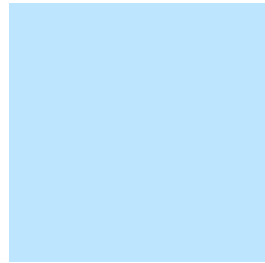


Coming Clean

Overcoming Lust Through
Biblical Accountability





Endorsements

“Coming Clean is user friendly, Biblically based, and practical. Few are as qualified as Luke Gilkerson to write on the subject, and few resources are as well written as this one. Consider it a must.”

– **Joe Dallas**, author of *The Game Plan* and *Five Steps to Breaking Free from Porn*

“It is becoming cliché to say a book is both gospel-centered and highly practical. That’s too bad, because that’s exactly what I want to say about Gilkerson’s *Coming Clean*. As a counselor who knows the impact a solidly grounded, well-equipped accountability partner can make in people’s lives, I would put this short book at the top of my list for anyone trying to walk alongside a man or woman struggling to overcome sexual sin.”

– **Alasdair Groves**, Director of Counseling, CCEF New England

“Luke Gilkerson’s book about fighting temptation by locking arms with an accountability partner provides the reader with a well-written and practical resource. I would urge anyone who wants to fight and win the battle for purity to read this book and pass it along to a friend.”

– **Bill Perkins**, author of *When Good Men are Tempted* and *When Young Men are Tempted*, President of Million Mighty Men

“*Coming Clean* is invaluable for all of us, especially so if you have an addiction to pornography. This affirming message of healing and hope through godly accountability is a must read—a gem to be treasured.”

– **Shelley Lubben**, former porn star and author of *The Truth Behind the Fantasy of Porn*



How to Use This Book

This book was written primarily as a guide for those who use Covenant Eyes Internet Accountability software.

When you use Covenant Eyes, a report of your Internet activity is e-mailed to someone you trust, like a friend, a mentor, or your spouse. These reports are designed to be conversation starters about the temptations you face and the choices you make online. Internet Filtering is also available.

Learn more and sign up for Covenant Eyes at www.covenanteyes.com.

Available for: Windows®, Mac OS®, Android™ phones and tablets, iPhone®, iPod touch®, and iPad®

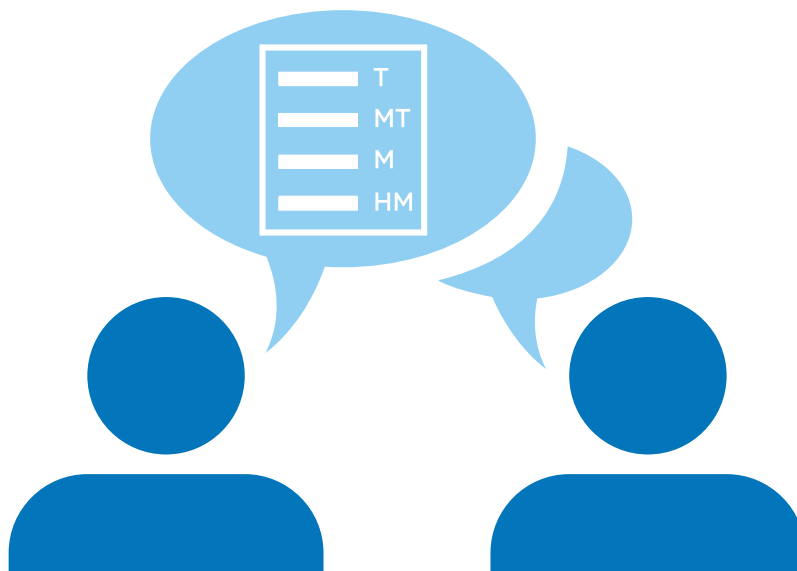




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Before working at Covenant Eyes he spent six years as a campus minister at the University of Toledo. He lives with his wife Trisha and four sons in Owosso, MI.



Introduction

No Private Solutions to Lust

“So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” – 2 Timothy 2:22

The above passage is probably one of the most concise bits of advice in the Bible about how to fight lust. In this text Paul lists three essential steps: (1) run from, (2) run toward, and (3) run with.

We are told to *run from* youthful passions, the cravings of lust. This includes physically fleeing: running away from tempting situations. This includes visually fleeing: shifting our eyes away from lustful images. This includes mentally fleeing: bouncing our thoughts away from lustful imaginations.

We are told to *run toward* a life of righteousness, faith, love, and peace. Our hearts were not meant to be devoid of passion. Running from lust is not about emptying our minds and hearts, but being *filled* with God, knowing He is the one who will satisfy our hearts forever.

Last, we are told to *run with* those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. We must not only run from lust and toward God, we must do so with Christian companions. We must all find friends for this stretch of the road who share our convictions and have a genuine desire to follow Christ.

When we want freedom from our nagging habitual sins, we often want a private solution to our seemingly private problem. We don't want to involve anyone else. But what if the Bible doesn't point us to private solutions? What if Christian accountability relationships are one of God's means of changing us from the inside out?

This last step—*run with*—is what this book is about.



Part 1:

Understanding Accountability



Chapter 1

Sexy Pics and Secrecy

A group of researchers at Newcastle University observed the littering behavior of students in a university cafeteria. Posters at eye-level displayed pictures of human eyes staring out at the hungry students all around the cafeteria. Strangely, researchers discovered people were twice as likely to clean up after themselves when surrounded by eye-posters.¹

This and other studies suggest that even on a subconscious level, we modify our behavior if our brain tells us we're being watched. Even though I know the eyes on those posters can't see me, I am wired in such a way to pay attention to them.

When it comes to facing Internet temptations, knowing others are watching us can change the way we behave—and there are good biblical reasons for this.

The Triple-A Engine of Porn

From the earliest days of the Internet, social scientists have noted the *online disinhibition effect*.² Basically, people say and do things online that they wouldn't say or do in their "real lives." This goes for pornography and cybersex as well.

Several years ago the late psychologist Alvin Cooper theorized that Internet pornography was alluring because of three primary factors: It is accessible, affordable, and anonymous—what he called the "Triple-A Engine." These three aspects of Internet pornography open the door wide to online temptations.³

-
1. Max Ernest-Jones, et. al., "Effects of eye images on everyday cooperative behavior: A field experiment," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 32 (2011).
 2. John Suler, "The Online Disinhibition Effect," *CyberPsychology and Behavior* 7 (2004).
 3. Al Cooper. *Cybersex: The Dark Side of the Force*. (Philadelphia: Brunner-Routledge, 2000).

Little can be done about the affordability of pornography: it is freely available at hundreds of thousands of online portals. And unless you eliminate all contact to computers and smartphones, porn will always be accessible in some fashion.

This is why many people seek to remove the third factor: anonymity. If I no longer have the option to see pornography *in secret*, I'm much less likely to view it at all. If someone I trust is monitoring where I go online, I will be more likely to avoid temptations altogether.

This is why hundreds of thousands of Christians use Internet Accountability Software. If a friend of mine receives a weekly report of everywhere I've been online, with each webpage rated and categorized for questionable content, I will be more likely to think twice about what I search for and what I click on.

Secrecy and Sexual Sin

Secrecy and sexual sin often go hand-in-hand.

The apostle Paul said those whose lives are marked by sexual immorality, impurity, and greed (Ephesians 5:3) commit these shameful acts "in secret" (v.12). Paul likens this way of life as hiding in "darkness" (v.8, 11). Sin seeks out the darkness so its deeds are not exposed to God or to others (John 3:20).

Christians are meant to walk in the light. Among other things, this means we must fight the illusion of secrecy and fight our tendency to want to create private corners where sin can thrive.

This is especially true in an age like our own where there are thousands of digital corners in which to hide.

Accountable to God

As far as our relationship with God goes, one of the great motivators God has given us to avoid sin is the knowledge that *He sees all we do*.

Paul calls Christians "children of the light" (1 Thessalonians 5:5), those united by faith to the Light of the World (John 8:12) and living in the light of Jesus' return. We know that God is real, that Christ has come, that He is our Lord, and that He is coming again to set all things right—and these are sobering thoughts. We live in the dawn of

- We must fight the illusion of secrecy and fight our tendency to want to create private corners where sin can thrive.

the age to come. The night of this present age is ending, so we must live like children of the day: brimming with faith, hope, and love and casting off the works of darkness (Romans 13:11-12).

One day, each of us “will give an account of himself to God” (Romans 14:12). We live knowing we’re finally accountable to the God we love.

Accountable to Others

Another motivator God has given us to keep us from sin is the threat of potential disgrace or shame before other people (Luke 14:9; Romans 1:24-26; 6:21; 1 Corinthians 11:6,14; 14:35). We must be aware of how our sins impact other people and our relationships. Paul’s term for this is “walking properly” (Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 14:40; 1 Thessalonians 4:12). It means living in a manner of decency, and having the awareness that our actions impact those around us.

None of us sins in a vacuum. Our sin affects our families, friends, and communities—and our place in those relationships.

Walking in the Light Online: Internet Accountability

Internet Accountability can have a powerful impact on us. Knowing someone else is going to get a report of everywhere I go online forces me to stop before each online click or search.

Internet Accountability helps to cure us of online tunnel vision. In my seemingly private online life, it is easy to feel that time is my own, that my choices affect only myself. But when I am reminded I am not alone—that at least one other person will see what I do—my myopic vision is broken. For a brief moment I am able to see my temptations through the eyes of another, not just through my own foggy vision.

.....○ We do not sin in a vacuum. Our sin impacts our families, friends, and communities, and thus it impacts our place in those relationships.

By choosing to remove the secrecy, we pull our lives into the light. Living in the light of another’s eyes helps me remember that my accountability partner is not the *only* one watching me. The one who loved me and gave himself for me “sees my ways and numbers all my steps” (Job 31:4). And in that moment I recall: I have made a covenant with my eyes. God, help me not to look at any worthless thing. (Job 31:1; Psalm 101:3)



Chapter 2

The Pillars of Accountability

“I don’t need to be accountable to another person. I’m accountable to God.”

This well-meaning but misinformed statement is a common excuse for why some Christians avoid accountability groups or accountability partners.

For some Christians, saying they need accountability in order to make changes in their life is equivalent to saying, “Knowing God is watching me isn’t enough to get my act together. Something must be wrong with me.” These Christians see accountability as a crutch they should be able to live without. If God can change my heart, they think, certainly he can do it without involving other people.

But what if accountability is actually one of God’s ordinary means to help us become more like Christ?

What if we were meant to treat accountability not as a last resort but as a *lifestyle*?

One-Anothering

The New Testament uses the phrase “one another” dozens of times. Attached to this phrase are vivid descriptions of what our friendships are supposed to look like in the body of Christ.

Accountability is a term the church often uses to summarize several of these one-anothers.

Confession and Prayer

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”

The first two one-another building blocks in accountability are (1) confession* and (2) prayer. In this text James urges us to regularly confess our faults to one another and then pray for each other.

Personal sin can be a cause—though certainly not *always* a cause—of our physical and emotional ailments. So what James is advocating here is good preventative medicine. He tells us to regularly check in with each other and enjoy rich face-to-face relationships of mutual confession and prayer.

This verse can be applied in many of our relationships—with parents, children, spouses, friends, Bible study groups—the list is endless. The vision here is of many communities of believers who pray earnest and fervent prayers for each other while they open their mouths and ears and get honest about sin.

These are key building blocks in all accountability relationships. Accountability is about giving an account of our sin to each other and then walking together to God’s throne of grace.

.....
○
Accountability is about giving an account of our sin to each other and then walking with one another to God’s throne of grace.

Meet Together and Encourage Each Other

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

— Hebrews 10:23-25

The primary concern of the author here is to see his readers persevere in their faith right up to the end of their lives—to hold on to the hope they have in Christ. Instead of shrinking back in our faith, we are called to move forward, blessing the world with love and good works as we long for the Day when Christ will return.

* Some Christian churches and denominations practice what they call sacramental confession. In this e-book, we are not speaking about confession in a sacramental sense, but in a disciple-to-disciple sense.

○
If I know my friend is battling with a particular sin, I should be going to the Scriptures and the brightest minds in the church to find the best kind of motivational material I can.

The author believes our relationships are crucial to our perseverance and growth, giving us two more building blocks to accountability: (1) stir up and encourage one another, and (2) meet together.

The word “stir up” can be translated urge, spur on, or motivate. It has also been translated “provoke one another.”

Saying it another way, the author commands us to “encourage one another.” This word means to *call someone to your side* in order to *strengthen them with your words*. It refers to both “being there” for someone and having the right words to say. In the original language, “encourage” refers to a variety

of conversations—instructing, comforting, admonishing, rebuking, warning, urging, begging, consoling—any timely words your friend needs to hear to strengthen his or her heart.

This means really *getting to know* one another. It means not just confessing surface-level stuff, but helping one another to see underlying *motivations*. It means hearing one another’s stories and spending time together. It means helping one another tap into godly motives for Christian living.

Encouragement also means investing some mental energy. If I know my friend is battling with a particular sin, I should be going to the Scriptures and the brightest minds in the church to find the best kind of motivational material I can. I must ask myself: What does my friend have to lose by continuing down his or her path of sin? What does my friend have to gain by overcoming? Good accountability partners spend mental energy thinking about and praying about these things.

With this in mind, we are told to “meet together” in settings where we can easily have these kinds of conversations. For many, the standard large gathering at church is not the place where these kinds of activities can happen (at least not routinely). These sorts of meetings need to happen in smaller settings.

Building the Accountability Relationship

Building a good accountability relationship takes time. There are benefits and blessings along the way, but the ripest fruit comes after a real friendship is built.

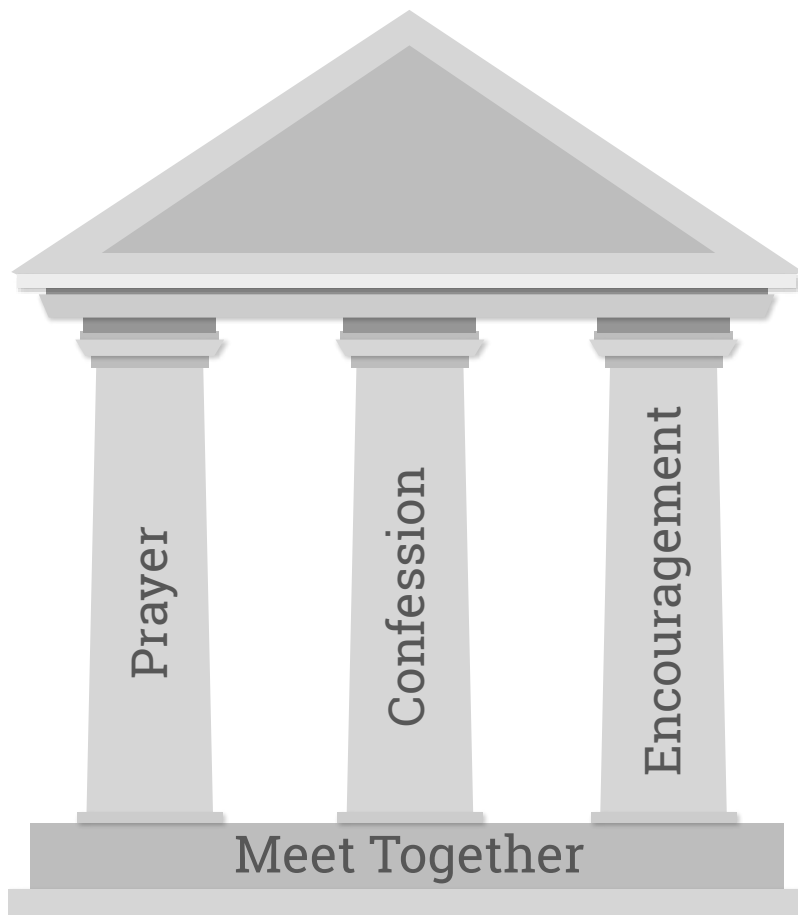
Thinking of these four building blocks together, they form a structure that gives purpose and shape to our accountability relationships.

The foundation is **meeting together**. This includes all the basic methods of communication and conversation: meeting for coffee, talking on the phone, writing e-mails, or anything that involves a meeting of minds.

The central pillar in the room is **confession of sin**: getting honest with God and one another about what we are doing that we shouldn't do or not doing what we should.

The outer walls that support and protect this relationship are **prayer** and **encouragement**.

As it stands now, our structure is firm but incomplete. In the next chapter we will talk about ways these building blocks can be put together poorly, and we will look at the capstone of every good accountability relationship: the gospel.





Chapter 3

Why Accountability Fails

Accountability groups and partners are not magic pills. While accountability plays a crucial role in personal growth and holiness, there are many accountability pitfalls.

Here are five ways accountability often goes bad:

1. When Accountability Partners are Absent

Accountability relationships need to be fostered through time together. It is hard to hold one another accountable when partners meet infrequently or sporadically (or not at all).

Often both parties are at fault. We might commit to “holding one another accountable,” but this might be something vague, elusive, and undefined. Accountability partners need to have a very clear picture in their minds about what accountability really entails: face-to-face, voice-to-voice conversation.

When accountability partners do not meet in some fashion, the accountability relationship has no foundation. This means the pillars of **confession**, **prayer**, and **encouragement** are erratic and shaky, at best.

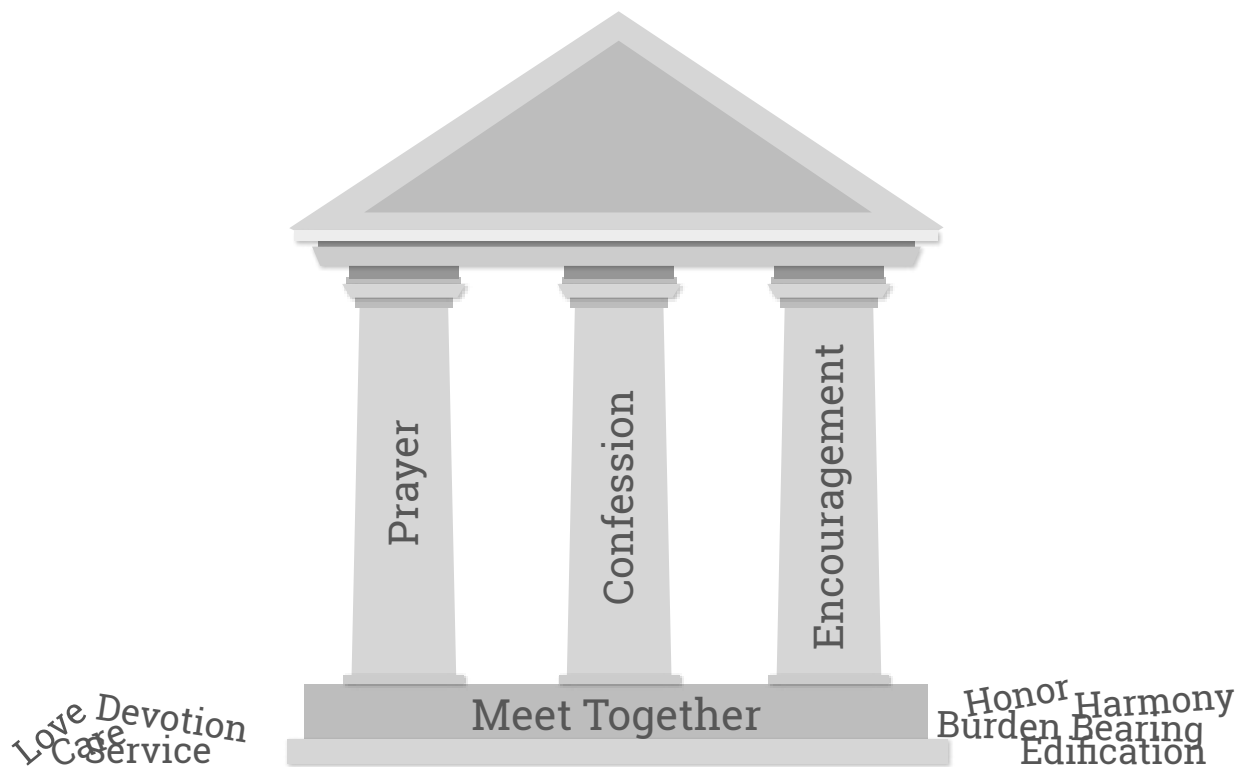


2. When Accountability Groups are Programmatic

When we read through the one-anothers of the New Testament, one cannot help but see the organic, family dynamic that is meant to exist in the church. We are called to an earnest love for one another (1 Peter 1:22), brotherly affection (Romans 12:10), single-minded unity (Romans 15:5), sharing meals together (1 Corinthians 11:33), bearing each other's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and having the same care for each other (1 Corinthians 12:25).

But often our approach to accountability is programmatic. We simply don't have the quality of friendships that are close and spiritually meaningful, so we search for it in forced and sometimes awkward settings.

The church, of course, should offer support groups and discipleship models. "Program" is not a four-letter word. But these programs should aim toward something rich and natural.



If **meeting together**, **prayer**, **confession**, and **encouragement** are the building blocks of accountability, then many of the other one-anothers in the New Testament are the "atmosphere" of the relationship. This should not be an empty, austere structure, but

filled with the air of Christian love and friendship. You may be “doing everything right” but it still feels empty and cold.

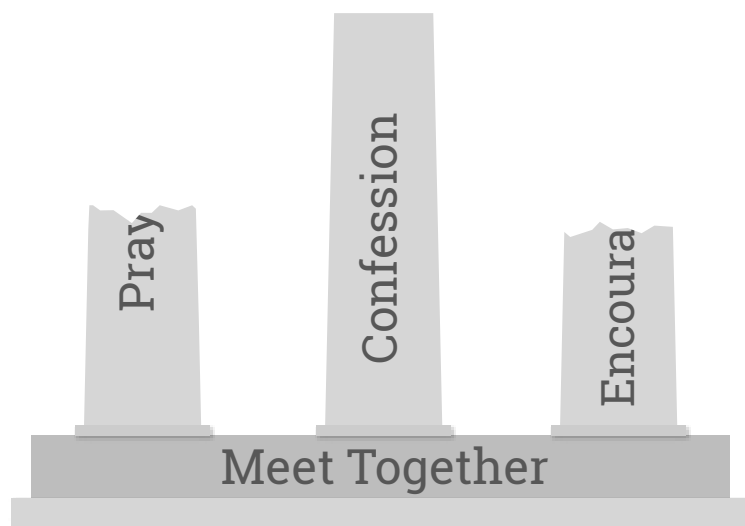
3. When Accountability Partners are Sincerity-Centered

Confession is the central pillar of accountability, but there are a few ways this pillar can be constructed poorly.

The first way confession of sin can go wrong is when it becomes an end in and of itself. This is when we believe confession is the *only* point of accountability, something we do to put to rest our uneasy consciences and get something off our chests. These kinds of accountability relationships make “getting the secret out” the whole point.

As therapeutic as this might feel—and it is therapeutic—we need to be careful that in our confession of sin we don’t trivialize sin as something that resolves itself with mere sincerity. Jonathan Dodson, lead pastor of Austin City Life church, says that one surefire way to ruin your accountability relationship is by making it “a circle of cheap confession by which you obtain cheap peace for your troubled conscience.”⁴

Christians do not believe that pardon from sin comes from merely being *honest* about sin. Your sincerity wasn’t nailed to a Roman cross for your sins; *Christ* was. Peace with God comes only by leaning on what Christ has done for us (Romans 5:1). We often mistake the feeling of relief of unleashing our secrets with true peace that comes from learning we are forgiven.



4. Jonathan Dodson. “8 Ways to Ruin Your Accountability Group.” TheResurgence.com. Published January 1, 2011. (Accessed April 16, 2013).

Conversation must not stop at confession. The outermost pillars of the accountability relationship call us to **prayer** and **encouragement**. After humble confession, we should encourage one another with the assurance of forgiveness promised in the gospel, and we should approach God's throne of grace in prayer together.

In this way we not only hold one another accountable for our behavior, but we also hold one another accountable for trusting in the gospel for our complete forgiveness.

4. When Accountability Partners are Obedience-Centered

The first way the pillar of **confession** can be built poorly is when we aim at cheap peace. The second way the pillar of **confession** can be constructed poorly is when the focus is on moral performance.

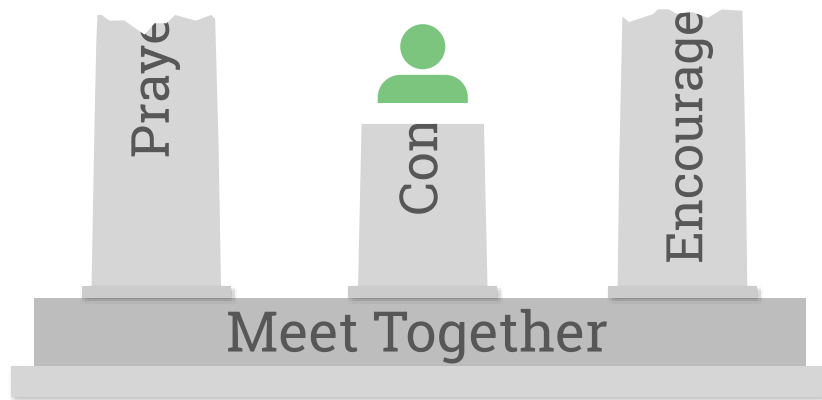
Some Christian accountability groups are militant about sin—a healthy attitude in its own right. Members want to see others grow in holiness, so this becomes the focus of the group: questions and answers that deal with obedience.

The problem is, mere rule keeping does not itself get to the heart of sin. This is one of the great lessons Paul teaches again and again. Merely knowing the law only aggravates our lusts (Romans 7:7-12), and following rigid ascetic regulations—don't touch, don't taste, don't handle—is “of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh” (Colossians 2:20-23).

What we need is a kind of accountability that corrects our natural tendency to focus on ourselves—our own performance or lack of performance—and instead focus on Christ and His obedience in our place.

Don't turn the pillar of confession into a pedestal—a place where we can prop up the idol of our own obedience. Accountability relationships like this either center our thoughts on a few benchmarks of success that we might happen to be reaching, or force us into hiding because we don't want to admit how much we are failing to hit the mark.

Don't turn the pillar of confession into a pedestal—a place where we can prop up the idol of our own obedience.



5. When Accountability Partners Forget the Gospel

Whether you slide toward being sincerity-centered or obedience-centered, both tendencies have ignored that the gospel is the capstone of accountability.

When we make our groups all about sincere confession with no expectation of change, we trivialize the very sins that were nailed to Jesus on the cross. When we confess the same sins week after week, say a quick prayer, and go home, we merely highlight the cheap peace we feel from refreshing honesty, and we forget to comfort each other with a testimony of God's grace of forgiveness. We forget to challenge each other to fight sin in light of the motivations God provides in His word.

When we make our groups all about obedience, we only reinforce our tendency to center our identity on our performance. This either drives us to rigid moralism or hiding the evil that lurks in us from others and ourselves. Either way, these kinds of accountability relationships only reinforce legalism and self-absorption. This robs us of the joy of building our identity on Christ's obedience, and we lose an opportunity to speak about the grace of God that trains us to be godly.

This is why the gospel is the capstone of good accountability. Our confessions, prayers, and encouragement should all be done under the canopy of what the gospel promises God's children.

- *Confess your sins in light of the gospel.* One aspect of repentance is agreeing with what God says about your sin, labeling your sin as truly sinful, as an affront to His holiness, something that cost Christ his life. So treat your sin seriously, but then confess your sins to God and others knowing He is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you (1 John 1:9).

5. Tullian Tchividjian. "A Barrier to Honesty." TheGospelCoalition.org. Published September 24, 2012. (Accessed April 16, 2013).

- *Pray together in light of the gospel.* The gospel promises both grace to cover our sins (Romans 5:1-2) and grace to empower our obedience (Titus 2:11-14). Approach Christ together asking for this grace (Hebrews 4:16).
- *Encourage one another in light of the gospel.* Knowing that true internal change happens in our lives as we set our minds and affections on things above—the complete redemption that is coming to us (Colossians 3:1-4)—we should help one another do this. Mining the Scriptures together, we can teach and admonish one another in wisdom (v.16). We can strive together to have more of a foretaste of the holiness we are promised in the age to come.

We need responsive, gospel-driven accountability. As good accountability partners, we need to not only *hear* an account of our friends’ sins, but *give* an account of God’s grace—a grace that not only saves us from the guilt of sin, but also from the grip of sin. More on this in the next chapter...





Chapter 4

Strong Ropes and a Ten-String Lyre

In Greek mythology they are called the Sirens, and sailors told stories about their seductive song. These creatures of great beauty sat in a flowery meadow on a small, rocky island in the Mediterranean—divine beings with voices that could enchant any sailor. Ancient storytellers described their “siren song”: a beautiful music that compulsively lured sailors toward the islands where they met their doom.

Pornography and other sexual media online have a similar effect on us. For many men and women, once we come within range of it, we become entranced, and it becomes difficult to look away. We don’t intend to crash the ship of our lives on the rocky shore of lust, but the siren song calls to us.

How did ancient seafarers get by the Sirens without being overcome by their songs? Two ancient myths give us a glimpse.

Odysseus: Bind Me to the Mast

Homer’s *Odyssey* tells of the adventures of Odysseus, one of the champions of the Trojan War. In the *Odyssey* he is counseled by a goddess to beware of the Sirens. She warns him that if he should come within range of their sweet song, they will draw him to his death. Beware, she says, all around the island there is a great heap of dead men’s bones, tokens of the Sirens’ power.

At her insistence Odysseus plugs the ears of his fellow sailors with wax. And because he wants the pleasure of hearing the Sirens for himself, he commands his men to bind him halfway up the mast of the ship, standing upright. He tells them further, “If I beg you to set me free, then bind me more tightly still.”

As Odysseus’ ship sails within an earshot of the islands, suddenly the wind falls into a dead calm. The Sirens see Odysseus coming. “Come here,” they sing, “and listen to our voices. No one ever sailed past us without staying to hear the enchanting

sweetness of our song.” Odysseus is overcome by the enchantment and demands that he be set free. But his men bind him with stronger ropes until they are out of the Sirens’ range. Disaster is averted.

Orpheus: A More Beautiful Song

Apollonius of Rhodes also writes about the Sirens in *The Voyage of the Argo*, the tale of Jason’s voyage to find the Golden Fleece. A centaur warns Jason about the Sirens, and sure enough, the sailors encounter them. As a fresh breeze floats over their ship they see the island. The Sirens’ watchful eyes spot Jason’s ship, and they begin to sing. The sailors are overcome with desire and are ready to cast their ropes from the boat to the shore.

Suddenly one of the heroes on board, the legendary musician Orpheus, pulls out his stringed lyre and begins to play. His music overwhelms the voice of the Sirens, as the sailors’ ears are filled with Orpheus’s tune, and the ship sails by the island without incident.

Two Styles of Accountability: Behavior and Beliefs

When it comes to accountability, what sort of people are on board your ship? When you come within range of the siren song of lust, what kind of accountability will you rely on? Ideally, we need both.

.....○ When we are looking to fight the sin of lust, it is wise to fight the battle on two fronts: behaviors and beliefs.





On one hand, you might be more like Odysseus: accountability is about finding friends who will bind you with strong ropes. You want others who will help you set personal boundaries and rules for yourself. You want someone to hold you to task to your goals. You want someone you can call in the middle of the night in the midst of a tempting situation. These people hold you accountable to your *behavior*.

On the other hand, you might be more like Jason: you want people like Orpheus who can help you get to the heart of your internal motivations. These are men and women who know that the only way to break the spell of sin is with a greater spell, a more enchanting song. These are friends who hold you accountable to your *beliefs*—your reliance on God and His promises, which are more delightful than anything pornography can deliver.

When we are looking to fight the sin of lust, it is wise to fight the battle on these two fronts: behaviors and beliefs.

On one front, we need to develop external roadblocks that keep us from lustful behaviors when temptation is fierce. Good accountability partners are people who can help you figure out ways to create these roadblocks.

Here are some questions you can discuss with your partner:

-  Is there a time of day when you are more easily tempted?
-  Is there a place where you are more easily tempted?
-  Are there any choices you typically make before encountering temptation that look insignificant, but actually get you closer to the source of the temptation?
-  When you first feel the urge to look at pornography, what are some “exit ramps” you can take to flee from the temptation?

Accountability partners who help you figure these things out are helping to bind you with “strong ropes.” Knowing the answers to these questions helps to create boundaries in your life to keep lust at bay.

On the other front, we need to get to the heart of our beliefs—what do we believe about porn or cybersex that makes it so alluring to us? We give into temptation because it’s enjoyable on some level, but what sort of itch does it scratch? There is something about that fantasy world we crave. Effective accountability partners are people who can help you see these deeper motives and hold you accountable to finding a greater satisfaction in God than you do in porn.

In his fantastic book, *Closing the Window*, Dr. Tim Chester identifies six promises the fantasy world of porn often makes to its viewers. This is the story pornography feeds to us:

1. Respect – If we feel inadequate or rejected, our sinful hearts often crave respect, and porn offers the fantasy of respect. In the fantasy world, we are adored by fantasy women or men. Porn gives us an eroticized world where we are man enough or woman enough to capture the attention of others by our sexual prowess. We enter the fantasy, and for a brief moment, can feel truly valuable and adored.

2. Relationship – We desire intimacy, but we don't like its risks. We want to be close to others, but we don't want to be vulnerable. We want a real relationship, but we want to be the one in control. Porn gives us this illusion: we can feel “connected” but not have all the mess of a real relationship. Porn offers a parody of love and closeness.

3. Refuge – In times of hardship or fear of failure, we want to relieve our stresses. When life gets hard we want somewhere to escape. We want to pretend to be someone else or somewhere else. Porn gives us a fantasy world where we are never a failure: you always get to have the hot girl or guy you desire, or you get to be the hot girl or guy. Porn provides us with an erotic escape.

4. Reward – In times when we are bored or when we feel like we've made great sacrifices, we often want to reward or entertain ourselves. This sense of entitlement drives us back again and again to the world of fantasy where our overworked minds and under-appreciated egos can “get what we deserve.” Porn showcases its “trophy” men and women across the screen, and for a brief moment, we experience that rush of, “Yes! I deserve this.”

5. Revenge – In times of frustration and anger, we might turn to porn as an act of revenge against another person (like our spouse who isn't having sex with us when we want) or against God (who isn't giving us the life we want). Porn is our tantrum at the world that isn't catering to our desires. Porn is our outlet for saying, “Won't give me what I want? I'll take this!”

6. Redemption – In times of guilt and self-loathing, the fantasy world of porn offers false redemption. If we are feeling guilty, pornography says, “You're okay just the way you are. Nothing about you needs to change.” Or if we are mired in self-hatred, porn is our way of punishing ourselves. “This is the shameful life I deserve,” we say. Porn is a way to indulge our dark world of self-pity.

These are the false promises of porn, and for each person it is a little different. Just one of these might ring true for some people. For others, several or all of them ring true.

But in the person of Christ, God makes better promises.

1. Respect – If we feel inadequate or rejected, we must remember that God is the one who offers us genuine acceptance through Christ. The men or women in the fantasy do not know you. They do not love you. Christ does. We must repent of needing the approval of others (what the Bible calls “the fear of man”), pursue God's glory above all (1 Corinthians 10:31), and anticipate the amazing glory he promises to those who trust

him (John 5:44). His approval is far better than the approval of men or women made of pixels on a screen.

2. Relationship – When we desire intimacy with others but we fear the risk, we need to run to our Heavenly Father who is sovereign over all our relationships. Relationships are risky. Hearts can be broken. Emotions are messy. But God promises that everything we go through will work for good for those who love Him and are called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28). God can and will take all our relationships—even our failed ones—and use them to conform us to the image of his Son (v.29). Knowing this, we can pursue genuine friendships and real intimacy with others in a godly manner, not run to the fake security of digital sex.

3. Refuge – When we are stressed or when life gets hard, God is our true refuge, our rock, fortress, deliverer, and stronghold (Psalm 18:1-3). No matter what our circumstances are, next to the mountain-shaking, thunder-breathing God, our problems are no match for him (v.7-13). Instead of medicating our bruises with fantasy, we can escape into Him, casting all our cares on Him because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:6-7).

4. Reward – When we are itching for pleasure and excitement, we should run to God who is our living water. The well of porn is empty, and time will tell how little it satisfies, but God is our fountain of living water (Jeremiah 2:13). Instead of rushing to the quick fix of porn, we should cultivate a life of communion with God through prayer, fasting, meditating on his Word, and worship. We should cultivate a longing for the eternal reward of living with him forever, rejecting the temporary pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:24-26).

5. Revenge – When we are angry that God is not giving us the life we want, we are like the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:29-31). We consider our sacrifices, our obedience, and our devotion, and we believe God “owes” us something. But God does not relate to us this way: He relates to us as a loving Father. We are not merely God’s servants, but His sons and daughters. When we do not get what we want, we must focus our faith on God who knows us better than we know ourselves. He knows exactly what blessings are best for us in His perfect love and timing.

6. Redemption – In times of guilt or shame, we need to run to God who freely forgives us of all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). We won’t find redemption by normalizing our sin or by trying to punish ourselves. We need to look to Christ, our perfect High Priest: “by

6. Tim Chester, “Sex, God, and the Gospel.” Published in *Porn-Free Church: Raising up gospel communities to fight secret sins*. Available at www.covenanteyes.com.

a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified” (Hebrews 10:14). When we are reminded of our guilt and failures, we must repeat the words Jesus uttered on the cross: “It is finished” (John 19:30). The cross both shows us the ugliness of our sin and God’s amazing love for sinners.

Being a good accountability partner—someone who holds others accountable for their motivational beliefs, not just their behaviors—is about learning to listen to the hearts of others and reminding them that Christ is better than sin. This is the vision the apostle Paul had for the church. We must not just hear the confessions of those caught in sin, we must bear their burdens (Galatians 6:1-2). We should comfort each other with eternal truths (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11). As we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, we can impart God’s wisdom to others (Colossians 3:15; Romans 15:14).

Use the above promises—both the promises of porn and the promises of God—as template for discussion, for going deeper in your accountability relationships.

Do you have friends like Odysseus’s? Do you have men or women in your life who are willing to bind you to the mast of your faith and call you to fortify your life against temptation?

Do you have friends like Jason’s friend Orpheus? Do you have companions who call you to find satisfaction in Christ, who know how to play the gospel promises of God like an instrument, helping you set your eyes on things above?

These myths and fairy tales, though they are not true, reveal what we have always known to be true: *we need others on board our ship*. G.K. Chesterton was right when he said fairy tales are *more than true*, not because they tell us that dragons exist, but because they tell us that dragons can be beaten.



Part 2:

Internet Accountability: The Nitty-Gritty Details



Chapter 5

Getting Started: 10 Steps

When you are just getting started with Accountability Software, the most important question to ask is: Who should receive the Accountability Reports?

For some people the choice is an obvious one—a parent, a best friend, a spouse. But a lot of people simply don't know who would make a good accountability partner.

Here are ten steps to get you started.

Preliminary Steps: Set Your Goals

1. Understand Accountability

Before you can choose a good partner, you have to know what accountability is. Here's a good working definition:

Accountability is the ability and willingness to be honest with others about your actions and motives, and your willingness to let them remind you about the person you long to be.

There are several key aspects to this definition:

Be Honest – Accountability is all about transparency about weakness, sin, and temptation, not hiding or dodging.

Actions and Motives – Accountability is about being honest about what you do and why you do it.

The Person You Long to Be – Accountability friendships are not ultimately about calling you *out* on your sin but calling you *up* to the person you want to become.

2. Take Personal Responsibility for Your Sins

When relational accountability is divorced from personal responsibility, you will be disappointed every time. In the end, it is not an accountability partner's job to change your life or reach your goals for you. You must completely own your mistakes, your messes, your weaknesses, your habits, and your character.

Many end up looking to accountability partners as scapegoats. "I didn't see any change in my life because my accountability partners fell through." Wrong. You are the one who fell through. You must be willing to take ownership of your sins. Only then can others hold you accountable for them.

3. Take Stock of What Motivated You to Find Accountability

Why did you sign up for Internet Accountability in the first place? Were you struggling with porn? Were you venturing into other morally "gray areas" online? Were you hoping to break deeply rooted sinful habits? Did you see the possible temptations online and desire to steer clear of them? Did you choose accountability to serve as a good example to your family or others?

You should be able to state clearly what your objectives are in very specific words. These are the kind of things your accountability partners need to know.

4. Formulate Accountability Questions Based on Your Motivation

Your partner should know your goals, your weaknesses, and your biggest potential pitfalls.

For a place to start, use or modify the list of accountability questions provided in Appendix B. The questions are detailed enough that you can't answer them with a simple yes or no. This will help you talk about not just your actions but your motives as well.

Eventually, accountability conversations can evolve from a routine list of questions to richer conversations about transparency, honesty, and character—but specific questions are a place to start.

Partnership Steps: Set Your Expectations

5. Make a List of Possible Accountability Partners

Nearly every accountability relationship I've seen that's worth its salt started on a foundation of friendship. Start there. Make a list of anyone you feel you have a genuine connection to—both in personality and spirituality. These don't have to be close friends. They could be old friends, church acquaintances, neighbors—anybody you feel you “click” with. Make a big list.

6. Narrow the List

Now narrow your list based on certain character traits. Is there anyone on the list you think is disengaged with their faith? Anyone who seems untrustworthy or has been known to be a gossip? Anyone who you've known to be very legalistic or harsh? Ideally, you want to find a partner who is the opposite of these things: someone spiritually engaged, trustworthy, and gracious.

7. Invite Your Potential Partner(s) to Join You

The first conversation to ask for accountability may be the most awkward for you. Don't let that stop you. You may want to use or modify the following text below in a quick e-mail or message.

Hi _____,

There has been something I've been meaning to talk to you about. I recently signed up for a program called Covenant Eyes. It monitors everywhere I go online and then sends a report of that information to any friend or friends I choose.

As you can imagine, this isn't the easiest thing for me to talk about. The reason I want to use this program is because I want to be open and honest with others about my Internet use. There are simply far too many temptations on the Internet today, too many pitfalls. Knowing others will see where I go online will really help me stay honest and avoid these temptations.

I'd love to talk to you more about this. I need help and encouragement right now, and I knew you would be a great person to ask for help.

You should receive an e-mail from Covenant Eyes asking you to confirm if you want to be my accountability partner. If you think you would be up for this, please accept that invitation. Let me know what you're thinking so we can talk more.

Thanks!
John/Jane Doe

After you've sent this message, if you haven't already, sign into your Covenant Eyes account online and select this same person to be sent an accountability partner invitation.

8. Set Up Times to Meet and/or Talk

How often do you want to meet or talk with your partner? What makes sense given your goals? Talk to your partner and suggest a regular day and time to talk.

9. Tell Your Partner(s) How to Challenge You

This step is critical. Tell your partner what you expect them to do if something questionable appears on your Report or if you admit to a failure.

Your partner might see a questionable search you did online, or a questionable website, or a questionable time of day or night you were online. Should they call you? E-mail you? Talk to you in person? Tell them what you expect.

Setting these expectations gives your partner an open door to have conversations with you. Don't leave it up to them.

Remember, accountability will look a little different for everybody. What's important is that you and your partner find what works best for you.

Technological Step: Set Up Your Internet Reports

10. Customize your Accountability Reports to match your goals

Talk to your partner about how frequently they should receive your Internet Reports and how often you'd like to talk about them.

Covenant Eyes Accountability rates each website for mature content and gives each site an age-based rating, such as T for Teen or M for Mature. You should tell your partner which sensitivity level is best for your Reports. Your partner can choose the minimum rating they want to see. Do you think your Reports should be set at the Teen level? Mature Teen? Highly Mature? Give your partner an idea what would be appropriate for you.

You can find detailed instructions at www.covenanteyes.com/support.



Chapter 6

Spouses And Accountability

“ If I am my husband’s accountability partner, will it really help him to quit looking at pornography? I don’t want to be a nag. ”

“ I want to get her Accountability Reports, but I’m not sure how to talk to her about them. ”

“ I’m tired of seeing the dirty details on these Accountability Reports. What can I do? ”

These are some of the questions women and men often have who receive Accountability Reports for their spouses. Do spouses make good accountability partners?

As you think about this issue for your marriage, here are four questions you should ask yourself. If you believe it will be helpful, read this chapter with your spouse.

1. Have I Given My Spouse the Choice?

Many men and women who have given into online temptations have often caused strain in their marriage as a result. More times than not, there’s been some level of secrecy around the use of pornography or cybersex.

Also, men and women who want to repent of this sin are looking to keep their “recovery” private, just like they had a private sin life. They would prefer to keep their spouse out of it as much as possible.

However, if you want to rebuild trust in your marriage, it is important that you give your spouse the choice about how much they want to know about your problem. Your sin

is *against them*, so ask them what sort of information they want to know about your journey of repentance.

Does your spouse *want* to receive your Accountability Report? It is important to include him or her in this decision.

2. What are the Potential Positive Outcomes?

What benefits do you hope to have from sharing your online successes, failures, and temptations with your spouse?

Most men and women who have their Accountability Reports sent to their spouses are looking to put a psychological barrier between themselves and temptation. For many people this works very well. Before they mindlessly click on a questionable website, they think twice about it. They constantly ask the question, “Will my husband/wife feel honored and cherished by what I’m about to look at?”

○ Will my husband/wife feel honored and cherished by what I’m about to look at?

In addition, many who receive their spouse’s Report appreciate this as a sign of openness and honesty in their marriage. It is one way their spouse builds trust. Internet accountability says to them, “I am letting you into every part of my life.”

3. What are the Potential Negative Outcomes?

For some, receiving a weekly digest of all the online temptations their spouse has encountered in a given week proves to be emotionally taxing.

Many men and women don’t want to know the details of their spouse’s Internet history. Openness is one thing, but they know they will drive themselves crazy thinking about every temptation their lover faced, every link that he or she could have clicked on, or every link he or she *did* click on. For many couples this places a very unhealthy strain on their marriage.

Many men and women don’t enjoy playing the role of counselor or parent for the spouse, and when they are the only ones who receive an Internet Report, this can be the result. Many men and women hate feeling like the “Internet cop,” they hate having to confront their spouse with specific questions, and they hate being the sole person their spouse depends on for help.

4. Who Else Should Also Receive Your Report?

Accountability works best when it is responsive. Accountability is not only about divulging information or giving someone access to your secrets. Accountability is also about hearing wisdom and encouragement from your partner.

This is why, regardless of whether your spouse receives your Internet Accountability Reports, we recommend you send your Reports to at least one other person of the same gender.

Many men and women love knowing their spouse is receiving accountability from others they trust.

Spouses Share Their Covenant Eyes Stories

There is no hard-and-fast rule when it comes to making your husband or wife your accountability partner, but as you keep the above questions in mind, you and your spouse should be able to come closer to a decision.

Here are a few brief testimonies from spouses of Covenant Eyes users.

..... ○ Kay's Story:

“ Covenant Eyes means that I don't have to be the Internet police. Our marriage would not survive that. You can't have a healthy marriage when one person is constantly checking up on the other person to make sure they are doing things right. What a nightmare! On the other hand, you can't have a healthy marriage with a pornography habit in it, either. Also a nightmare. The healthiest thing is when the person with the problem takes responsibility for their problem and takes steps to fix their problem. And Covenant Eyes has enabled Andy to do that. He has his buddies who get his report and who will talk to him if there's a problem. I love not being that person. God bless Covenant Eyes and his accountability partners. ”

..... ○ Kevin's Story:

“ I remember the day my wife came to me and told me she was struggling with pornography. The first thing we did was contact our pastors (who are a husband and wife team) to share with them what we were dealing with. The next step we took was to put

Covenant Eyes on our computer, and I became Amy's accountability partner. Looking back, Covenant Eyes did not fix the problem, but what it did do was add a safeguard so that the healing process could take place. This was almost 5 years ago, and I praise God that my wife is not only free but she now ministers to women caught in the same trap. I believe that this may not have been possible had it not been for Covenant Eyes and the level of accountability it provides. ”

..... ○ Laura's Story:

“ Ryan told me about the power of being accountable to other men. He told me that he had downloaded Covenant Eyes Accountability software on all of our computers and that a small group of men he trusted would receive full reports of all his online activity. Until this point, I had been the one looking over Ryan's shoulder and “catching him” from time to time. It was exhausting, not to mention humiliating. Now that his friends were by his side, I could step back and allow Ryan to develop his own internal passion to resist temptation. You can imagine my relief. His friends ask him hard questions about his Internet Reports, and they've developed very deep relationships because of it. ”

..... ○ Nicole's Story:

“ Jon researched Internet accountability programs and chose Covenant Eyes, which would monitor his computer and send a report of all his Internet activity to some of our trusted friends and myself. After hearing him explain the program in detail and then receiving my first Internet report, I was impressed and could clearly see how it would be an excellent tool to help us rebuild trust concerning the computer in our home. Having multiple sets of eyes, other than mine, viewing Jon's activity on the Internet was helpful in two ways: it gave him the motivation to consistently make good choices on the computer, and took the pressure off my mind and heart of wondering whether or not he was being truthful in that particular area. ”

His friends ask ○
him hard questions
about his Internet
Reports, and they've
developed very
deep relationships
because of it.

..... ○ April's Story:

“ Covenant Eyes played a huge role by giving me the comfort of knowing that men that I knew and trusted to hold Darren accountable were keeping him on track. That was no longer my job. I didn't have to worry about looking and finding something on his computer again. I could rely on other men to help Darren and to bring me into the conversation if they deemed necessary. To me, Covenant Eyes allowed me to heal as a wife and to begin to rebuild and renew my trust and respect toward my husband. ”

..... ○ Cindy's Story:

“ Chris' computer and cell phone are monitored by Covenant Eyes software, which provides reports to his best friend, his boss, and me every week. Anytime that I have a question about a website he visited, he sits down with me and we discuss it together. His best friend cares deeply, not just for Chris, but for our marriage. He is a wonderful force in Chris' life and pushes him to be a better man. ”



Part 3:

More Resources



Appendix A

First 4 Accountability Meetings

Below is a suggested format for your first four accountability meetings, using this e-book as a guide for discussion.

Meeting #1

Before You Meet: You and your partner should read the Introduction and Chapter 1.

Starting the Meeting: Pray aloud together about the purpose of your meeting. Ask God to give you wisdom about establishing a redemptive accountability relationship.

Discussion: Talk about the reading.

- Has there been a time in your life when you chiefly saw purity as a matter of *running from* sin and didn't think of it as *running toward* a passion for Christ? When? What was the result?
- Have you ever had a beneficial friendship or relationship in your life that was built on a mutual desire to fight sin and pursue holiness? What was that relationship like?
- What is the relationship between secrecy and sexual sin in your life? Are there habits of secrecy in your life that have become open doors for sexual sin? Are there any recent secret sins you need to confess?
- What do you hope Internet Accountability (and accountability in general) will change in your life? What sort of questionable behaviors do you want to avoid online?

Ending the Meeting: Pray aloud together, asking for God's mercy for sins recently committed. During your prayer, have one person read aloud Psalm 32 as your personal prayer to God.





Before Your Next Meeting: Make sure you have Covenant Eyes installed properly on every Internet-enabled device you own. Make sure your accountability partner is designated to receive your Internet Reports.

Meeting #2

Before You Meet: Read Chapter 2. Fill out the Accountability Partner Discussion Guide in Appendix B for yourself and bring it to your accountability meeting.

Starting the Meeting: Pray aloud together about the purpose of your meeting. Ask God to give you wisdom about establishing a redemptive accountability partnership.

Discussion: Talk about the reading.

-  After receiving the Covenant Eyes Accountability Report, what questions do you have about the information on the Report?
-  Have you ever thought of accountability relationships as a “crutch” or last resort? Why or why not?
-  There is a lot of meaning behind the word “encourage”—*calling someone to your side in order to strengthen them with your words*. This can include instructing, comforting, admonishing, rebuking, warning, urging, begging, or consoling—any timely words your friend needs to hear to strengthen his or her heart. What will help you and your partner to be more comfortable having this kind of conversation with one another?
-  Reading the Accountability Partner Discussion Guide, what questions or sections were the most convicting? Why?

Ending the Meeting: Pray aloud together, asking for God’s mercy for sins recently committed. As a confession of God’s grace, as you end your prayer, have one person say aloud the words of Romans 8:31-39.






Before Your Next Meeting: Make sure you adjust the settings of the Covenant Eyes Accountability Reports. For anyone receiving a report, go to www.covenanteyes.com/myaccount and sign into your online account. Adjust how often the Reports should be sent or what the rating level of the Reports should be.

Meeting #3

Before You Meet: Read Chapter 3 and Appendix C. Fill out the Accountability Partner Discussion Guide in Appendix B.

Starting the Meeting: Pray aloud together about the purpose of your meeting. Ask God to give you wisdom about establishing a redemptive accountability partnership.

Discussion: Talk about the reading.

-  Have you ever tried to start an accountability partnership that just didn't meet frequently enough to be effective? Why did that happen? How can you prevent it from happening again?
-  Have you ever tried to start an accountability relationship that felt too programmatic? What made it feel that way? How can that be prevented from happening again?
-  Which error are you more likely to make in an accountability relationship: being too focused on sincerity and just getting your secret out, or being too focused on your own obedience?
-  One of the purposes of the Discussion Guide is to help you *remember your need for God's grace*. Are there any questions from the Discussion Guide you find the most helpful for doing this?
-  Were there any questions you rated yourself at 3 or less? What were they?

Ending the Meeting: Pray aloud together, asking for God's mercy for sins recently committed. As you end your prayer, have one person say aloud the words of Psalm 103:1-14 as an assurance of forgiveness.





Before Your Next Meeting: Set a time to share a meal together, either one-on-one or with your families.

Meeting #4

Before You Meet: Read Chapter 4. Fill out the Accountability Partner Discussion Guide in Appendix B.

Starting the Meeting: Pray aloud together about the purpose of your meeting. Ask God to give you wisdom about establishing a redemptive accountability partnership.

Discussion: Talk about the reading.

-  What did you think about the two stories about the Sirens?
-  Have you ever had any accountability partners like those on Odysseus' ship? What were those relationships like?
-  Being more like Orpheus means calling one another to find a greater satisfaction in Christ and His promises in a way that lessens the allure of sin. What are practical ways your accountability relationship can move in that direction as it matures?
-  Share your answers on the Accountability Partner Discussion Guide. What questions stand out that need some attention during this meeting?

Ending the Meeting: Pray aloud together, asking for God's mercy for sins recently committed. As you end your prayer, have one person say aloud the words of 1 John 1:5-2:2 as an assurance of forgiveness.

Before Your Next Meeting: Schedule days and times to continue meeting together.



Appendix B

Discussion Guide

The following is a personal assessment designed to help you develop a life of godly humility, purity, and integrity. To the best of your ability, fill out this assessment before speaking with your Accountability Partner or Accountability Group, and then use this as a template for conversation.

The aims of this list are to help you:

- 1:** Remember and summarize the temptations you have faced, the choices you have made, and the state of your heart;
- 2:** Discuss these matters with trusted Accountability Partners;
- 3:** Talk concretely with others about ways to guard against sinful actions, thoughts, and motives; and
- 4:** See your need for God's grace—for overcoming both the guilt and the grip of sin.

It may be difficult to get through all of these questions in a single meeting, so choose those which are most pertinent for you.⁷

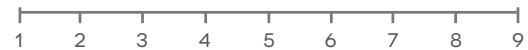
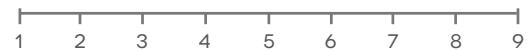
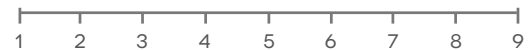
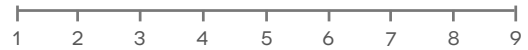
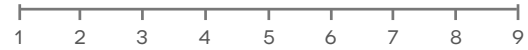
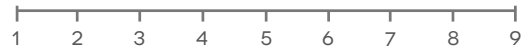
Fill out the following questionnaire before meeting with your Accountability Partner or Accountability Group. Use it to spark discussion and encouraging conversation.

7. Several sources were consulted to compile and adapt this list of questions, including John Wesley's Band Meeting questions, Bethlehem Baptist Church's pastoral accountability questionnaire, the Life Transformation Group system by Neil Cole, *A Spiritual Formation Workbook* by James Bryan Smity and Lynda Graybeal, Grace Brethren International Missions, Mark Driscoll's sermon "A City in a City," "Talking About Idolatry in a Postmodern Age" by Tim Keller, "Idols of the Heart and 'Vanity Fair'" by David Powlison, and *Gospel-Centered Discipleship* by Jonathan Dodson.

Sexual Purity

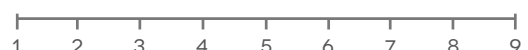
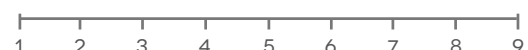
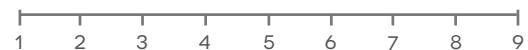
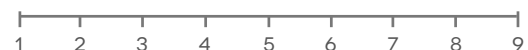
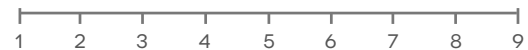
1 = HELP! (CIRCLE A NUMBER) 9 = STABLE

1. I have avoided looking at pornography or other sexually provocative images online or offline.
2. I have avoided images, interactions, or stories online I knew could be seductive or titillating (but wouldn't necessarily be considered "pornographic").
3. I have kept my eyes from second glances and kept my mind from entertaining thoughts about someone (other than my spouse).
4. I have actively avoided known triggers of sexual temptation or titillation.
5. I am successfully fighting the desire to be noticed by or to attract the attention of other men or women (other than my spouse).
6. I have not spent time with a man or woman in a way that could be viewed as compromising to my purity (or my faithfulness to my spouse).

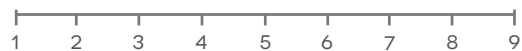


Stewarding My Time, Talents, and Treasures

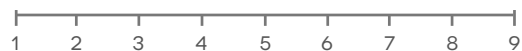
7. I am intentional about showing love to others by the way I serve them with my gifts/talents.
8. I have been intentional about spending appropriate time with my family/household.
9. My family/household is enjoying joy and harmony.
10. My time with technology or media has not displaced time with God, family, friends, work, or my neighbors.
11. I have spoken to and about others with edifying words, not with words that damaged them or their reputation.



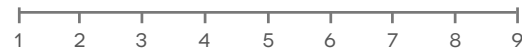
12. I pray about my financial expenditures, and I am intentionally generous with others. People can tell from my financial expenditures that God is my greatest treasure.



13. I am intentional about the use of my spare time to pursue wholesome activities.



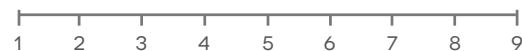
14. I am intentional about my diet, exercise, and sleep habits.



15. I am not creating the impression that I am better than I am. I do not exaggerate or make much of myself.

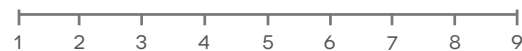


16. I am feeling energized for the week ahead.

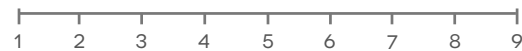


Satisfaction in God

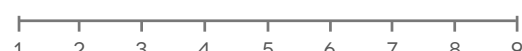
17. I am resting completely in what Christ has done for me—not obsessing about my own failures nor putting stock in my own performance.



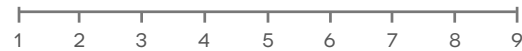
18. Regularly focusing on the gospel gives me great joy that overcomes life's disappointments.



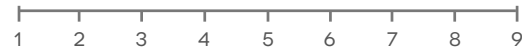
19. When I hear disappointing news, I do not complain or live in doubt or fear, but instead I am inspired to pray and trust in God's care and providence.



20. I am enjoying prayer, and I am praying for others and myself with consistency.



21. The Bible is consistently shaping the way I think and live. I spend regular time reading or hearing God's words, and as a result of that time, I have determined to better trust and obey God in specific ways.



Dispositions of the Heart

22. Though Christ is the one I want to put at the center of my life, there are specific people, experiences, or objects that I am tempted to make a chief source of my significance, satisfaction, and fulfillment.⁸ (Check all that apply.)

- | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual Pleasure | <input type="checkbox"/> Girlfriend/Boyfriend | <input type="checkbox"/> Career | <input type="checkbox"/> Health |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> My Image | <input type="checkbox"/> Comfort |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Hobby | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | <input type="checkbox"/> Opinions of Others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Future Spouse | | | |

23. I am currently fighting these dispositions in my heart. (Check all that apply.)

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pride | <input type="checkbox"/> Bitterness | <input type="checkbox"/> Discontentment | <input type="checkbox"/> Worry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resentment | <input type="checkbox"/> Covetousness | <input type="checkbox"/> Doubt | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-pity | <input type="checkbox"/> Critical Spirit | <input type="checkbox"/> Grumbling | <input type="checkbox"/> Jealousy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Unforgiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Deceptiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Ingratitude | <input type="checkbox"/> Preoccupation with the Opinions of Others |

8. Often this can seem like a difficult assessment to make, so ask yourself some critical questions. What am I most afraid of losing? What do I long for most passionately? What gets me up in the morning? What do I run to for comfort? What do I complain about most? What angers me the most? What has caused me to get angry with God? What makes me happiest? What do I want to have more than anything else? What do I make the biggest sacrifices for? Whose approval am I seeking?

Open-Ended Questions

What am I doing about these dispositions of the heart? (mentioned on the previous page)

What on my Internet Accountability Report should draw my Partner's attention?

What do I hope none of my Accountability Partners ask me about?

When it comes to my habitual sins, is there a time of day, a place, a person, or a mood that tends to open the door to more tempting situations?

What good habit do I believe God wants to form in my life? Have I taken specific steps to develop that habit?

What am I praying for? Have I received any specific answers to my prayers?

How can my Accountability Partner(s) pray for me?



Appendix C

All the One-Anothers

The New Testament uses the word ἀλλήλων (allēlōn) which means “one another” and carries the idea of mutuality or reciprocity. This word is used many times in the New Testament to describe the relationships we are meant to have in the body of Christ.

Positive Commands:

- Earnestly love one another as Christ loved us (John 13:34-35; 15:12,17; Romans 13:8; 1 Thessalonians 3:12; 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:3; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11,23; 4:7,11-12; 2 John 1:5).
- Wash one another's feet (John 13:14).
- Be at peace with one another (Mark 9:50).
- Be devoted to one another with genuine brotherly affection (Romans 12:10).
- Outdo one another in showing preference and honor to each other (Romans 12:10).
- Be of the same mind and live in harmony with one another (Romans 12:16; 15:5).
- Mutually edify one another (Romans 14:19).
- Welcome, accept, and receive one another as Christ accepted you (Romans 15:7).
- Admonish and instruct one another (Romans 15:14).
- Greet one another with a holy kiss / kiss of love (Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 16:20; 2 Corinthians 13:12; 1 Peter 5:14).

- Wait for one another when you come together to eat (1 Corinthians 11:33).
- Have the same care for one another (1 Corinthians 12:25).
- Serve one another in love (Galatians 5:13).
- Bear one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2).
- Patiently bear with one another (Ephesians 4:2; Colossians 3:13).
- Be kind and compassionate to one another (Ephesians 4:32).
- Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21).
- Esteem one another as more significant than yourselves (Philippians 2:3).
- Encourage and comfort one another with eternal truths (1 Thessalonians 4:18; 5:11).
- Strive to do what is good to one another (1 Thessalonians 5:15).
- Consider one another, how to motivate each other unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24).
- Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16).
- Pray for one another (James 5:16).
- Be hospitable to one another (1 Peter 4:9).
- Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another (1 Peter 5:5).
- Have fellowship with one another by walking in the light (1 John 1:7).

Negative Commands:

- Seek honor from God, not just from one another (John 5:44).
- Do not judge or condemn one another (Romans 14:13).
- Do not bite and devour one another (Galatians 5:15).

- Do not provoke or be jealous of one another (Galatians 5:26).
- Do not lie to one another (Colossians 3:9).
- Do not slander one another (James 4:11).
- Do not grumble and complain against one another (James 5:9).