



SANDALS CHURCH MEN
ADVANCE **SEASON 6**

ALIENS.
PORN AND
PETER PANS



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From inside his room, blinds closed of course, he sits down at his computer. The familiar hum of the processor booting up sounds, for a moment, like a purring cat. A cheshire cat perhaps. One leads you further and further down the rabbit hole of isolation.

Here, in this room, he follows that cat to a site where he can see pictures of real life. These pictures are meticulously framed and shot to represent what real life looks like outside of the rabbit hole. The filters and perspective manipulation are further distortions of real experience. The man clicks a heart on a few and suddenly feels lonely. He feels like he should be at those places taking pictures like those people. He thinks he should have those things. All alone, without a word spoken out loud, he looks inside all of his friends' lives and feels envious, ashamed, inadequate and bored all at the same time.

Perhaps a snack or a meal might make him feel a bit better, so he opens a porn site and begins to build tonight's woman like a sandwich. Each slice of her is hand picked and constructed until it looks good enough to eat. He eats the nothingness by way of his eyeballs while his stomach groans. After the pixels dance and the man has had what he understands to be a normal sexual experience, he erases the internet history like someone might throw away the wrappers and used napkins after a rushed feast. Except nothing was fulfilled, consumed yes, but not fulfilled.

From there he becomes a shotgun-wielding hero mowing down hoards of enemy aliens while rescuing...

One moment: quick break for a late work email. Ever since work became his home (or perhaps his home became his work) everything kind of mixed into this static hum of screens and text. At least when he was working in the office he would have some small talk throughout the day. He even thought of checking out that church that T...

Email done, back to buckshot and alien guts. For the next several hours he wins medals and high scores. He saves teammates and achieves many things. Except nothing was actually achieved, consumed yes, but not achieved.

The night sort of pauses like a screen, or a saving point, or a video buffering and the man goes from his chair to his bed. He's unhappy but complacent. After all, isolation isn't uncomfortable to men. Actually, I think most prefer it. The rabbit hole is gravitational and it pulls. Almost like a riptide at a beach when you are swimming and you realise that you are at station six and you set your towel down by station ten. You might say it sneaks up on you, just as sleep is now creeping up on the man. As he drifts to sleep, he thinks about that church his friend at work told him about but he can't remember the name. He feels a small flicker of hope when he thinks about stepping out of the realm of his current isolation. That flicker will die, however, when he inevitably gets pulled into the riptide again and when you have no one on the beach to let you know how far you are drifting, the distance becomes so great that the swim back seems worse than the prison of isolation you find yourself hopelessly bound to.

QUESTIONS

For the Group After the Video

1. How does society's current view of sexuality differ from God's original plan?
2. With the recent moral failures of high-profile Christian men (Carl Lentz, Ravi Zacharias, etc.), how can we use their experiences to avoid the same pitfalls? What does this teach us about men? What does this teach us about ourselves?
3. Why is isolation so deadly for men?
4. After this past year of isolation, there has to be more porn addiction/secret sexual sins than ever persistent in most men's lives. What are you doing to fight against that in your own life? What are you doing to fight against that for the other men in your life?
5. Who do you have in your life that you can confess things to? Who has you in their life as someone they can confess things to? Why is that?
6. What would happen if we confessed our thoughts and cut these types of things off at the roots, instead of waiting for them to fully bloom and destroy our lives? How do we start getting into the habit of that?
7. What are you doing to help the generation below you fight this influx of pornography and society of sexual sin? How can we help them?
8. How are we helping the generation below us fight against isolation?
9. How are we treating men of different sexual/gender orientations at church? Does it look the way Jesus would? Why is that?



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WEEK 4 • PORNHUB/ISOLATION

Day 1: The Wilderness

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend’s or of thine own were: any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

JOHN DONNE

READ: Luke 3 & 4:1-2

EXPLORE THE THEME: As Jesus meets John the Baptist and is baptized, his ministry here on Earth officially begins. This was prophesied and fulfilled the moment Jesus’s face emerged from the water. Think of it as a send-off of sorts, a graduation, or a groundbreaking. The baptism we read about is one of the greatest moments in human history, which makes what immediately follows it so baffling.

Immediately after the great announcement of Jesus’s work beginning, as the world prepares itself for miracles, teaching and ultimately the triumph of death itself, he is led into the wilderness to spend forty days in complete isolation. Human company will be left behind, the comfort of a home and bed foregone, and even the comfort of food is left behind as he steps into the unknown.

It is there in that dusty isolation that Satan visits Jesus. That same isolation he loves to visit us in today.

WRITE IT OUT: As Jesus is called into the wilderness and isolation, take time to reflect on this last year and the isolation that you have experienced yourself. What have been some of the old bad habits or sins that have tried to, or have successfully crept back into your life? Write them out and try to be as honest as possible. It can be anything from laziness to an affair.

LIVE IT OUT: Partner up with someone in your group and/or community this week to go over the things you write down each day. Take turns reading what you have written down. Be as real and respectful with each other as you can as you practice this exercise. Do not judge or dismiss and be sure to end each talk with a quick prayer over each other asking for grace and encouragement.

WEEK 4 ▪ PORNHUB/ISOLATION

Day 2: Not by Bread Alone

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

JOHN DONNE

READ: Luke 4:1-4

EXPLORE THE THEME: Satan comes to Jesus with the first of many temptations he has planned for his time there in the wilderness. Jesus, at this point, has not eaten anything for forty days so it would be safe to assume that he is hungry in a way most people will never know. Fully understanding this, Satan offers him something his body is craving. So, in the wilderness where no one would see, Satan offers him what he wants.

We see Jesus tempted here as a man with a physical desire that he has been instructed to temporarily refrain from. That is something that every man can relate to.

WRITE IT OUT: As Jesus is tempted with a physical desire, what are some of the physical temptations you face in your life? Just as you did yesterday, take some time to write all those things out. Think about how much worse they get in the isolation of your mind (and body too) and why Satan chose to tempt Jesus there.

LIVE IT OUT: Partner up with that same guy in your group and/or community this week to go over the things you wrote down. Take turns reading what you have written down. Be as real and respectful with each other as you can as you practice this exercise. Do not judge or dismiss and be sure to end the talk with a quick prayer over each other asking for grace and encouragement.

WEEK 4 ▪ PORNHUB/ISOLATION

Day 3: Bend the Knee

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

JOHN DONNE

READ: Luke 4:5-8

EXPLORE THE THEME: The devil then offers the world to Jesus. He brings him to a high point and shows him everything. He sees the beauty and ugly. He sees his creation that Satan now owns. Satan offers him a shortcut to ruling it all. For Jesus came to save the world, he came to rule the world again once sin and death had been defeated. This temptation is a lot more complex than it initially reads. This offer presents an alternative to accomplishing his mission without having to die on the cross. Instead, all he would have to do is simply bow to the devil. Just a simple bend of the knee or nod of the head and it would be finished. For a moment, Jesus is presented another way. A way that doesn't involve so much pain, a way that is quicker and easier.

Of course, that would have come with strings attached as shortcuts so often do. The temptation here is one that challenges Jesus's conviction and morality. The kind of sin that can be understood or, maybe even, justified. The white lies we tell at work, the corners we cut, cooking the books, overcharging someone who doesn't know the going price and the like are very small examples of similar temptations we might be tempted with. Most of the time, they are met in the isolation in our mind. The desert of the things we don't tell people.

WRITE IT OUT: What temptations do you face that challenge your convictions/morality? Do you find it hard to talk about these temptations? Write down anything that comes to mind as you spend time exploring this passage and theme.

LIVE IT OUT: Partner up with that same guy in your group and/or community this week to go over the things you wrote down. Take turns reading what you have written down. Be as real and respectful with each other as you can as you practice this exercise. Do not judge or dismiss and be sure to end the talk with a quick prayer over each other asking for grace and encouragement.

WEEK 4 • PORNHUB/ISOLATION

Day 4: Don't Test Me Boy

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

JOHN DONNE

READ: Luke 4:9-15

EXPLORE THE THEME: The great climax of Jesus's time in the wilderness erupts with the final temptation. This, again, might seem like a bizarre temptation upon first glance; however, upon further investigation I think you will find this to be the most applicable one to men in today's day and age. If Jesus were to throw himself down and command for God to save him from dying, he would essentially be telling God what to do. Jesus would be fully aware of his intent prior to jumping off of the temple peak, therefore implying that God's power and will is something to be played with by those under his authority. It would mean Jesus not submitting as a son to God the Father.

We do this when we do not take our actions or sin seriously. This is the equivalent of knowing that pornography is a sin and harmful to our relationship with God, yet still watching it under the assumption that God's grace has already saved them. It's the same thing as someone driving without a seatbelt, or refusing medical advice, based on some incorrect assumption of God. The crazy thing, as well, is that Satan actually uses scripture out of context to tempt Jesus in this final test. That same tactic is on full display today as people metaphorically throw themselves from the top of the temple and into a pool of sin and heresy under the banner of some misrepresented scripture or ideal.

The scariest part of this type of temptation is that it can only happen in isolation. When there is no one else to speak into your life and challenge you to seek truth. To help you decipher what is God's voice and what is Satan's.

In the desert, they both sound the same.

WRITE IT OUT: Do you take the teaching of the bible and Jesus Christ seriously? Do your actions prove this? Do you have any confusion currently with some of the things you have been reading or hearing about Christians and/or God? Write them all out and pray as you're writing it out; being completely honest as you do so.

LIVE IT OUT: Partner up with that same guy in your group and/or community this week to go over the things you wrote down. Take turns reading what you have written down. Be as real and respectful with each other as you can as you practice this exercise. Do not judge or dismiss and be sure to end the talk with a quick prayer over each other asking for grace and encouragement.

WEEK 4 • PORNHUB/ISOLATION

Day 5: No Man is an Island

“No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bells tolls; it tolls for thee.”

JOHN DONNE

READ: Luke 4:1-13

EXPLORE THE THEME: Read through the temptation in the wilderness story again and take note of the things that Jesus did when faced with temptation. Take notice of his knowledge of scripture and understanding of God. See how he confronts temptation, see how he is aggressive in confronting it. After his time in the desert was done, Jesus set out to enlist his twelve disciples immediately. He invites men into his life, even though he is God, so that they can all navigate through the wildernesses of this life together.

Do you see the danger of isolation in this passage? Do you see the need for community?

WRITE IT OUT: Write out some of the ways you can respond to the current temptations in your life. What does your community currently look like? What do you need to do to avoid the dangers of isolation? Write it all out and pray as you do so.

LIVE IT OUT: Partner up with that same guy in your group and/or community this week to go over the things you wrote down. Take turns reading what you have written down. Be as real and respectful with each other as you can as you practice this exercise. Do not judge or dismiss and be sure to end the talk with a quick prayer over each other asking for grace and encouragement.

Continue talking with each other even though this week is over. There will be a time in the near future where they will need to speak into your life, and you into theirs.