

"Am I Obsessed?"

A NOTE TO LEADERS

Please remember, we want you to be able to be honest and vulnerable about where God has brought victory personally in your life, **but please share in a way that is age appropriate for your audience. Be cautious** in what you share, speaking generally and avoiding specifics or graphic comments. If you even question that sharing something personal could cause a student to struggle, then, especially for this series, hold off sharing.

You probably already know that middle schoolers get really passionate about a LOT of things, and that can be great and healthy! The problem is when their passion starts to become an obsession that takes over their life. So take some time this week to remind your students that while it's awesome to be passionate about things, if those things control their thoughts and actions and cause them to ignore other parts of their life or give in to temptations, they should start setting some boundaries. Be sure to tell your students that you're available to talk with them privately about any obsession they're struggling with right now. **The goal of small group today is to help students identify the power of obsession in their life and begin to set boundaries around them.**

If a student tells you they are struggling to stop watching pornography and/or masturbating, engage in a conversation with them about it:

- **First, affirm** them for being vulnerable enough to tell you and for stepping up to and ask for help. THAT IS HUGE!
- **If you are a high school student, let them know you are going to bring in adult small group leader or staff** so we can walk alongside both of you in this conversation. Go together right then to continue the conversation.
- **Let them know you'll be praying for them and there is some accountability software** they can use to help them (see below).
- Remind them that **God's forgiveness to us is unlimited** and that we can lean on the **Holy Spirit's power** to help us overcome temptation.
- **Remind them that the more trusted people "on their team" helping them overcome this struggle the better**, including parents! While watching pornography and/or masturbating aren't mandated reporting items you legally have to tell parents, **we highly encourage students to share this with their parents.** Your student may be terrified of this, but encourage them it's in their best interest and even offer to be with them while they tell their parents if that will help.

ACCOUNTABILITY SOFTWARE RESOURCES

Ever Accountable: <https://www.everaccountable.com/>

Accountable2you.app: <https://www.accountable2you.com/features>

Covenant eyes (better for computer): <http://www.covenanteyes.com/>

Net Nanny (gives deeper parental controls): <https://www.netnanny.com>

MAIN POINT: Control your obsessions or they will control you.

OPENER:

Pick one or two of the questions below and have each of your students give an answer to get them all talking:

- 1.** Who is your all-time favorite sports team, athlete, singer, actor, actress, or celebrity?
- 2.** What are some different things that middle schoolers get passionate about?
- 3.** What do you think is the difference between passion and obsession? Give an example.

READ:

*1 Corinthians 6:12
NLT*

"You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything."

ASK:

- 1.** What do you think this verse means? How does it relate to our topic today?
- 2.** What are some examples of good things that can become bad if someone gets obsessed over them?
- 3.** What are some ways an obsession could negatively impact your life?
- 4.** What can make it difficult for someone to recognize or admit if they have an obsession?

DO:

Have your students take their "Am I Obsessed?" quiz. Since this topic can be personal, don't ask specific questions about their obsessions. Instead, ask students to think about their quiz results and make some healthy changes if they're close to obsession territory.

READ:

1 Corinthians 10:13 NLT

"The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure."

ASK:

1. *Our obsessions can lead us to giving in to temptations. Where is God when we are facing temptation?*

2. *A boundary is a line that marks the limit of something. Examples of boundaries are not hanging out alone or not being on your phone when you are alone. How can creating boundaries be a good thing and help us overcome an obsession?*

3. *What's one area of your life where you might need to create boundaries?*

4. *This week, what's one step you can take to set those boundaries? (If your students have trouble coming up with this on their own, help them brainstorm and decide on one.)*

UNPACK:

The word "boundaries" is NOT exciting, but **having boundaries in our lives is a really good thing.** Boundaries are there to protect us and others. God gives us boundaries not to dull our life down or steal any freedom, but to keep us from having to experience certain negative consequences of crossing boundaries.

If you have crossed a boundary, or are facing an obsession or temptation, **first know God loves you and offers forgiveness if you ask Him.** Second, talk to God about it and **ask God for His help to overcome it.** If you still struggle to stop, ask a mature Christian to talk with you and pray for you.

NEXT STEP: We are going to take a few moments as a group to pray in silence. If you have anything you are obsessed with or tempted about, ask God for His forgiveness and His help to overcome what you are going through. This week, set some boundaries in your life that can help you overcome your obsession. *Close your time together in prayer.*

AM I OBSESSED?

Sometimes it's difficult to know whether something you're passionate about is heading toward an obsession. To help you figure it out, complete this quiz by placing a check next to the answer that best describes your passion:

- YES NO Do I think about this all the time?
- YES NO Do I talk about this all the time?
- YES NO Do I spend a majority of my free time doing this?
- YES NO Is this the last thing I think about when I go to sleep or the first thing I think about when I wake up?
- YES NO Do I have trouble sleeping because I think about this so much?
- YES NO Do I feel better or worse when I take part in this?
- YES NO Do I do this for longer periods of time than I had originally planned?
- YES NO Do I feel upset if I'm not able to take part in this?
- YES NO Do people in my life make comments about how much I talk about or spend time doing this?
- YES NO Do I tell myself that I'm not going to spend time doing this anymore, but end up doing this anyway?

If you answered "yes" to more than five of these questions, your passion could actually be turning into an obsession. That doesn't mean you have to cut this thing out of your life altogether, but it does mean you should start finding balance and setting boundaries. Start by asking a trusted friend, adult, or Small Group Leader to help you figure out ways to create limits and rules for yourself. Then, determine a first step you can take to begin to change your behavior so that you can live the free and full life God intends for you to live.

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