



Understanding Triggers

FLESH SERIES

“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and He will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation He will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”

—Ephesians 6:16, NLT

We often have difficulty identifying the escape that God provides in our temptation. In the moment, we can be so close to giving in to sin that it’s hard to see a way out. Often, God provides a series of escapes from sin during or before our temptation; we just need to take steps to identify them. Identifying and understanding triggers will be crucial for you in the battle against lust.

IDENTIFYING TRIGGERS (From Living Free¹)

A great resource called “Living Free” mentions mapping out things that trigger your sexual arousal so that you can prepare yourself for responding to the situations that set you up. Anything in life can become sexually arousing because, throughout experiences in life, we can associate certain things with sexuality. For example, someone who begins to masturbate as a way to escape his feelings of anger or rejection will often become aroused in the future when those feelings are triggered. This exercise will give you the ability to identify the specific things that trigger your arousal.

Locations (e.g., home alone, bathrooms, student union building)

Sensations (e.g., laying on my stomach, vibrations, being touched)

Body Types (e.g., skinny, short, curvy)

Personality Types (e.g., outgoing, dominant, passive, quiet)

Culture (e.g., older women, school girls, feminine men)

Feelings (e.g., anger, fear, stress, sadness)

1. Look at the body types, personality types and types of individuals that you find triggering. Are there past experiences that may be related to why these are triggering? Look back to the examples of John, Mark and Tim in the lesson.

MY ESCAPE PLAN (Living Free²)

Now that you have identified these triggers in your life come up with a plan of action for specific patterns of arousal that are consistent. This plan will help you clearly identify the escapes that God provides in your temptation.

1. What consistent patterns of arousal do you face? For example, I often find myself aroused when I go to the gym and see tall, slim blonde women. I can find myself aroused when I am home alone. When I'm stressed or angry, I can be particularly vulnerable to temptation.

- A.
- B.
- C.

2. For each of the above patterns, list out concrete steps to take the escape that God provides. For example, I'll reach out to my friend Matt if there's a woman near me at the gym who shares the traits I find arousing. I'll remove myself from being able to see her and remind myself what unmet needs I'm sexualizing by wanting to lust after her. Then, I'll turn to Psalm 145:16 and the Holy Spirit for strength.

- A.
- B.
- C.

¹Ben Bennett, Brett Butcher, Ted Roberts Living Free (Pure Desire Ministries International, 2016), 165.

²Ben Bennett, Brett Butcher, Ted Roberts Living Free (Pure Desire Ministries International, 2016), 165.