

Strategies for Avoiding Sexual Temptation

This talk will consider the strategies that Christian leaders can adopt to diminish the dangers of sexual temptation and ensure that they flee from it, rather than yielding to it. What are the practical steps for faithfulness that they can take? How can they nurture their spiritual lives and relationships to remain sexually pure to the glory of God? How can they structure their ministries to keep themselves out of situations where temptation can gain a foothold?

John Stevens is the National Director of the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches, a family of over 500 Bible-centred churches in the UK, a position that he has held since 2010. Prior to this he was one of the founding pastors of City Evangelical Church Birmingham, which was planted in the centre of the UK's 2nd largest city in 1999. He was instrumental in starting the Midlands Gospel Partnership, was the course Director of the Midlands Ministry Training Course and is a visiting lecturer at Oak Hill Theological College. John is also one of the pastors of Christchurch Market Harborough, a church he helped to plant when he took up his current role. He was converted whilst studying law at Cambridge University, and after taking a post-graduate degree at the University of Oxford worked for 16 years as a University Lecturer, ending his career as Deputy Head of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. John is married to Ursula and they have four children aged between 12 and 7. He blogs at www.john-stevens.com on theology, church life and ministry, culture and politics.

I. Components of Strategies of Avoid Sexual Temptation

- A. Scriptural commands
- B. Personal spiritual vitality
- C. Legalistic rules
- D. Wise practices

II. Acknowledge the Danger You Are In

- A. We are all subject to temptation – Mark 14:27-31
- B. We must avoid spiritual place or complacency
- C. Don't assume "It will never happen to me"

III. Understand Your Personal Vulnerability

- A. Homosexual or heterosexual temptations

- B. Types of person you find sexually attractive
- C. Stimuli which induce stronger sexual temptation
- D. Situations in which you are likely to be tempted

IV. Cultivate a Close Communion with God

- A. 1 Timothy 4:16 – watch your life and doctrine
- B. Love and fear God and desire His glory
- C. Cultivate a love of holiness and hatred of sin
- D. Read the Bible and pray personally
- E. Enjoy church as a congregation member, not just a leader

V. Trust What Christ Has Accomplished for You

- A. Romans 6:1-14
- B. Romans 7:4-6

VI. Take Radical Action Against Temptation

- A. Matthew 5:27-30
- B. Romans 8:12-13

VII. Understand the Unique Seriousness of Sexual Sin

- A. 1 Corinthians 6:15-17
- B. Impact of sexual unfaithfulness on ministry

C. 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

D. Hebrews 13:4

VIII. Flee from Sexual Immorality

A. 1 Corinthians 6:18

B. 1 Corinthians 10:11-22

C. Genesis 39:6-12

IX. Maintain a Right Balance between Work, Family Duties, and Rest

A. 2 Samuel 11:1

B. 1 Corinthians 7:33-34

C. Exodus 20:8-11

X. Avoid Potentially Dangerous Relationships

A. Avoid fostering emotional connection with members of the opposite sex (or same sex if same-sex attracted)

B. Take great care ministering to members of the opposite sex – 1 Timothy 5:2; Titus 2:3

C. Always put your godliness ahead of your perceived usefulness – trust Christ and others to look after the needy

XI. Cultivate Healthy Preventative Relationships

A. If married

1. 1 Corinthians 7:1-7

2. 1 Thessalonians 4:4

3. Hebrews 13:4

- B. If single
 - 1. 2 Samuel 1:25-26
 - 2. 1 Corinthians 7:7-9

C. If same-sex attracted

XII. Establish Accountability Relationships

- A. Proverbs 27:6
- B. Someone you trust to ask you hard questions
- C. Someone to share with when you are struggling
- D. Someone who will question your practices

Suggested Readings:

Adrian & Celia Reynolds, *Glorious Union: Flourishing in Ministry and Marriage*, 10Publishing

Kris Lundgaard, *The Enemy Within*, Presbyterian & Reformed

Christopher Ash, *Marriage: Sex in the Service of God*, IVP

Stephen Arterburn, *Every Man's Battle*, Waterbrook Multnomah

Tim Chester, *Captured by a Better Vision*, IVP

Glynn Harrison, *A Better Story*, IVP

Gordon MacDonald, *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, Highland Books

<http://www.reformation21.org/blog/2017/03/a-pastoral-letter-to-myself-in.php>

John Armstrong, *The Stain That Stays: The Church's response to the sexual misconduct of its leaders*, Mentor