting bones, mending nets, and bringing factions together. The phrase “carry each other’s burdens” refers specifically to moral burdens. As a spouse, is it easy to gently bring the relationship back together and mend things while carrying the other’s moral burdens? Why or why not?
2. It is pleasing to God when your behavior expresses gratitude to God for your salvation. Is He more pleased when you express gratitude for your salvation by walking in a sexually pure way or is He more pleased when you express gratitude for your salvation by restoring your stumbling mate and helping to carry that moral burden?
3. You are called to make the very most of your time on earth, recognizing and taking advantage of each opportunity and using it with wisdom and diligence. You never get a day off as one of God’s children, and He’s counting on you, even now, to obey His will. What gives God the right to expect hard things from each one of us? Is it fair?

### A Couple’s Choice

#### Questions for Individual Reflection and Examination as a Couple

##### Excerpts from Chapters 15 and 16:

Pursue your wife’s heart. Pursue freedom, and always persevere as you train for war and fight to win. Lead by example in all circumstances.

... Full restoration is not only possible, but it’s also God’s will, which means it will surely happen as long as your husband engages in the battle. Of course, he must choose freedom. If he does, he must put his whole heart into rebuilding his soul and full strength into defending the two vulnerabilities in his sexuality.

1. Men, is pursuing sexual freedom another form of pursuing your wife’s heart? Brenda and Fred always saw it that way. Does your wife see it that way? Why or why not?
2. Is pursuing your sexual freedom another form of defending your wife spiritually? Why or why not?
3. As a wife, what things are you willing to give up for the sake of helping your husband win this war? Name some of the necessary sacrifices you must make to be an effective side-by-side partner.



## A Couple's Walk

### Your Guide to an Individual Application of These Truths

#### Excerpts from Chapters 15 and 16:

She longs to share her secret garden with you, but she doesn't want you polluting the landscape with the pornographic tastes you've developed in the darkness of cyberspace. Acting like a porn queen in bed is not the great adventure she craves. She simply wants to be who she was created to be—a kindred spirit, a partner to run at your side, and a friend who helps lift you to Christian greatness. She'll sally forth on your great adventure and push on with you to win your biggest battles. Defend her heart's beauty as she rides at your side.

. . . If he's genuinely sorry for the damage he's done, he should never summarily demand your trust before he's earned it. He should never say, "If you really loved me, you would trust me again." Instead, his genuine patience with the dawdling pace of your healing heart will reveal a deep recognition that his betrayal was *his* failure and *his* alone.

. . . If you do *not* have regular sex in marriage—and by that, I [Brenda] mean around two times a week—you're missing the mark in your marriage by God's way of thinking. There is a wound somewhere in your marriage, a warp in your attitudes, or a disrespect of your differences. Something is off-kilter in your husband's approach to you, or something is off in your approach toward him.

. . . If he's embarrassed about his transgressions, his proper response is to stop sinning, not forbid you from getting the help you need. Protecting his false "Christian image" should never take precedence over your genuine need for healing.

1. Love can exist in a vacuum . . . you can love others unconditionally, even if they don't love you in return. But trust cannot live in a vacuum because there is no such thing as unconditional trust. If you're to trust someone, that person must first be trustworthy. When it comes to sexual sin, define what "trustworthy" means to your spouse.
2. If you are not having regular sex in your marriage, there is a wound in the relationship or a disrespect of the differences between you. Team up together and discuss what might be wrong.
3. God calls you to have regular sex in marriage, but He doesn't promise that you'll get it just the way you want it. How can genuine intimacy grow in the bedroom when you regularly press a spouse to do something he or she is uncomfortable with? Discuss this together.
4. In silence, reexamine what you have learned and written in this week's lesson. If fresh observations come to mind, write them down.
5. Going deeper:

- What was your most significant idea or truth in this week's study?
- If God was sitting right next to you, how would you discuss this with Him? Write down your response and make it your prayer this week.
- What practical steps do you think God would want you to take in response to this week's lesson?

### **A Couple's Talk**

### **Productive Topics and Practical Questions for Group Discussion or Consideration as a Couple**

### **Key Focal Points from the Book to Read Aloud and Examine Together**

#### **Excerpts from Chapters 15 and 16:**

She wants to communicate openly and honestly about every last thing with you and live in an incredible place of interpersonal intimacy. She also wants your sexual intimacy to flourish and to become something that you both can treasure and enjoy together, where *all* of your sexual needs and desires are laid squarely on her (instead of shared with a pixelated nude) and where she'll never doubt that you desire *her* as your one and only beauty. She wants you to lead as you both charge purity's battlefield together. She wants you to be the man who clearly knows that marriage and purity are worth fighting for.

. . . Childhood sexual abuse, body image issues, premarital promiscuity, or emotional disconnection can make it seem too painful to "go there" again, even in marriage. Perhaps you have shut down sexually, avoiding your husband's sexual advances for years . . . or decades. But the truth is, that simply isn't how God said things should be in a marriage, and He wants far more for you. He wants to heal that wound. He wants you to find true oneness in marriage.

. . . Navigating marital intimacy is tough for all of us because men and women are created differently, and we can barely *understand* our partner's makeup, let alone easily accept it. Even in the best circumstances, married couples need a ton of communication to get it right. Without that communication, it's far too easy to mislabel "normal male differences" as "negative character flaws." We must never do that because it's always devastating to oneness and unity.

. . . I [Brenda] don't know what the complications or challenges have been inside your bedroom, but one thing is absolutely certain: If you are aware of your husband's sexual sin, it has made things worse for you as his wife, and now you have some hard decisions to make.

### Discussion Questions

1. Which parts of Chapters 15 and 16 in *Battle On, Battle Over* were most helpful or encouraging to you and why?
2. Does the phrase “my body, my choice” have any place in the marriage bed? Why or why not?
3. How would God define true sexual liberation in marriage?
4. Without great communication, it’s far too easy to mislabel “normal male differences” as “negative character flaws.” Do you have excellent communication with your spouse sexually? What could make it better?
5. Even though sex with your mate can be exciting and satisfying, what is it about such physical intimacy that can also be challenging?
6. If you are aware of your husband’s sexual sin, it has made things worse for you as his wife, and now you have some hard decisions to make. What are some of these hard decisions?
7. Take a moment to reflect on what you’ve studied and discussed during the previous weeks. Comment on one or more of these questions:
  - What can you thank God for because of this study?
  - What do you sense God most wants you to understand about this topic today?
  - In what specific ways do you believe He wants you to trust and obey Him fully?

# Resources

## A Note from Fred Stoeker

Thank you for “going deep” with the *Battle On, Battle Over Workbook*. Now that you’ve done so, would you consider leading a group through the lessons and teachings shared on these pages?

I also want to take this moment to mention other books that I’ve co-authored in the past that may be interested in, along with guidance for whom they are targeted. You can order them through my website at [FredStoeker.com](http://FredStoeker.com) at prices considerably better than those found online, and bulk orders are even cheaper. Shipping is free on orders over \$90.

For those seeking eBook or audiobook versions, these resources can be found at the usual online shopping sources, such as Amazon, [Christianbook.com](http://Christianbook.com), and [BarnesandNoble.com](http://BarnesandNoble.com).

***Every Man’s Battle: Revised and Updated 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time* by Fred Stoeker and Steve Arterburn with Mike Yorkey**

With more than two million copies in print and translations into more than three dozen languages, *Every Man’s Battle* brings to light the challenge that every man faces and the fight that every man can win.

The technological innovations of the digital age make pornography so easily accessible that nude pictures can be punched up on a smartphone twenty-four hours a day. This instant access to porn, along with the loose sexual morality in our culture and the tight—or skimpy—dress codes for women, means that any man seeking purity is standing on a slippery slope these days—truly miserable footing.

Considering these developments, it may seem impossible to avoid the temptation to look, linger, or lust, but *Every Man’s Battle* provides a proven roadmap for overcoming these temptations and ultimately gaining permanent victory over them.

**Recommended for:** men dealing with “eye issues” that lead them to look at porn and to lust over women, and for women who want to understand how the male eye works so that they can help their husbands win their battle for sexual purity.

***Every Man’s Marriage: Every Man’s Guide to Winning the Heart of a Woman* by Fred Stoeker and Steve Arterburn with Mike Yorkey**

Married men and women often have common misconceptions about the role of submission in a marital relationship. Fred Stoeker candidly reflects on how his misconceptions about male headship and leadership in marriage nearly cost him his marriage and how God corrected his approach through a more biblical understanding of Scripture.

Fred moved to a sacrificial, Christlike form of leadership and stopped trampling Brenda's heart, creating a home where she could genuinely blossom as a wife and daughter of God. In this best-selling, ECPA Silver Medallion-winning book, Fred reveals how men commonly trample their wives' hearts without knowing it and shares solid, time-tested biblical wisdom that can help men bless their wives and turn their marriages around on a dime.

**Recommended for:** married couples and engaged couples.

***Every Heart Restored: A Wife's Guide to Healing for Wives Facing a Husband's Sexual Sin* by Fred and Brenda Stoeker with Mike Yorkey**

The title and subtitle say it all: when husbands are ensnared by sexual sin, wives suffer the most. In *Every Heart Restored*, an ECPA Silver Medallion winner, Fred and Brenda Stoeker declare unequivocally that a husband's sexual sin is not his wife's fault.

Then they help wives understand male sexuality and learn how to move from a place of rage and judgment to a place of mercy and reconciliation. God can enable you to survive your husband's betrayal and rebuild a solid, intimate, and joyful marriage. In fact, commit to reading this book as a couple. You won't be sorry if you do.

**Recommended for:** women (married or in a serious relationship) who discover that their men are entangled by pornography and sexual sin.

***Preparing Your Son for Every Man's Battle* by Fred Stoeker and Steve Arterburn with Mike Yorkey**

Driving a stake into the ground and establishing sexual purity in your own life is only the first step in changing the destiny of your family. The second step is teaching your sons to arise and follow your example and to love God's pure ways.

The ten-chapter "Parent's Section" at the beginning of this ECPA Gold Medallion-winning book explains why starting early with this training is best and then teaches the how-to and the whys when it comes to training your boys to love sexual purity and to walk it out in practice. Going through this book with your sons will change your relationship forever. That's a promise.

**Recommended for:** dads and single moms of sons who desperately need the guidance of an adult in the sexual arena, perhaps more than any other.

***Every Young Man's Battle: Strategies for Victory in the Real World of Sexual Temptation* by Fred Stoeker and Steve Arterburn with Mike Yorkey**

As a young man, you face incredible sexual temptations every day, but *Every Young Man's Battle* shows you how to rise above today's highly sexualized, self-seeking culture by examining God's standards, training your eyes and mind to obey God's standards of purity, and cleaning up your thought life. This best-selling, ECPA Gold Medallion-winning book will help you develop a plan to see things through with strategies that have worked for millions of other young men.



**Recommended for:** single men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-four and for women in a serious dating relationship.

***Hero: Becoming the Man She Desires* by Fred and Jasen Stoeker with Mike Yorkey**

Heroic men will always seek to take personal purity to its logical conclusion, which is to never leave a woman worse off for having known them. *Hero* shows you what it takes to be an ultimate hero to women by teaching you to control your sexuality and to protect your girlfriend from illicit sexual play before marriage.

Jasen Stoeker never left a girl worse off for having known him, and now he shares the mindset and practices necessary to defend your relationship and protect your convictions and promises to God.

Can you have an electric dating relationship without moving into the sexual arena? Yes, you can. Are you up for the challenge?

**Recommended for:** young men and women who are dating or marriage minded.

# Ask Fred Stoeker to Speak at Your Community Event or Church Conference

Fred Stoeker, a well-known conference speaker who has spoken in or been televised into fifty-nine nations, is bent upon challenging people to become sexually pure and to connect in true intimate relationships with their Father in heaven and with their spouses and children on earth. His mission is to encourage and equip men and women to rise up and *be* Christian rather than simply *seem* Christian, and he's available to speak at community events or church conferences. His wife, Brenda, isn't a public speaker but she gladly participates in Q&A sessions at conferences with Fred.

If you would like to contact Fred or Brenda, you can reach them through the contact page at [FredStoeker.com](http://FredStoeker.com).

# About the Author

**Fred Stoeker** is the founder of Living True Ministries and co-author of the *Every Man's* series, which has impacted millions of readers worldwide.

After stumbling upon his father's *Playboy* magazine under his father's bed in first grade, Fred struggled with pornographic materials for the next twenty years. He found that his marriage to Brenda did not eliminate the problem, and the negative effects of his sexual sin upon his intimacy with God and his wife grew with each passing year.

Embarking on a study of Christian literature on his issues with porn, Fred searched for answers to his problems with his whole heart yet found little help there. However, the Holy Spirit responded to his search with great zeal and passion, conveying the practical knowledge that Fred needed to transform his mind and change his behaviors permanently. Before long, God broke the stranglehold that sexual sin had over his life.

That struggle—and victory—led Fred to write *Every Man's Battle* in the late 1990s. His first book, co-authored with Steve Arterburn, hit a cultural nerve, and word-of-mouth resulted in more than 2 million copies being sold and his work being translated into dozens of languages.

Since the release of *Every Man's Battle*, Fred has written more than a dozen other books that challenge men and women to be sexually pure and connect in genuine intimate relationships. Today, he is a popular conference speaker and has counseled hundreds of married couples.

He and his wife, Brenda, are the parents of four adult children and make their home near Des Moines, Iowa.

His website is [FredStoeker.com](http://FredStoeker.com).