



Hey Students!

Welcome. I am so glad you are here today. Amidst all the busyness you have going on, I'm thankful you came today so we can set our focus on the thing that matters most: Jesus! He is the one who makes everything else make sense. He is our joy, our comfort, and our strength.

Today we are going to be starting a 4-part series of messages through the book of Proverbs. It's a heavy one, but I think it's going to be so practical to your life and the lives of your friends—so bring somebody with you next week! The series is called “Temporary High.” Say it with me!

Now, is anyone ready to hear an embarrassing story?

[Leader Note: Tell an embarrassing story about yourself here about a time you were at a party, did something illegal, or simply did something stupid and foolish for the thrill of it.]

How many of you know that sin can be fun? The thrill is fun. The attention is fun. The high is fun. The release feels good. Until you can't stop.

[Put up the slide of the ocean]

Imagine with me the ocean for a second, would you? Imagine the sun, the sound of the waves, the cool water, the jellyfish, the sand. I love the first step into the sand. I love taking a run down by the shore. I like seeing kids building sandcastles. But let me tell you something.

[Pull out your tray of sand and start putting it all over the stage.]

I don't like sand in my bathtub. Or in my carpet. Or in my hair. Or in my bed. Eww, that is the worst.

Let me connect the dots for you. I think God made us to be thrill seekers: people who look for pleasure, for physical highs, for emotional pleasure. He made our brains capable of experiencing a runner's high or experiencing an orgasm. GASP.

And when those God-given physical and emotional appetites are in their proper place, it's THE BEST. Just like sand on the beach next to the ocean, not in my bed or my bathtub is THE BEST.

God is not down on thrills or emotional elation or sex, so long as they are in their proper place, under the proper authority, treating our bodies and others' bodies as the temples they are to the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NLT)

“Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.”

These things are God-given. It's when we are seeking pleasure outside God's design, and for the purpose of self-gratification or hiding our pain, that God says “woah, woah, that's sand in your bed, bro. It's no good for you. Long term, you aren't going to like where that takes you.”

The problem is that nowadays, saying someone is acting foolishly with the choices they are making with their bodies is going to get you cancelled quick. But I want to contend with you today, straight from the mouth of God through Solomon in the book of Proverbs, please don't cancel me if something I say over the next 4 weeks offends you. Check out **Proverbs 3:11-12 (NLT)**, *“My child, don't reject the LORD's discipline, and don't be upset when he corrects you. For the LORD corrects those he loves, just as a father corrects a child in whom he delights.”*

I love you. God loves you. We want you to thrive in life. We want you to enjoy a proverbial lifetime by the beach. Like I said, Solomon wrote a lot of warnings to his children about these things long before there was even electricity and flushing toilets.

Check out this first “temporary high” with me.

Proverbs 7:6-27 (NLT)

“While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain, I saw some naïve young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense. He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house. It was twilight, in the evening, as deep

darkness fell. The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart. She was the brash rebellious type, never content to stay at home. She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner. She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a brazen look she said, 'I've just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows. You're the one I was looking for! I came out to find you, and here you are! My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of Egyptian linen. I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning. Let's enjoy each other's caresses, for my husband is not home. He's away on a long trip. He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won't return until later this month.' So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery. He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap, awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life. So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path. For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims. Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death."

Although Solomon isn't directly talking about it because it didn't exist back then, lust did. So, let's talk about pornography today, since that's an easy temporary high to start our series off with, right? I'm just kidding about it being an easy one to talk about. But we need to talk about it.

I want to start by addressing the elephant in the room that many of you, guys and girls, have seen pornography or heard talk about porn, and you may have liked it. If you haven't, hallelujah!!! You do not want that sand in your bed.

Here are some thoughts or ideas you might associate with porn:

You know deep down that it's wrong on multiple levels. It's addictive. You feel trapped. It's degrading to the people who are part of it. It affects your own view of people in your life. It is a major distraction, and you know God doesn't like it, and you feel terrible about it.

Or, maybe you think that because you aren't engaging sexually with another person IRL, it's not as bad. You may think it doesn't affect anyone but you. You don't realize now that it does affect you and your future

relationships and your ability to experience pleasure in a committed relationship without outside stimuli. The more you see, the cringier porn you need to find. You don't see how it is connected with sexual abuse and human trafficking and degrading the infinite worth and value of all humans.

Or, maybe you experience a lot of shame surrounding pornography. You feel like you are dirty. You can't forget what you saw. Maybe someone else showed it to you and you are angry at them for that. Maybe you were even taken advantage of with it. As a result, you experience anxiety and self-loathing alongside of what may or may not now be an addiction or other sexual fantasies you wouldn't have struggled with otherwise. If this is the case for you, please talk with your parents, me, or with your small group leader. We want to help you to understand that this was not your fault and that there is healing for you. Christian trauma-informed counseling is a powerful thing. And so is justice through the legal system.

And maybe for you, it's not pornography. You can hardly sit in your seat because you are so uncomfortable right now. Let God soften your heart to not judge others and to be a warning for you of the trap that it is, so that you stay away from it.

And for many of you, you may not look at pornography regularly, but you are fantasizing about others in your mind for that same sexual pleasure. Your hormones are on full throttle as a teenager, and you simply don't know what to do with them in a godly way.

Well, I have good news for each one of you. There is hope. Pornography and perversions of God's good gift of sex do not get the last word in your life.

[Leader Note: Tell a story here about your personal struggle with addictions and how the gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection have given you hope. Don't give too much detail, but just enough vulnerability to show students that they are not alone.]

Here's what you must hear if you do not hear anything else! I'm going to read this quote from the book *Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers* by Dane Ortlund, "Jesus deals **gently** and **only gently** with **all** sinners **who come to him, irrespective of their particular offense** and just how **heinous** it is. What elicits **tenderness** from Jesus is

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