

FLEEING SIN & RECOGNIZING RELATIONSHIP STOP SIGNS

THE BIG IDEA

Fleeing sin is not only about what you run from. You need to know who you are running to - and you need the courage to obey the stop signs God gives you.

MESSAGE ABSTRACT

Week 3 brought together two connected ideas: how to flee sexual sin and how to recognize relationships that keep pulling us toward compromise. The first half challenged students to stop treating purity like a willpower contest. Scripture tells believers to flee sexual immorality, but retreat only works when we know where we are going. The message used the Battle of Cowpens as a picture: the militia did not simply run into the wilderness; they retreated toward safety. In the same way, freedom is not found by staring at temptation and repeating, 'Don't do it.' We flee toward Jesus, accountability, wisdom, and practical plans.

The second half focused on dating relationships. A bad relationship can become a direct path back into compromise, isolation, secrecy, insecurity, and sexual sin. The message compared warning signs in relationships to stop signs on a road: restrictions are not meant to ruin the journey; they are meant to protect us. Students were challenged to recognize four major stop signs, stop explaining them away, and submit their relationships to God.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Fleeing sexual sin means moving toward God, not merely trying to move away from temptation.
- When temptation hits, identify what you are really feeling and what need you are trying to meet.
- Have a plan before the moment of temptation: know where you will go, what you will do, and who you will contact.
- Grace is for people who stumble and run back to Jesus; grace is not permission to keep choosing sin.
- Relationship warning signs should be taken seriously before compromise becomes normal.
- Purity is ultimately about submission: Who gets the final word in my habits, relationships, and decisions?

CORE SCRIPTURES FROM THE MESSAGE

SCRIPTURE	TRUTH	MESSAGE CONNECTION
1 Corinthians 6:18-20	Flee sexual immorality; honor God with your body.	Sexual sin is not presented as something to casually manage. Scripture tells us to flee.
2 Timothy 2:22	Flee youthful passions.	Retreat from what pulls you toward sin and pursue what leads you toward God.
Proverbs 22:3	The prudent see danger and take refuge.	Wisdom notices danger and responds before damage is done.
1 Corinthians 15:33	Bad company corrupts good character.	Relationships shape us. Pay attention to who you are becoming.

Fleeing Sexual Sin

1. SCRIPTURE SAYS FLEE

The message opened from 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. Scripture does not describe sexual sin as something we should stand in front of and prove we are strong enough to defeat. The command is direct: flee. Run from it. Create distance. Take the danger seriously.

KEY THOUGHT

If the Bible tells us to run from something, wisdom starts by taking that command seriously.

2. RETREAT IS ONLY HALF THE PLAN

Running away is not enough if our attention stays locked on the temptation. The message described the common cycle: we decide we are done, grit our teeth, stare at the problem, and spend all our energy saying, 'I am not going to do this.' Even while moving away, our mind is still centered on the thing we are trying to escape.

The shift is simple but important: a retreat is not only about what you are running from; it is also about who you are running to. Instead of making the obsession, 'How do I stop this sin?' make the pursuit, 'God, how do I honor You? What do You want to do in me and through me?'

THE COWPENS PICTURE

The militia did not retreat aimlessly into the forest. They knew where safety was. In the same way, do not flee temptation without knowing where you are going.

3. CHANGE THE FOCUS

The message included a personal testimony about struggling with pornography while already in Bible school. The turning point was not discovering a perfect technique or never being tempted again. The change came as the focus moved away from constantly staring at the sin and toward pursuing Jesus.

- Old focus: "I have to stop watching this."
- New focus: "God, I want to get closer to You."
- Old focus: "I cannot mess up again."
- New focus: "What does obedience look like right now?"
- Old focus: willpower alone.
- New focus: pursuit of God plus a practical plan.

This does not mean temptation disappears instantly. The message was clear that there can be stumbles, difficulty, and setbacks. The point is direction: when our proximity to Jesus increases, our desire to live against Him begins to lose its hold.

HEART CHECK

- When I am trying to stop a sin, am I still mentally fixated on it?
- What would it look like to pursue Jesus instead of only fighting temptation?
- Where do I actually run when I feel weak?

PART ONE - APPLICATION

A Plan for the Moment of Temptation

APPLICATION STEP 1: BECOME AWARE OF WHAT IS HAPPENING INSIDE YOU

Before reacting, ask what you are actually feeling. Temptation is often connected to something underneath the surface. The message named loneliness, boredom, stress, rejection, and the desire for comfort as examples.

When you can name the feeling, you can address the real need instead of automatically reaching for a sinful shortcut. If you are lonely, connect with someone. If you are bored, change environments and do something. If you are stressed, slow down and regulate. If rejection is driving you, ask why that person's opinion has so much power over you.

ASK YOURSELF

What am I feeling right now - and what am I hoping this sin will give me?

APPLICATION STEP 2: HAVE SOMEWHERE TO RUN BEFORE YOU NEED TO RUN

Do not wait until the emergency to make the plan. Schools practice fire drills because people need to know what to do before a crisis happens. Purity deserves that same kind of planning.

- Who is my accountability person?
- What room, environment, or situation do I need to leave?
- What do I need to move away from me - a phone, device, app, or conversation?
- What healthy activity can interrupt the moment?
- What Scripture, prayer, or worship habit can redirect my attention toward God?

The personal example in the message was intentionally practical: putting the phone far away, making access inconvenient, contacting a trusted person, and doing something else. The point was not to copy one exact method. The point was to stop pretending that a plan is unnecessary.

APPLICATION STEP 3: USE GRACE - DO NOT ABUSE GRACE

Christians have grace. That is good news. But the message warned against turning grace into an excuse. There is a difference between stumbling and running back to Jesus versus choosing to keep sinning because you assume forgiveness will always clean it up later.

USING GRACE	ABUSING GRACE
"I messed up. I am running back to Jesus."	"I can keep doing this because God will forgive me."
Repentance wants to change direction.	Presumption plans to continue.
Grace gets you back up.	Grace becomes an excuse to stay down.

STUDENT REFLECTION

- What feeling most often sits underneath my temptation?
- What is one specific change I can make to my environment this week?
- Who is one safe, mature person I can contact before I spiral?
- Do I treat grace as a reason to return to Jesus or as permission to delay obedience?

PART TWO

Relationship Stop Signs

WHY "STOP SIGNS"?

A stop sign is restrictive, but the restriction exists because it is protective. It forces us to pause, look, and decide whether it is safe to keep moving. The message applied that picture to dating: some relationships have obvious warnings, but emotional attachment can make us want to keep driving anyway.

KEY THOUGHT

A boundary can feel restrictive and still be loving. Protection often requires a pause.

THE PERSONAL STORY BEHIND THE MESSAGE

The message described a three-year toxic relationship before the speaker came to a healthier place spiritually and relationally. There were repeated warning signs: the relationship started immediately after another breakup, arguments became vicious, the couple repeatedly broke up and got back together, trust was broken, and cheating eventually occurred. The speaker also made clear that he was not innocent in the toxicity; both people contributed to an unhealthy relationship.

The lesson was not 'look how bad the other person was.' The lesson was how easy it is to become so emotionally invested that obvious stop signs stop feeling important. Even after major damage, the desire to save the relationship can become stronger than the willingness to obey wisdom.

PROVERBS 22:3 - WISDOM RESPONDS TO DANGER

The message used Proverbs 22:3: the prudent see danger and take refuge, while the simple keep going and pay the penalty. Wisdom is not simply noticing that something is wrong. Wisdom changes direction because of what it sees.

- I am hiding the relationship because people I trust would be concerned.
- I keep compromising convictions I said mattered to me.
- My parents, leaders, or long-term friends keep raising the same concerns.
- I feel pressure to do things sexually or emotionally that cross my boundaries.
- I keep breaking up and getting back together but nothing truly changes.
- I feel convicted, anxious, isolated, or unlike myself because of this relationship.

REMEMBER

Seeing a stop sign is not the same as obeying it. Protection requires a decision.

THE FOUR STOP SIGNS

What to Pay Attention to in a Relationship

STOP SIGN 1: THEY DO NOT RESPECT YOUR BOUNDARIES

Pressure is not love. Statements like 'Everyone is doing it,' 'If you loved me, you would,' 'We have already gone this far,' or 'Nobody has to know' are not small details. They reveal that the other person's desire is being placed above your conviction, safety, and obedience to God.

BOUNDARY TRUTH

If someone repeatedly pushes past your "no," the problem is not that your boundary is too strong.

STOP SIGN 2: YOU DO NOT LIKE WHO YOU ARE BECOMING

Pay attention to the fruit the relationship is producing. Are you lying more? Hiding more? Compromising more? Pulling away from God? Isolating from people who love you? Becoming more insecure? A relationship should not require you to become a version of yourself you know is less healthy, less honest, and less faithful.

1 Corinthians 15:33 was used as the biblical frame: bad company corrupts good character. Relationships shape us, so who we become around someone matters.

STOP SIGN 3: YOU KEEP EXPLAINING AWAY WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW

Constant excuses are a warning. 'You do not know them like I do.' 'They said they will change.' 'When it is good, it is really good.' Sometimes we explain because we already know there is a problem and we do not want to face what obedience may require.

CHECK THE PATTERN

A few good moments do not erase a repeated pattern of disrespect, compromise, dishonesty, or harm.

STOP SIGN 4: YOU KEEP ASKING FOR MORE SIGNS

Sometimes the issue is not lack of clarity. It is that we do not like the answer we already have. If trusted people have warned you, boundaries keep getting crossed, you keep hiding, and the relationship repeatedly produces conviction and chaos, you may not need another sign. You may need the courage to obey the signs you have already seen.

RELATIONSHIP HEART CHECK

- Does this person respect my boundaries without manipulation or pressure?
- Do I like who I am becoming in this relationship?
- Am I constantly explaining the relationship to people I trust?
- Have I already received enough warning to know what I need to do?

PUT IT TOGETHER

Purity Is Submission in Real Life

TWO MESSAGES - ONE DECISION

The two halves of Week 3 connect around one question: who gets the final word? Sexual temptation asks whether desire gets the final word. Dating asks whether emotional attachment gets the final word. Purity says God gets the final word in both.

WHEN I FEEL...	THE OLD RESPONSE	THE SUBMITTED RESPONSE
Tempted	"I will just try harder."	"I know what I am feeling, and I know where I am running."
Ashamed after failure	"I might as well give up."	"I repent and run back to Jesus."
Pressured in dating	"I do not want to lose them."	"My boundary still matters, even if they dislike it."
Warned about a relationship	"Maybe I need one more sign."	"I will act on the wisdom God has already given me."

STUDENT ACTION PLAN

One temptation I need to stop treating like a willpower contest: _____

The feeling or situation that usually comes before it: _____

One place, activity, or person I will run to instead: _____

One boundary I need to strengthen this week: _____

One relationship warning I need to stop explaining away: _____

One trusted person I will talk to honestly: _____

QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS / SMALL GROUPS

1. Why do you think Scripture uses the word "flee" for sexual immorality instead of simply "fight"?
2. What is the difference between running from sin and running toward Jesus?
3. Why can focusing constantly on "not sinning" sometimes keep our attention stuck on the temptation?
4. Which emotions tend to make people most vulnerable to unhealthy choices?
5. Why is it helpful to create a plan before temptation arrives?
6. How can someone tell the difference between receiving grace and abusing grace?
7. Why do people ignore obvious stop signs in relationships?
8. Which of the four relationship stop signs is easiest to explain away? Why?
9. How should trusted parents, leaders, and friends factor into dating decisions?
10. What would submission to God look like in one real decision you are facing right now?

PARENT / GUARDIAN GUIDE

Continue the Conversation at Home

THIS WEEK'S AIM

This message was designed to give students practical language for two realities they are already navigating: temptation and relationships. The goal was not to create shame around sexual sin or fear around dating. The goal was to help students recognize that purity requires direction, planning, wisdom, boundaries, and submission to God.

WHAT YOUR STUDENT HEARD

- Sexual temptation should not be treated casually; Scripture tells believers to flee.
- Freedom is not only about stopping a behavior. Students need to know where and to whom they will run.
- Temptation often has emotional triggers underneath it, such as loneliness, boredom, stress, or rejection.
- Practical plans and accountability are part of spiritual maturity, not a sign of weak faith.
- Grace welcomes repentance, but grace should never become an excuse to plan continued disobedience.
- Dating relationships should be evaluated by boundaries, character, patterns, and spiritual fruit - not feelings alone.
- A student may already know a relationship is unhealthy but need courage and support to act on what they know.

QUESTIONS PARENTS CAN ASK

- What part of the message stood out to you most - fleeing temptation or relationship stop signs?
- When you are stressed, lonely, bored, or rejected, what do you usually reach for?
- If you were facing a strong temptation tonight, what would your plan actually be?
- Who are the people you feel safe being completely honest with?
- What boundaries matter to you in dating, and what would make you feel pressured or unsafe?
- Do you think it is easy or hard to listen when friends, parents, or leaders are concerned about a relationship? Why?
- Is there any relationship in your life right now that makes you feel like you have to hide, lie, compromise, or isolate?
- How can I support you without making you feel like you have to pretend you never struggle?

A HELPFUL PARENT POSTURE

The best follow-up is honest conversation, not interrogation. If your student shares a struggle, try to keep the door open. Listen before reacting. Thank them for being honest. Help them build a concrete plan and identify safe accountability. If they describe coercion, pressure, threats, or a relationship that feels unsafe, take that seriously and involve appropriate trusted adults and support.

PARENT GOAL

Make home a place where honesty leads to help, wisdom, accountability, and next steps - not immediate panic or humiliation.

REVIEW + RESPONSE

Internalize the Message

QUICK REVIEW FLASHCARDS

What does it mean to “flee” sexual sin?	Create real distance from temptation and move toward God, safety, accountability, and obedience.
Why is retreat only half the plan?	Because you need to know where you are going, not only what you are leaving.
What is the first application step?	Become aware of what you are feeling and what need is underneath the temptation.
What is the second application step?	Have a plan before you need it - where to go, what to do, and who to contact.
What is the third application step?	Use God’s grace when you stumble, but do not use grace as permission to continue in sin.
What are the four relationship stop signs?	Boundaries are not respected; you dislike who you are becoming; you keep making excuses; you keep asking for more signs.
What does Proverbs 22:3 teach in this message?	Wisdom sees danger and responds instead of continuing into it.
What is purity in the language of this series?	Submission - choosing to let God lead and have the final word.

TAKE-HOME CHALLENGE

Before the week ends, write down one temptation plan and one relationship boundary. Make them specific enough that you would know what to do in the moment. Then share at least one of them with a trusted parent, leader, mentor, or mature Christian friend.

CLOSING PRAYER

Jesus, forgive me for the places where I have tried to manage sin on my own or ignored wisdom because I wanted my own way. Teach me to run toward You. Give me awareness when I am vulnerable, courage to make a plan, humility to ask for help, and wisdom to obey the stop signs You put in my path. Help me submit my habits, my body, my relationships, and my future to You. Holy Spirit, lead me, guide me, and direct my steps. Amen.

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Do not run aimlessly. Run toward Jesus. Do not ignore the stop signs. Submit to God and let Him lead.