

Walking in the Light

Leader's Guide

Helping others walk in the light.

This is a simple guide to help you effectively lead a *Walking in the Light* Group. Presented below are some principles that have been found as helpful when leading this specific study.

Experience has shown that about 85% of the men who go through this study CAN experience great progress in overcoming sexually compulsive behavior. There are some who can, but aren't ready to be broken. Others may not take the study seriously enough. But for those whose heart is in the right place, and who are willing to invest the time and vulnerability required for the study, we're seeing great movement.

Starting the Study:

- This study is designed for men aged 18-25. There is a version for older men called *Into the Light*. Women could use these studies and find great value but as a leader, you'd need to do a bit of work beforehand to explain the feminine side of the equation. There is a version for women calling *Living in the Light*. All three are available for purchase from the People Resources Team of The Navigators. They come with a spiral binding and a heavier cover so are more durable and are very handy. To order any of the three, contact Diane at diane.sevcik@navigator.org.
- This is not a study where people can join in on any given week. It requires commitment to one another and evokes some very deep sharing. Having a newcomer in the group might feel like a serious compromise of the safety of the group. If there are others who want to join in, your best bet would be to start another group. (This is called a closed group rather than an open group.)
- The study is a 14-week commitment for participants.
- People have successfully used the study where participants prepare in advance and also when they do the study together in a group, discussing as they go. Of course, prior preparation will net a greater result, but both ways have had very positive effects. The latter chapters require prior preparation, however.
- As a leader, experience has shown that it is helpful to set right expectations: *"I am deeply committed to helping you. But, I will not work harder than you at addressing the situation. I will work at making this group a safe place to share the details of your story. You will not be forced to share anything you don't want to share. But much of the benefit of this experience is not in the material you learn but in the freedom of being real. Dave Legg is fond of saying "Truth does not transform. But truth that is trusted transforms."*

Leading the study:

1. At some point each week, it might be good to ask each person or at least a few people to share how they did at walking in the light over the last week. This creates an atmosphere of open sharing and even confessing. If someone does share a failure, you might ask if others fell in this

area. Then have a time of prayer. – James 5:16: *Confess your sins to each other and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.* This can be scary, but it's the single most important thing someone can do – talk about their struggle with someone else, getting into the light, out of the shadows.

- To begin the study the first week, you might want to ask everyone, *“When was the first time you saw pornography?”* Share your story and then let others share. Some may not be ready. That's okay. Once everyone has shared, then share your own current struggle (see #4). You might start it by saying, *“The last time I looked at pornography (or one of its cousins) was...”* (even if what you looked at was rather “tame” in comparison to what others might be struggling with). Then, have another person ready to share (who's been seriously struggling with porn and masturbation) to be ready to share VERY vulnerably. Set it up with that person in advance. This sets a tone for coming weeks.
- In later weeks, you might have a quick “check in”, where everyone gives a brief report. Or you can ask *“Does anyone have any sexual struggle or sin to confess?”* But be careful here, you don't want the group to dissolve into a place where guys share repeated failure just to clear their conscience.

2. Experience has shown that when people share about struggles and failures, that vagueness doesn't bring them into the light like a detailed explanation of what happened. So, “I struggled Saturday night,” just isn't enough. You might ask things like:

- a. *“Tell us what you did.”*
- b. *“Did you struggle and win or struggle and fall?”*
- c. *“What specifically did you look at?”*
- d. *“How long were you looking?”*
- e. *“Did you do it just this once or were there other times?”*
- f. *“Did you masturbate afterwards?”*
- g. *“Are you okay with that?”*

Don't back off! While this feels very intrusive, it's been found that this level of honesty is necessary for someone to really feel they have come into the light. Allowing euphemisms allows people to discretely lie.

3. People won't go where you personally are not going. The study requires frank vulnerability by each participant, including you. You'll need to come prepared to share the depths of your soul. This kind of sharing will create a safe place where others will know they too can share at that deep level.
4. Don't feel you have similar struggles to those in your study? If you've never looked at Internet pornography, praise God. But where have you struggled? Movies, young girls at the mall, the beach, newspaper advertising inserts, whatever. Share where you do struggle and it will become evident that you'll be able to handle other's struggles. You can also share of struggles from your past. Particularly if you struggled when you were at the age of the people in your study, struggles from your past can also help people feel you'll be safe to open up with. Lastly, if you've never struggled in the area of sexual purity (I have never met a man like that, but you never know) you might then share struggles in other areas where you've had chronic struggles – anger,

selfishness, fear, pride, etc. Sharing an ongoing or compulsive struggle in another area can also communicate that you'll understand about compulsive sexual behaviors.

5. At one point, you'll be asked to share about your own personal sexual fantasies. This can be quite embarrassing, but is necessary to get to the depths of the heart issues. You're encouraged to share vulnerably as a group leader for your own benefit and to encourage others to do the same. (Each man's fantasy life has recurring themes. Being able to identify the theme will shed light on the "need" or insecurity the man is trying to fill.)
6. As we lead people through the study, they often have a deeper issue that is opening the door to failure in the area of purity. The purity struggle is often just the symptom. As you encounter underlying issues such as insecurity, poor stress management skills, anger towards God, to name just a few, you as the leader can help a person name their issues. In assisting and/or encouraging that person to get help with the underlying issues, the purity area often begins to resolve itself. There is something powerful about naming the underlying issues so the person can bring them into the light as well as their outward behaviors.
7. Don't minimize the seriousness of the problem. Someone might say, "It was a good week, I only looked at porn and masturbated once." You might gently say, "*Well, that is improvement but what else made this a good week?*" They then have to think about how not giving themselves to porn can free them up to have more energy to live responsibly and relate more freely to others, which is real growth and ministry. There is a time to celebrate the progress that has been made but you don't want the participants to feel like they are coming each week to be graded and/or receive shallow affirmation.
8. If you're struggling on the computer, whether it's YouTube or Google or things far more serious, you would be well blessed to get an accountability program like COVENANT EYES. And put it on your phone and all other electronic devices with access to the internet.
9. If you have the bandwidth, you might want to ask, one on one, the nature of the porn someone is using. One-on-one; because you don't want to educate to evil other members of the group. Naked women, same-sex, bestiality, violence, and so on. BEWARE! Don't ask for specific websites. You yourself may be tempted.
10. Finally, Appendix 3 is about Healing Prayer. This is an aspect of the study that can be used if you like. Experience has shown that using healing prayer to address underlying issues that come up often greatly accelerates the progress made in breaking free from both these underlying issues and from consequent sexual issues. Healing Prayer has been placed at the end of the study because it is a good recap of many of the things the men have shared about their lives. But it also gives God a chance to speak to some of the men who still have memories or activities that keep them enslaved to their sin. Some do the healing prayer inventory as a group but for the men that have a list of things that God has brought to mind they schedule time to pray alone with each man because the healing prayer process takes a block of time and you don't have enough time in the study. You can use the guide Facilitating Healing Prayer (free from The

Navigators PRT) or contact PRT for a list of people who might be available to come to your location and conduct the healing prayer.)