

## Under Siege – Repelling the assaults!

Dear Member,

I am guessing that right now you are probably chewing your fingernails and feeling close to despair. Your body is ablaze with irritations and all you want to do is scratch. If not...then it will be soon. This is not a statement to make you feel impending doom, just a reality check. As a veteran soldier in the campaign against sexual addiction, I have had to fight many of these temptation sieges. They are never easy and they are always hard to overcome. They creep up on you and often leave you fed up and desperate. Many times, I have given in and let the enemy overrun my defensive walls and enter my soul. If you let that occur, you have little chance of survival...

### **NOW IS THE TIME TO BATTEN DOWN THE HATCHES AND KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN**

If you have been following this program then you will have felt the joy of early success and the freedom from your cravings. Well done for persevering and well done for committing to prayer. You are starting to enjoy the benefit of God's grace and it feels great! However, beware. You may be thinking that you 'have it licked'. Do not be so presumptuous. This is how the devil deceives us back to sin. So do not stop your prayer routine – in fact, my recommendation is to increase it.



Say to yourself right now, ***“I am an addict and I must never let my shield down”*** (Do this daily)

It is important to understand that all you need to do right now is 'hold out'. This phase of recovery is about defence and strengthening your shields and armour. There is nothing complicated or new in this process – it just requires determination and perseverance. In my experience, you will encounter numerous assaults over the coming weeks, but importantly, the ferocity of them will diminish as your brain starts the process of healing. (More of this in a later unit)

### How can I stop the water getting in?

Before we can hope to understand why we use pornography or have lustful thoughts we must make sure we stay afloat. As with a land siege, it is no different at sea in a raging storm. In this unit, I will concentrate our attention to identifying the danger from 'leaks' and how to stop them. Up until now we all have used prayer and 'hiding from the internet' as our defence from sin. I would guess you already realise that this is not enough...

Over the years, we have developed patterns of behaviour and seemingly harmless routines. It could be the route and time we drive to work or other places. It may be the occasions that we watch TV or other media streaming services. Perhaps you always insist on doing the shopping for your family or picking up the kids from their activity. Do you carry out certain activities alone or late at night?

All of these decisions are choices; and to others may appear harmless. However, I know that many of my choices allowed me the 'unexpected' opportunity for lustful thoughts or encounters. Addicts tell themselves half-truths and lies. Addicts live in a sea of permission givers and compromise. We struggle to be honest with others and we are never honest with ourselves. We are selfish!

*So what were some of my selfish 'leaky' choices?*

Leak No. 1:

I would insist that I did the shopping to allow my wife time to rest. Noble and charitable sentiments I would tell myself. What I did not admit to her was that shopping *also* allowed me the opportunity to look down the women's clothing aisle. I did not have to buy anything; the anticipation alone was enough to cause me to think lustfully of the item.

Leak No. 2:

Shopping also gave rise to regular 'accidental' opportunities to look lustfully at women who attracted my attention by what they wore. This in turn caused me to consider leak no. 1 again – if I had managed to overcome it the first time.



Leak No. 3:

Driving to and from work at a certain time when I knew I would see women wearing the clothes that gave me lustful thoughts.

Leak No. 4:

Watching harmless media that I knew contained women wearing clothes that gave me lustful thoughts. It is worth noting that this does not include pornography or adult rated TV.

Leak No. 5:

Allowing myself time to daydream and sleep late – knowing I would have lustful thoughts that were 'outside my control'?

Leak No. 6:

I would regularly stay up later than everybody else to use the internet. Later claiming that I had urgent work to finish.

Leak No. 7:

I would look at women's clothing on eBay or other internet shopping sites. Convincing myself that I was only testing my success at avoiding the sin...

*Moreover, the leaks just keep on coming...*

Clearly, these leaks are specific to my sexual addiction. In my circumstances, any thoughts about a certain item of women's clothing will start a chain of events that eventually ends in me watching pornography or conducting other sinful activity. **Having the internet blocked does not affect this – it just limits the most obvious and easiest sin.**

Meticulous Examination of your day:

If you do not take a rigorous look at your daily life, you will not defeat this addiction. Blocking the internet is only the beginning – it will not stop your sins. In the early stages of recovery we must first be clear on what ‘triggers us’ into lustful thoughts. These are your leaks and must be found and stopped before you end up sinking. Using my leaks as the example, I will talk you through the changes I had to make:

- I avoid shopping alone and always say a Hail Mary when I am near the women’s section
- I shop at a time I know family are around to see what I have purchased
- I take custody of my eyes when I see something that attracts me – ‘Bounce my eyes away’
- I never allow my gaze to remain on a woman for more than 1 second
- I never take a ‘second look’
- I imagine myself delivering a scourging blow to Jesus when encountering lustful thoughts
- I go to bed early or at the same time as others
- Not driving around when I know there is a greater chance of seeing ‘that item’ of clothing
- Using the family computer in public view and never deleting internet history
- Contacting my peer support anytime I am in ‘peril’.
- Never sleeping in and waking from lustful dreams to pray (if I am aware and can)
- I allow my family to know my risks (not to be recommended in early stages of recovery)



This examination must be thorough and be conducted each evening before going to bed until you have properly identified all your leaks and put in place a practical solution. When a solution is not obvious then you must ensure you have a secondary defence such as prayer, ‘eye bounce’ or an effective ‘self-talk’ aid/image. (Scourging Jesus)

What happens if this does not work?

There is no point telling you that you will succeed on your first, second or even third attempt. That is why Our Lord made it clear that he will never stop forgiving us. If it were that easy, you would not be reading this guide.

- As soon as you have fallen to temptation, pick yourself back up, get down on your knees, and say an Act of Contrition.
- Beg of God’s forgiveness and thank him for giving you the humility to know you cannot do this alone.
- Notify your peer support to obtain the prayers of this fellowship group.
- Then, most importantly, review how and where you stumbled. If it was because of a known leak then look at the defence, you are using to combat it. It clearly does not work so ask for advice from your peers.
- Identify if the failure was accidental or deliberate.
- Recognise that you fell because you did not call for peer support early enough!

If it was a *deliberate choice* then no amount of defences will help you avoid the occasion of sin. Your first action with addiction is to have a firm resolution to amend your ways. Without that, we cannot help you. Failure is not the problem with addiction – despair is.

To complete this unit:

1. You must always be prepared to repel the assaults of temptation
2. You must never stop using your prayer routine
3. You must carry out a meticulous examination of your day to identify all known leaks
4. Put in place appropriate defensive measures to reduce/stop these leaks (seek advice if necessary)
5. Maintain daily contact with your support, regardless of your success or failure
6. Be willing to discuss your progress at group Crypt Chat sessions and be a positive example to others
7. Never forget that all of us have fallen and probably will do again – leave pride with the devil
8. Make sure you have kept up to date with all previous homework

**We will be discussing all of your leaks during the next session so please take the time to reflect on the things you do that may have a motivation linked to sexual sins.**



**In the next unit, we will be looking at how we can fill our days with meaningful activity.  
So start considering the things that interest you most...and do them! 😊**

**VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE!**