

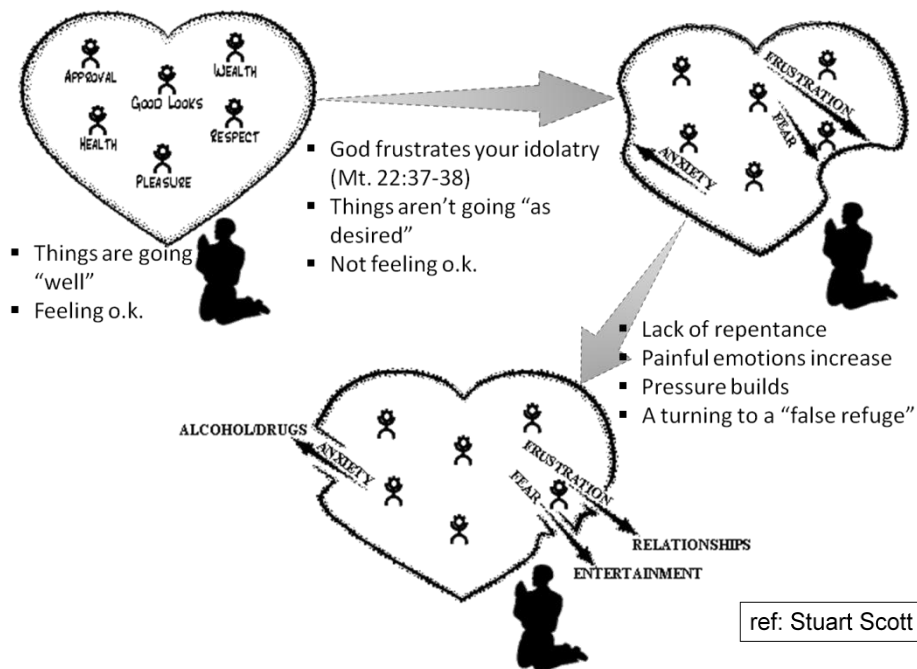
INTERNET TOOLS & DISCIPLINES

I. SETTING THE STAGE

A. In the Counseling Context

1. Computer strategies cannot change the heart

- Even a “foolproof” setup (which does not exist) without biblical discipleship only serves to divert an unrepentant heart to other manifestations of sin.
- They are not the missing ingredient for obedience
- They are a way to hinder temptation and sin



2. The computer and the internet are mediums that can be used either to feed lust or to glorify God.
3. Wise use of the computer is a dominion issue and a stewardship issue (of our time & energy) (1 Cor. 6:12b)

B. Pitfalls for Counselors to Avoid:

- “This is not my strong suit, so I’ll just deal with the heart.”
- Overemphasis on technological “fences”

C. Identify godly men in the congregation who are gifted in this area to evaluate tools, assist counselors, train spouses, train parents, etc.

II. SETTING THE STAGE

A. Fundamentals of Entertainment Choices¹

1. Avoid temptations that feed your area of weakness (1 Pet. 2:11)
 - a. What (potentially) sinful situations you need to avoid (Pro. 4:23)
 - b. The need for caution (Pro. 6:27; 14:16)
 - c. The deceptiveness of sin (Pro. 24:3; Heb. 11:25)
2. Make the most of the time God has given you (Eph. 5:16)
3. Worship God above all else, even in your entertainment choices (Phil. 3:8)
4. For those you counsel/disciple/parent:
 - a. Be a good example
 - b. Stand guard
 - c. Stimulate spirituality

B. Four Rules of Electronic Communication

- Internet disciplines & strategies must ...
 1. ... communicate a principle goal of pleasing God (1 Cor. 10:31)
 2. ... eliminate temptations due to “careless mistakes” (as much as possible) (Mt. 6:13)
 3. ... hinder deliberate attempts to sin (provides many opportunities to recognize/acknowledge/deal with sin) (Mk. 14:38)
 4. ... cultivate self-control (Pro. 25:28)
- Internet disciplines & strategies must not ...
 - ... be seen as what’s keeping them from sin
 - ... detract from recognizing our need of grace (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
 - ... steal glory from God when obedience is present
 - ... shift blame from counselee when sin/failure is present
 - ... mask/dismiss sin even when attempts to further their sin are thwarted

C. A counselee’s resistance to loss of convenience needs to be confronted as a lack of repentance (2 Cor. 7:10-11)

D. The complexity of techno-countermeasures should at least match (if not exceed) the counselee’s skills/capabilities used to access pornography, etc.

¹ Adapted from “Parental Guidance Required” by Kurt Gebhards, *The Journal of Modern Ministry*, Vol. 6 Issue 1, Winter 2009

III. WHAT TO DO UP FRONT (CLEANING UP THE MESS)

A. Communication / Give Hope

1. Your attitude should reflect biblical hope!
2. Make sure to explain to (and repeatedly remind) the counselee of the purposes of any “fences”
3. Communicate a clear plan for:
 - a. Immediate, short-term constraints
 - b. Graduated, interim constraints
 - c. Sustained, long-term disciplines

B. Basic/Intermediate

1. Remove “offensive” files
 - From hard drive
 - From storage media
2. Remove administrator privileges for counselee and young people
 - Why? Will not be allowed to install software or change critical settings
3. Decrease the number of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) – ideally to one
 - Why? Easy to bypass filtering with additional ISPs
4. Decrease the number of browsers – ideally to one
 - Why? Browsers usually store information and histories in different places, so much more difficult to monitor online activity
5. Remove all peer-to-peer (P2P) software
 - E.g., BitTorrent, Napster, Kazaa, iMesh, eDonkey, Gnutella, Morpheus, LimeWire, G2, Overnet, Grokster, FastTrack, etc.
 - Why? An easy way to “tunnel” past filters. Also, promotes illegal activity and increases susceptibility to malicious software

C. Advanced

1. When the computer is “littered” with files, reformat the hard drive
 - Reinstall the operating system (OS)
 - Selectively install desired software
 - May need to remove old email accounts
2. For exceptionally “sneaky” counsees, temporarily disable mass storage devices
 - E.g., CD/DVD writer, USB drives, etc.
 - Why? Often a clandestine way to view, store, and hide downloads apart from the computer

IV. RADICAL STEPS

ii Primarily intended for counselees still bound in sexual sin

A. “Radical Amputation” (Mt. 5:27-30)

B. Online activities allowed only with direct supervision/monitoring by another

V. DISCIPLINES & STRATEGIES FOR ALL

A. No-tech

1. Public location

- Eliminate privacy (No bedrooms!)
- “Spy-friendly”
- Singles: Administrative account for someone else to monitor at unscheduled times

2. Time limits

3. “Edifying decorations”

4. Formal instruction (esp. for children)

- a. Child’s Internet Usage Contract (see *Addendums*)
- b. Parent’s Internet Pledge (see *Addendums*)

B. No-tech

1. Passwords for all administrator privileges

- Nothing “obvious”
 - Combination of lower/uppercase letters, numbers, and/or characters
- Never written down or placed in “accessible location”
- Short life (change periodically)
- Only the spouse/parent knows the password
- Children/counselee do not know the password

2. Filtering/reporting software (see *Addendums*)

C. Quality Controls

1. Questions about ...

- a. Eye control (Ps. 101:3a; Job 31:1; Pro. 4:23,25)
- b. Friend control (1 Cor. 15:33; Pro. 13:20-21; 22:24-25)
- c. Circumstance control (1 Thes. 5:22; Ro. 13:14; 2 Ti. 2:22)

2. Detective work made simple (see *Addendums*)
 - a. Filtering/reporting software
 - b. History trail and address bar dropdown
 - c. Added software
 - d. Files recently modified
 3. “Open door” policy (unscheduled checkups by computer-savvy believer)
- D. Cultivate God-Honoring Habits
- Be very deliberate and disciplined in your training in righteousness
 - Example: “Online Journal” (see *Addendums*)