

## **Winning the War Against Lust** *summoning reinforcements for individual "battles"*

Accountability is more than going to a brother or sister in the Lord and confessing failure. **Accountability is going to them in the middle of a battle, before we've fallen, and asking for their help.** This concept helps a husband understand the role his wife plays in his fight for moral purity.

Before accountability can happen, there must be openness. We need to understand each other's weaknesses and vulnerable areas. This involves **confessing all hidden sins to our wives and having a broken heart** that desires change. Then we must humble ourselves and acknowledge our need for accountability and help. Our wives should always be our first accountability partners.

### **Understand the Battle**

In order for our wives to be able to help, we need to talk the same language. For years, my wife Jenny asked me, "Are you struggling?" when she sensed the presence of temptation. **I viewed the word "struggling" as equivalent to "failing."** If I had not given into sin and was striving to overcome the temptation, I would tell her, "No, I am not struggling." We both became frustrated, because she thought I was lying and would say, "How can you not be struggling?" and I insisted I was not "failing."

Our miscommunication continued until one evening when the word "battle" was mentioned in our conversation. We both said, "That's it!" We realized that every day of our lives, we enter into battles. The word **"battle" doesn't mean we're failing; it means we are engaged in warfare.** A battle accompanies every temptation we encounter. In each battle we will either be victorious over Satan, or defeated by him.

With this new understanding, I am able to tell Jenny when I am being attacked, and she is able to join and support me in the fight. Now, when we are in a place with immodestly dressed women or other temptations, she can ask me "Having any battles?" and we each know what we are talking about.

### **Call for Reinforcements!**

Have you ever been suddenly bombarded with intruding thoughts of temptation towards someone or something? You may be faithfully taking your thoughts captive, but still the intruding thoughts just keep coming. **Now is the time to recognize you are in a battle!** Your first response should be to call for help.

No battle is ever fought by one lonely soldier. If the attack is on, reinforcements are in order. Call on the body of Christ for help **when you find yourself in a battle, not after you have been defeated.** Remember, accountability isn't admitting when we've failed. It's acknowledging to others when we're in a battle so others can come to our side and join the fight.

Many times I have found that just acknowledging the battle to my wife will cause the intruding thoughts to cease.

### **Battle as a Family**

I have learned to allow Jenny to be my helper in this area. She helps protect me by entering into the battle with me. It is amazing how **the enemy usually flees as soon as I bring the battle to the light**. Just the other day, we were in a restaurant and an immodestly dressed woman came in and sat down behind my wife. Immediately I had a choice: battle all alone and probably fall, or ask my covenant partner to enter the battle along side me. I simply said, “Honey, there is a possible battle behind you. Can we trade seats?” Jenny loves it when I allow her into my life. Just knowing that I want her help in my battle for purity makes her feel loved and safe.

Do I tell Jenny every single thought that comes my way? No. Thoughts come all the time, but not every one is a battle. A single thought taken captive and refused is not a battle. It’s **when the thoughts keep coming that I know I’m in a battle**, and it’s time to call up the reinforcements! Sometimes I can anticipate a battle prior to a situation. In this case I will let Jenny know ahead of time, so I can avoid a possible problem.

If we are apart, I give Jenny a quick call. If I can’t reach her, I mention it to my coworker just to bring it to the light. **My wife is always my first resource for help**, and a brother in Christ is my second if the need arises. Again, this is referring to battles, and not just the stray thoughts that we resist.

**Joining together in battle involves the whole family**, not just a husband and wife. One example of how our family supports each other in the battle involves sunglasses. I have made a commitment to not wear sunglasses when I am in a place of temptation (busy streets, parks, etc.), and I don’t allow my sons to wear them in such places either. Sunglasses hide a man’s eyes and make it easier for him to look at temptations and not be caught. Jenny was surprised when I confessed this to her, yet she was grateful for my commitment to be totally open and honest. To help us in the battle, my wife and daughters follow suit and show us their support: they don’t wear sunglasses either. It’s wonderful to have the whole family in the battle together—and winning!