A Covenant To Contend:
The Courageous Fight For Healthy Sexuality

There is a battle going on within me. As much as it pains me to admit it, that battlefield is my sexuality. I realize that the outcome of this battle not only holds my life in its hands, but the lives of those I love and care for. I now choose to participate in the battle for Godly character and integrity not only for my soul but also for my family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ and, above all else, Almighty God.

I am beginning to understand I cannot win this battle myself. I am coming to see the biblical truth that "we are members one of another." Therefore, I surrender to His wisdom, turn to the leadership of the church, and submit myself to the process of the renewing of my mind.

Things I Can Do:

- Attend a small group weekly.
- God's values supersede mine; therefore, I will contend to live life on His terms instead of mine or of the culture around me.
- Pay close attention to what I look at; what I listen to; what I set my mind on.
- Take responsibility for my thoughts and actions.
- Verbally describe my feelings.
- Make contact with a group member or members at least three times between small group meetings.

I Can Accept:

- Healing is a miraculous process over time.
- Healing requires feeling the pain and learning from it.
- I am very capable of retreating back into the addictive lifestyle.
- A relapse does not stop the healing process but it will have consequences.
- I have become skilled at lying to others and myself.
- I do not really live in isolation; my choices do affect others.
- My secrecy keeps me in bondage to my sin.

I Will Commit To:

- A willingness to change—and following through with my plans.
- **Total confidentiality!** I discuss only **my** experiences outside the group.
- Rigorous honesty with God, my small group, myself and eventually to my friends and family.
- Building my knowledge base (books, CD's, videos, & seminars).
- Reading Scripture and praying.
- A biblical standard of sexual purity in my life.
- A goal of moving toward sobriety that is living life God's way.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Witnessed by:_____

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The **Covenant to Contend** was created to help the men understand and know what it would take for them to experience healing. A version of this covenant has been used in For Men Only/Pure Desire groups at East Hill Church for over a decade.

During the rest of this lesson we will examine this covenant piece by piece so that you will be able to see to what you are committing. Are you ready? Then let's go!

Read the opening paragraphs again. Look for core values that are being spoken here.

> **There is a battle going on within me. As much as it pains me to admit it, that battlefield is my sexuality. I realize that the outcome of this battle not only holds my life in its hands, but the lives of those I love and care for. I now choose to participate in the battle for Godly character and integrity not only for my soul but also for my family, friends, brothers and sisters in Christ and, above all else, Almighty God.**
>
> **I am beginning to understand I cannot win this battle myself. I am coming to see the biblical truth that "we are members one of another." Therefore, I surrender to His wisdom, turn to the leadership of the church, and submit myself to the process of the renewing of my mind.**

These two paragraphs point to several truths. You may see more than I do, but here are the core foundations to the covenant.

- We are in a war and the enemy of our souls is using our sexuality as the battleground.
- Our addictions have hurt the significant people close to us, including family, friends and even God.
- We can't win this battle alone; we will need our family, friends and God to support us in this battle.
- Healing cannot happen if we don't surrender to His will and purpose in our lives.

For you to begin the healing process you must embrace these truths. Do you see other truths found in the two paragraphs? If so, write them down and be prepared to share them with your group.

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➔ Can you agree with and commit to each of the bullet point truths and any others added by yourself or your group? How do you see each of them playing out in your healing process?

Things I Can Do:

- **Attend a small group weekly.**
- **God's values supersede mine; therefore, I will contend to live life on His terms instead of mine or of the culture around me.**
- **Pay close attention to what I look at; what I listen to; what I set my mind on.**
- **Take responsibility for my thoughts and actions.**
- **Verbally describe my feelings.**
- **Make contact with a group member or members at least three times between small group meetings.**

Now the battle for restoration begins. It's not just what happens in your Pure Desire group, but what happens in your daily life. Yes, we attend group. But we also must choose to make healthy choices when nobody is around. We are still growing in our self-awareness, both externally and internally. You may find it helpful to read a good book that encourages self-control practice by averting your eyes from the sexual images around you, such as Stephen Arterburn's *Every Man's Battle: Winning the War on Sexual Temptation One Victory at a Time.*[38]

Let me emphasize again: No one gets healed alone. Making contacts with your group members is incredibly important. This will need to be done week after week after week.

Do you live for yourself or do you surrender to God? What do you believe God and the Bible teach concerning your sexuality and sexual behavior? What does our culture teach about your sexuality and sexual behavior?

- With each of the six commitments under **"Things I Can Do"** rate how well you think you're doing. (1 = **not at all** and 10 = **no sweat I've got this baby down!)**
- Give an explanation of your rating for each category.

Things I Can Do:

1. **Attend a small group weekly.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

2. **God's values supersede mine; therefore, I will contend to live life on His terms instead of mine or of the culture around me.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

3. **Pay close attention to what I look at; what I listen to; what I set my mind on.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

4. **Take responsibility for my thoughts and actions.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

5. **Verbally describe my feelings.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

6. **Make contact with a group member or members at least three times between small group meetings.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

I Can Accept:

- **Healing is a miraculous process over time.**
- **Healing requires feeling the pain and learning from it.**
- **I am very capable of retreating back into the addictive lifestyle.**
- **A relapse does not stop the healing process but it will have consequences.**
- **I have become skilled at lying to others and myself.**
- **I do not really live in isolation; my choices do affect others.**
- **My secrecy keeps me in bondage to my sin.**

In my studies of the original language of the New Testament, I have discovered that over 80% of the time the word "heal" and its derivatives appear in the text they come from the Greek word "therapeuō" from which we get our word therapy. The intended meaning is a process, not a one-time event. In fact, this whole portion of the covenant is about the process. Healing requires you to become honest with yourself by acknowledging the lies of commission and omission. It requires breaking isolation and facing the pain of life. The isolation and secrecy that feel so comfortable actually keep you in bondage to your addictive life.

- With each of the seven commitments under **"I Can Accept"** rate how well you think you're doing. (1 = **not at all** and 10 = **no sweat I've got this baby down!)**

- Give an explanation of your rating for each category.

I Can Accept:

1. **Healing is a miraculous process over time.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

2. **Healing requires feeling the pain and learning from it.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

3. **I am very capable of retreating back into the addictive lifestyle.**
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

4. **A relapse does not stop the healing process but it will have consequences.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

5. **I have become skilled at lying to others and myself.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

6. **I do not really live in isolation; my choices do affect others.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

7. **My secrecy keeps me in bondage to my sin.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

I Will Commit To:

- **A willingness to change—and following through with my plans.**
- **Total confidentiality! I discuss only <u>my</u> experiences outside the group.**
- **Rigorous honesty with God, my small group, myself and eventually to my friends and family.**
- **Building my knowledge base (books, CD's, videos & seminars).**
- **Reading Scripture and praying.**
- **A biblical standard of sexual purity in my life.**
- **A goal of moving toward sobriety that is living life God's way.**

Signed: _____ **Date:**_____

Witnessed by:_____

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This last section of the Covenant actually leads to Pillar 3 Lesson 3. There is a price for battling against the cravings and committing yourself to the healing process.

- With each of the seven commitments under **"I Will Commit To"** rate how well you think you're doing. (1 = **not at all** and 10 = **no sweat I've got this baby down!)**
- Give an explanation of your rating for each category.

I Will Commit To:

1. **A willingness to change—and following through with my plans.**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

2. **Total confidentiality! I discuss only <u>my</u> experiences outside the group.**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

3. **Rigorous honesty with God, my small group, myself and eventually to my friends and family.**

   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
   (not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

   _____

   _____

4. **Building my knowledge base (books, CD's, videos & seminars).**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

5. **Reading Scripture and praying.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

6. **A biblical standard of sexual purity in my life.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

7. **A goal of moving toward sobriety that is living life God's way.**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(not at all) (No sweat; I've got this baby down!)

_____

_____

So here we go! It is time to put this Covenant into action.

If you are ready to commit to your healing process, sign the covenant as it appears on the one-page version earlier in this lesson; ask your group leader or co-leader to sign as a witness.

Assignments . . . for next time

- Review the covenant and prepare written responses to all the exercises and questions included in this lesson.
- Be prepared to discuss the covenant and your commitment at the next Pure Desire meeting.