GUARDING THE AVENUES TO THE SOUL

Lasting Pleasure

November 2, 2019

1 PREPARING

A. THE SOURCE

1 John 2:16, 17 (NASB) • “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

2 Timothy 2:22 (NASB) • “Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.”

Romans 6:12-14 (NKJV) • “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.”

Galatians 5:19-21 (NASB) • “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Numbers 15:39 (NIV) • “You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes.”

Job 31:1 (NIV) • “I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.”

Matthew 5:28 (NIV) • “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Colossians 3:5 (NIV) • “Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.”

1 John 2:16 (NIV) • “For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world.”

Exodus 20:14 (NIV) • “You shall not commit adultery.”

Psalm 51:1 (NIV) • “Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.”

B. WHAT’S TO BE SAID ABOUT “GUARDING THE AVENUES TO THE SOUL”

The importance of this lesson is to help your
young people understand the moral principles and standards that God has given us. God wants us to be morally pure and holy. These principles and standards are for our good. They will help us to lead pure and holy lives. God is always with us to help us overcome our sinful natures and guide us on the path of righteousness.

As you will see as you progress through the lesson, just because we desire something does not mean we should do it or have it. You’ll see this demonstrated in the life of King David.

The opposite is true as well, and when we follow God and allow Him to lead in our lives, we’ll experience great things as revealed in the story of Joseph.

Within our human nature we experience desires (longings, wants, passions, etc.). Some are good, and some are not so good.

We want our students to personally be able to identify God’s plan for their lives. And when they know God’s plan, they will be able to spot Satan’s counterfeit right away. Guarding the avenues to our heart and mind is an important life lesson with eternal consequences.

C. WHERE WE’RE GOING WITH “GUARDING THE AVENUES TO THE SOUL”

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:
1. Understand that desires and passions are something we all deal with.
2. Learn to listen to God’s instructions so as not to fall into sin.
3. Reinforce the idea that intimacy within the boundaries of marriage is a God-given gift.

D. MATERIALS NEEDED

Beginning • (Activity A) pens, papers, pencils; chalkboard, whiteboard or flipchart; (Activity B) Lay’s potato chips, drinks (optional).

Connecting • Bibles, student lessons.

Applying • Paper and pencils.
Go • When they have had enough time to address each of the items on their papers, have them share their commercials with the group. There should be a lot of overlap, but that is OK. Make sure each group gets to share at least one unique answer for one of the items.

Debriefing • Ask: How many of these commercials overtly used beautiful young people in order to drive the consumer to purchase the product? What are some ways we can use discernment when exposed to images, sounds, and other materials in the media? Why do you think God wants us to guard the avenues to our souls? How important is it for you to guard against material that would have a negative impact on your morality and character?

B. BEGINNING ACTIVITY

Get ready • Have your room set up with small tables if possible. Have a bag of Lay’s potato chips on each table. As the students arrive, allow them each to eat just one chip.

Get set • Make some small talk and announcements after they have eaten their one chip. Then remind them that a potato chip company makes the claim “Bet you can’t eat just one!” Then move on to either the first activity, or some more announcements. You want the students to either really need another potato chip or at least a drink of water, which you should not let them have.

Go • Refer back to the potato chips and talk about what it means to really desire something.

Debriefing • Ask: What does it mean to “lust after” something? Is this a healthy desire, or an unhealthy desire? (You could perhaps talk about the need to quench the thirst as being the healthy desire, and the desire for more chips as the unhealthy desire.)

C. BEGINNING ILLUSTRATION

In your own words, tell the following story.

(This is a personal story, so if you have one that is similar, feel free to be transparent with the kids. Your story is the most important one of all!)

I first came into contact with lust when I was in fourth grade. I know that seems early, but it happened. I still shudder to think of it to this day. My best friend came to school on this one particular day, and he had something that I had never seen before. He had a metal lunch box. It was something to behold! You see, I am sure that I had coveted things before in my nine years of life, but this was something completely different! I wanted to have that lunch box—no, I had to have it! I remember when he would go out to play after lunch and leave his lunch box by the bike rack at school that I would look at it for a long time before I went out to play along with him.

It was tough dealing with this new emotion. I had never wanted something so badly in my life. I knew my parents wouldn’t be buying me one of these lunch boxes; they thought that brown bags were good enough. One time, my mom tried to draw a picture on the bag to make me feel better, but stick figures on a brown bag are nothing like the painted metal of a lunch box! I was doomed to be in a state of lust for a while, until my interests moved on, which they eventually did. But I learned some valuable lessons from this experience. What do you think they are?

Debriefing • Ask: Have you ever desired something so much that the feelings threatened to take over your life? What was it? When? Have you ever thought about it in the context of idolatry? Could we be giving things a false importance in our lives?

A. CONNECTING TO THE KINGDOM

Present the following ideas in your own words:

Let’s take a couple of examples from the
B. CONNECTING TO THE LESSON

ILLUSTRATION

Ask someone beforehand to read or tell the story from Sabbath’s section of the lesson.

Ask: How does self-pleasure affect us? What do the words “self-pleasure” mean to you? (Selfish, selfishness, thinking only of self)

How can we be temperate in the things we enjoy?

C. CONNECTING TO LIFE

Pose the following scenario:

What would you do if you found yourself in the same type of situation that David was in? Would you stay and watch? How would you react to someone like Potiphar’s wife? Would you walk away? In circumstances like Joseph’s, why is it important to run and get as far away as possible? What principles should guide your decisions?

5 APPLYING

A. APPLICATION ACTIVITY

Give each student a piece of paper and have them write down the following:

>> What is your favorite dessert?
>> What is your favorite entrée?
>> What is your favorite video game?
>> What is your favorite class?
>> What is your favorite sport?

After they have answered each question, bring them together for a discussion about moderation in all things. It is important to bring them to an understanding that all of these things are good when done in moderation.

Share the following ideas in your own words:

One of God’s best gifts to humankind is the gift of marriage. He created human beings as moral agents who have the freedom to choose. Physical intimacy is a gift from God reserved
solely for the marriage union between a man and a woman. God calls us to live morally pure lives when we are single as well as when we get married. A single person is exercising his or her moral power in harmony with God’s will when he or she avoids and abstains from engaging in any activity that would encourage immoral thoughts or actions. Such a person, much like Joseph, will allow the love for God to prevail over any other desire and will abide by principles of moral integrity at all times and places.

Any desire can become all-consuming. Genesis 4:7 says, “If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it” (NKJV). We were not created to give in to any and all whims or urges that come our way. We are to be mindful and aware of what we are watching and doing. Everything we watch, listen to, or experience should be measured based on God’s standard for our lives. God knows what is best for us, and He is waiting for us to call on Him and allow Him to lead in our lives (see Proverbs 29:11-13, NKJV).

Debriefing • Ask: How do you think you can go about guarding yourselves from the pictures and music in the media? What can you do to help one another be faithful to God’s call of purity in your lives? Is there a way to get your parents involved in this, or would that be too embarrassing? Do you think you can handle these emotions and feelings all by yourselves?

Say: Remember, there is always help from a pastor, a teacher, a parent, or even a friend. But above all else, we have a God who seeks for His people to be happy and pure so that they can live without regret and in healthy relationships. God wants this for you. He is not out to keep you from something good. He knows how much better life can be when we make good decisions.

Follow up with the following questions:

B. APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. What’s the difference between the world’s way and God’s way?
2. What are some practical ways for dealing with the media?
3. What are some things you can do to safeguard the avenues to your soul?

SUMMARY

In your own words, conclude with the following ideas:

Remember, Satan loves to take that which is pure and holy and distort it any way he can. He offers counterfeits of all of the wonderful gifts God has blessed us with.

When FBI agents are trained to look for counterfeit money, do you know what they study? They never look at or touch a counterfeit bill. The only bills they ever examine and get to know are genuine bills. They become so familiar with authentic bills that they are able to spot a counterfeit quickly.

It is the same for us. We do not need to study Satan’s counterfeits to know what is real. What type of life do you want? Do you want to spend your time watching and listening to what the world has to offer, or do you want to become more like Jesus? God’s Word assures us that by beholding we become transformed. Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us: “But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (NKJV).

“It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence” (Ellen G. White, The Great Controversy, p. 555).

By spending time studying God’s Word, we will learn about the plan God has given us to live pure, healthy, and happy lives. Won’t you commit to living your life according to God’s plan and see where God will lead you?
Sabbath FOR STUDY

» Memory Text: “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age” (Titus 2:11, 12, NASB).

» Our Beliefs, no. 7, The Nature of Humanity: “Man and woman were made in the image of God. . . . When our first parents disobeyed God, . . . the image of God in them was marred. . . . Their descendants share this fallen nature and its consequences. They are born with weaknesses and tendencies to evil. But God in Christ reconciled the world to Himself and by His Spirit restores in penitent mortals the image of their Maker.”

» Ellen G. White, Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 62

LASTING PLEASURE

Researchers at a prestigious Eastern university researched motivation factors in monkeys. Choosing a male monkey for the experiment, they placed him in a cage and began a process of carefully recorded observations. They observed the monkey’s eating, sleeping, and mating patterns. They watched how this monkey cared for his young.

They then hooked an electrode to the monkey’s brain, which, when stimulated, would give the monkey a sensation of pleasure. The researcher taught the monkey how to push the pleasure button. The monkey now had the key to happiness—a pleasure button.

The monkey soon became obsessed with pleasure, ignoring his young, his food, and even his mate. The highest goal for the monkey was pleasure, stimulating the nerve endings, doing what made him feel good. Finally he knocked himself out having fun. The excessive stimulation killed the monkey.

Sin is an awful lot like the monkey’s pleasure button. It does produce an illusion of pleasure. If it didn’t, nobody would do it. The problem is that the pleasure is not only short-lived; it is destructive.

Moses chose rather “to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin” (Hebrews 11:25, NKJV). Sin’s pleasures pass quickly, leaving us empty. When the bubble bursts, discouragement floods the soul. Fortunately, Jesus’ joy is eternal. God’s deep, inner joy lasts. The psalmist called God his “exceeding joy” (Psalm 43:4, NKJV). Isaiah testifies that God will give us the “oil of joy for mourning” (Isaiah 61:3, NKJV). Jeremiah called God’s Word “the joy and rejoicing of my heart” (Jeremiah 15:16, NKJV). Jesus says that His joy remains in us (John 15:11). Paul prays that his readers will be filled with “all joy and peace in believing” (Romans 15:13, NKJV). James says we can even “count it all joy” when we have trials (James 1:2, NKJV).

When our Lord returns, He will say, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faith-
ful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord” (Matthew 25:21, NKJV).

Our Lord offers much more than a temporary, short-lived, illusionary pleasure. He offers the deep, lasting joy of His presence now and through all eternity. One thing is certain—there is no joy like this joy anywhere.—Mark Finley, Solid Ground, pp. 249, 250.

Sunday
RESPONDING

» Read 1 John 2:16, 17.

» Here’s the situation: A friend brings a questionable magazine to school one day. It gets passed around to both girls and guys. Because everyone is a little curious and a little afraid, no one throws it away. Finally, it comes to you.

» A similar situation, but this time you are on the internet while some friends are at your house. Your computer is somewhere where your parents aren’t necessarily going to come by, so the choice is up to you. What do you do?

Monday
BIBLE ANSWERS
ON THE NATURE OF HUMANITY

» Read Psalm 51:5, 10; Ephesians 2:1-3; 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.

» Even though we are born with the propensity or tendency to sin, God sent His Son to save us from evil tendencies and from sin.

» What tendency do you need to overcome by God’s power? Ask Him to help you overcome it.

» Fill in the blanks.

“_______ Your face from_______
_______, and _________ _________
_______ _________ _________.
_______ in _________ a _________
_______, O God, and _________ a
_______ _________ _________ me.
Do _________ cast me _________
_______ _________ _________, and do
_______ _________ Your _________
_______ _________ _________.
_______ to me the _________ of Your
_______, and _________ me _________
_______ _________ _________” (Psalm 51:9-12, NKJV).

Tuesday
REFLECTING

» Read 2 Timothy 2:22.

» It’s important to deal with the issue of lust before we get into an overpowering situation. Jesus tells us in His sermon on the mount (Matthew 5) that we should stay as far away from sin as we can. How do we do this when what causes our sinful desires are things we see all around us? Do we have to walk around this world with blinders on? Guys are especially susceptible to this. For some reason, guys are wired so that what they see has a big effect on them. However, girls are not exempt from temptation from the eyes. It gives both guys and girls a great deal of responsibility when dealing with printed material, images, and each other.

» Girls, watch what you wear! Guys, make sure to guard yourselves against images that tear down the value of women in your eyes. Remember, every image you see represents a person who somehow found themselves in a less-than-ideal situation. But also remember that each person is a child of God and
needs to be respected as such.

**Wednesday**

**BIBLE INSIGHTS**

» Fill each blank with the word from the correct Bible text. If you don’t have some of these Bible versions at home, you can find them at BibleGateway.com.

1. Galatians 5:19-21 says: “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are:
   ________, ________, ________, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, ________, factions, ________, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (NASB).

2. First John 2:16, 17 tells us: “For all that is in the world, the ______ of the ______ and the ______ of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and also its ______; but the one who does the will of God lives forever” (NASB).

3. In Romans 6:12-14 we find: “Therefore do not let _____ reign in your mortal body, that you should ______ it in its ______. And do not present your members as instruments of ________ to sin, but present yourselves to ________ as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under ________ but under ________” (NKJV).

4. Titus 2:11, 12 says this: “For the grace of _____ has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ________ us to ________ ungodliness and worldly ________ and to live ________, ________ and ________ in the present age” (NASB).


6. In Colossians 3:5 we find this advice: “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, ________, ________, and greed, which amounts to idolatry” (NASB).

**Thursday**

**CONNECTING**

» Read Galatians 5:1.

» Review the memory text.

» Because Satan likes to tempt us with things that are attractive to us, we need to guard ourselves against things we are drawn to by nature, but that we know are not of God. Therefore, there are many safeguards we can place in our way so we don’t inadvertently come across those images. We can put guards on our computers (have friends or family do it so you can’t get by the password). Don’t go into situations in which you might be tempted; stay away from things that take our minds away from God and spiritual matters. While you may not think that this pertains to you, you will be surprised at how you become assaulted with unhealthy situations either from the media, the internet, or even with real live people.

» What we look at and listen to affects us. The things we spend our time on is what becomes a part of us. If we spend our time and energy on things of this world, we will little by little become more like the world. And when we take that same time and energy and look at Jesus, we will become more like Him.
“It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 555).

The good news is that God can be with you in every situation and wants you to be victorious over sin. Remember, Galatians 5:1 says: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery” (NIV). Just remember that what Satan makes seem like freedom to do what feels good actually becomes a yoke that can ruin our lives and that we can’t get out from under by ourselves.

**Friday**

**APPLYING**

Read Romans 6:12-14.

Take time to log your activities for a day. Is there a time when you have nothing to do? Are you bored a great deal? Are you without enough to do so that you drift to things that are not of God? Take this sheet or make one of your own and log all the different things you do in a day and see where your time is spent.

**ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:**

Was there time that I wasted? Was it planned, or did it just happen?

What volunteer organizations could use my help in my spare time?

What do I give back to God in my spare time?

What books could I read that I thought I didn’t have the time to?

Whom could I spend time with that would enhance my relationship with others and with God?

What could I have done in those times that would have been more productive?
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