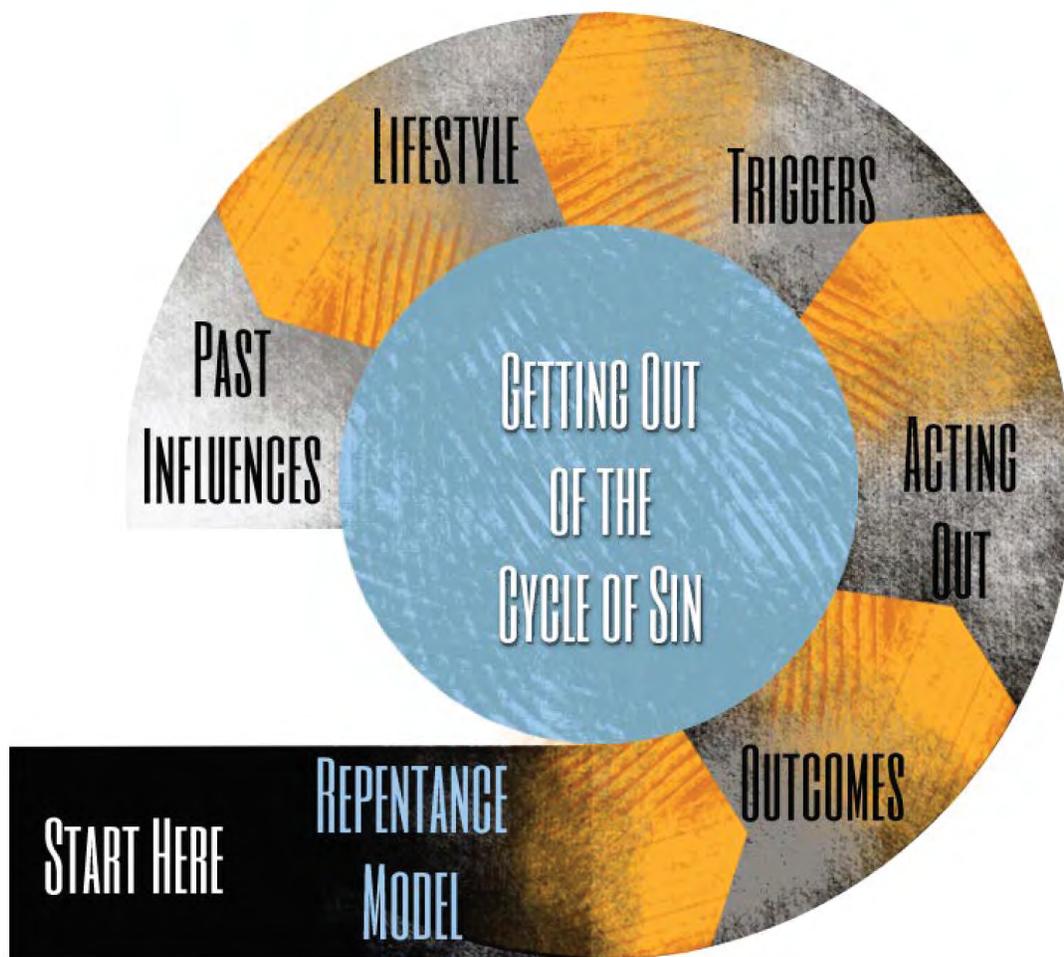


# ACCOUNTABILITY

in CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



# WELCOME to the



CONQUERORS  
THROUGH  
CHRIST

# NARROW ROAD

Most of the software makers and authors on the subject of pornographic addiction write about "Accountability Partners." We at Conquerors through Christ like to think of these important men and women in our lives as "Encouragement Partners."

These are people who labor alongside of us to do God's work of saying "NO!" to the instances when habitual sins happen in our lives. When we build a team of encouraging partners, we develop community.

With truth and with love, our accountability partners and encouragers are with us on the long road.

The name that we give to these important people in our process of recovery from addiction is not as important as the work they do and how they do it with God's blessings. They are doing what is truly a ministry of love! If you're reading this because you're doing the work of an Encouragement Partner, we at Conquerors through Christ would like to thank you, to support you, and to wish God's blessings on you in this important task.

# WELCOME

Welcome to Accountability in Christian Community! We pray this resource helps you care for and coach those who care for fellow Conquerors. Whether you're beginning the journey into accountability and encouragement or finding ways to enhance your current practices, we pray this resource is a helpful guide.

These Guidelines are ideal for individuals, trusted friends, and small groups who are interested in spurring one another on to be proactive in fighting the Enemy's lies concerning purity, shame, and God's ability to forgive struggling sinners.

In the following pages, you will discover the three major steps to setting up successful accountability and encouragement. You'll start with self, move into developing real partnerships, and then discover great resources.

Everything in these guidelines is based in and drawn from God's Word. We at Conquerors through Christ pray that this guide equips you to bless those you encourage with grace and truth that they need to honor God with their bodies in our challenging culture!

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Note to all: *Accountability* is more than a buzzword in addiction treatment and in the larger world of helping those who struggle with porn addiction. These guidelines are Conquerors through Christ's approach to this topic and can be considered in the wider body of accountability literature.

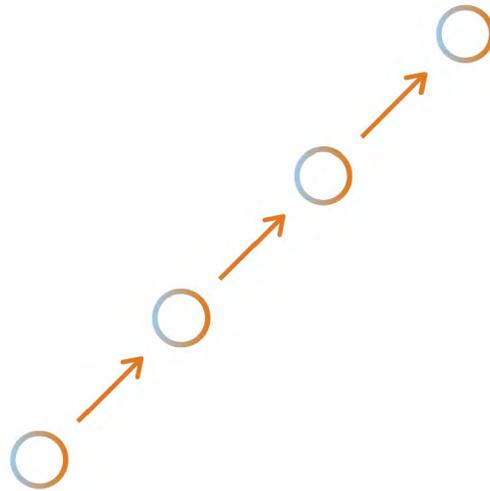
**Note to Facilitators:** If you're leading a group through this resource, please be able to follow the flow exactly as it is set up. We've tried to make it just as useful to a group as it is to a single set of partners. e

Thank you in advance for preparing to make the this guide a blessing to all whom you serve!

## INTRODUCTION:

### ENCOURAGEMENT vs. ACCOUNTABILITY

*What's the difference, and why should it matter?*



-----OR-----



## ACTIVITY:

Discuss which of these two images makes you think of *accountability* and which makes you think of *encouragement*. Explain why you made the choice you did.

## WHY "ENCOURAGERS"?

**Encourage** - transitive verb

1a: to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope : HEARTEN

1b: to attempt to persuade : URGE

2: to spur on : STIMULATE

3: to give help or patronage to : FOSTER

### ENCOURAGEMENT IS GOSPEL WORK

Most experts on the subject of pornographic addiction don't talk about Encouragers, they talk about "Accountability Partners." We get it - it's a good idea. Psychology shows that most will very rarely *if ever* overcome addiction without real accountability from a trusted source.

That being said, we at Conquerors through Christ prefer to frame these important people in our lives differently, calling them "Encouragement Partners" (or just Encouragers.)

They are still people who labor alongside us to do God's work - saying "NO!" to the instances when habitual sins happen in our lives. They still remind us of our commitments and our loved ones and our God. They still hold us accountable.

Nevertheless, we call what they do "encouragement" because we *want to stress the Gospel over the Law*. It's part of how CtC (Conquerors through Christ) works; we're gospel-oriented. That does not mean that the application of the Law is not a *part* of the service and ministry of an Encouragement Partner. It just means it's not the *point*.

Frankly, the name is not as important as the work - what they do, how they do it, and why they do it. They are truly doing a ministry of love! If you're reading this because you're doing the work of an Encouragement Partner, we at Conquerors through Christ would like to thank you, to support you, and to wish God's blessings on you in this important task.

#### In Summary:

*The Law shows people how they are inadequate.*

*The Gospel makes people adequate.*

*An Encourager understands God's use of them both.*

## ENCOURAGER GUIDE: OUTLINE

*In the coming pages, you'll work through the WHY, HOW, and WHAT of developing a beneficial Encouragement Partner relationship. We start with why at the heart level, move into the actions and practices that lead to success, and finally dive into the specifics of what is done within an encouraging relationship.*

### PART 1

I am a Christian!

- I am a Child of God!

God Is Our First Encouragement Partner

### PART 2

I am an Encourager!

- Biblical Qualities of an Encouragement Partner

Finding My Encouragement Partner

- How will I ever find such a person?
- How will I ever be such a person?

*If you have questions as you walk through this, you can reach out to us at CtC by visiting [conquerorsthroughchrist.net/contact-us](http://conquerorsthroughchrist.net/contact-us).*

## I AM A CHRISTIAN! I AM A CHILD OF GOD!

Scholars have said that Martin Luther told a story about a woman 19 times over the course of 24 years (!!!) in his published sermons and writings. Each time he told the story he changed some things about it: sometimes the woman was old, sometimes young, sometimes a noble woman, sometimes a peasant, sometimes a married woman, sometimes single, and sometimes a nun.

There were two things similar in all the stories:

- The woman was always tempted (though the temptations varied.)
- The woman always countered the temptation with the words, "I am a Christian."

The point? A faithful Christian person can stand in the face of evil and proclaim, "I am a Christian."

The ministry of an Encouragement Partner is to help your partner remember and proclaim - in the face of evil - "I am a Christian." "I am a Child of God."

### *I Am a Child of God*

It is important to know who YOU ARE IN THE STRUGGLE against addiction and habitual sin. Despite this, your identity is not that of an

- hopeless,
- helpless,
- worthless,
- addict stuck in a cesspool of habitual sin.



Your identity is "a child of God."

## GOD IS THE FIRST MEMBER OF COMMUNITY

God is, himself, triune.

There's a lot about God being three-in-one that is hard to understand, but one thing is true. He is Father *and* Son *and* Holy Spirit. He is mutuality and love in a perfect way, and we are made in his image - an image we have lost, but one that echoes within us.

### GOD ENCOURAGES US WITH HIS GOSPEL LOVE

**Romans 1:16-17** | "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed – a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'."

### GOD ENCOURAGES US TO ENCOURAGE OTHERS

**Galatians 6:1-10** | "Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should *restore that person* gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2 *Carry each other's burdens*, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. 3 If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. 4 Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, 5 for each one should carry their own load. 6 Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor. 7 Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. 8 Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, *let us do good to all people*, especially to those who belong to the family of believers."

## QUALITIES OF A COMMUNITY

### Biblical Qualities of Encouragement & Accountability

#### HUMBLE

He or she humbly knows his or her own sin and humbly knows how much he or she needs a Savior. This humble person is not judgmental, but he or she loves the Lord and his Word and will humbly apply God's Word to another sinner (read: YOU) as you need it. He or she will use the Word of God to confront you with your sin and your lies and deception. He or she will speak the joyful message of the Gospel of God's forgiveness to you when you repent, encouraging you and giving you hope. This spiritual and humble person will not be judgmental, but will be encouraging, using both God's Law and God's Gospel.

#### LOVING

He or she will show themselves to be both patient and firm, full of grace and truth. These two ideals of a good Encouragement Partner seem to be at odds, but they are not. Each is an expression of love. It is in love that a person is firm in confronting another about a sin. He or she lovingly desires them to repent of their sin. It is in love that the forgiving Gospel of Christ is proclaimed to the repentant sinner. This love is humble.

#### TRUSTWORTHY

Confidentiality is a part of this love. Listen to the words of Jesus: Matthew 18:15 | If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. Love also moves your Encouragement Partner to leave confidentiality behind if you become hardened in habitual sin, but only for your spiritual benefit.

Matthew 18:16 | But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

## PATIENT

Because your sin is a habitual sin, your Encouragement Partner may need to be an especially patient person. Addictions and habitual sins are difficult to overcome.

Listen to the patience Jesus talked about:

Luke 17:3-4 | “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

Patience goes hand-in-hand with love, but patience does not call for condoning. It calls for active watchfulness and earnest and loving honesty.

## FINDING MY CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

### Finding the Right People

*Building community takes time, and communities change over time. Here are ways to go about building the team that will help you stay focused on Christ, and in doing so to conquer your addiction.*

#### ***Do a Spiritual Search***

Look around you in your life. Who do you have at church or in the work place or in your family that you respect for his or her Christian life?

Talk to your pastor about your sin. Confess it to him and ask him to direct you to people who might serve as your Encouragement Partners.

Consider more than one person. We recommend that you have two or three in your community. Each will be able to help you in different ways from the others. When one is not available, one of the others may be.

We do recommend that you keep your community to the same gender - females for females, males for males.

#### ***Make Contact***

Make contact with these people in humility and confidentiality. Find the right place and the right time to do this, and do it intentionally.

Know beforehand what you want to say and say it humbly and honestly.

#### ***Make Commitments***

The commitment to work with your community is yours. The commitment to work with you is theirs. God makes a commitment to you both - he will be with you and your community because he loves you and wants to help you both.

God will lead you to grow together and to work together to do His work. Your community will not be perfect. You will not be perfect. God is perfect. God is your power, your strength, and your hope. He is the same for your community. Together you will be blessed by God to do his work.

## BEING PART OF SOMEONE'S CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

### *Pray Consistently*

God will be with you to help you grow into this. God is as close to you as your simplest prayer in thought. "God help me!" will bring an immediate answer.

- *2 Timothy 4:2* | Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction.
- *Matthew 8:20* | And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

### *Strengthen Yourself*

Be aware that this may be a difficult task. If the person you are working with keeps relapsing into the same sinful habits again and again you can get very discouraged. Remember that God is with you. Continue to be firm, loving, forgiving, and encouraging. Remember – no one is a greater sinner than you. God has loved you. God has forgiven you. He has forgiven the habitual sinner in your presence because he loves him also. You can keep on with your work of sharing God's love with your friend.

### *Set Boundaries*

There may be texts and calls at all hours, even when you want to be left alone. Remember how Jesus also wanted to be alone at times for prayer and meditation. You will need to set some boundaries. (This is a large part of why each person addicted to pornography should have more than one Encouragement Partner.)

### *Preempt Frustration*

At times nothing may seem to work. Your friend is so needy. They just keep repeating the same things, using the same excuses in an endless cycle of failure. If they would only listen to you they could get out of this cycle of sin! Why don't they ever learn! What's wrong with them!

Be humble in those moments of frustration. Remember that God has every right to be frustrated with you – but, instead, he loves you. Go to his Word. Rejoice in his love. Be strengthened by his power and grace. Remember that his grace (not your success as an Encouragement Partner) is sufficient for you (2 Cor. 12:9).

### *Faithfulness > Anger*

You may get to the point where you dread the calls from your Encouragement Partner. After all, this is a personal task you do because you care about someone. If you find yourself doing more yelling and judging and condemning than forgiving and restoring and encouraging, step back and talk to God about it. Ask him for strength and purpose and focus and guidance. Remember the eternal presence of your loving Savior in your life. Your faithful God will be your strength. Remember that "success" is in God's hands – not yours. God only requires that you be faithful. He will provide the increase. St. Paul wrote about himself and another pastor who had labored in the city of Corinth in a way that is helpful for us to remember when we think about serving a brother or a sister as their Encouragement Partner:



Conquerors through Christ is a gospel-focused ministry that exists to help God's people reject, resist, and recover from the wreckage of pornography. You can find free resources, helpful articles, recommended counselors, book suggestions, Bible studies, parenting helps, and much more at [www.conquerorsthroughchrist.net](http://www.conquerorsthroughchrist.net).