

FAITHFUL BUSINESS TRAVEL FOR THE CHRISTIAN LEADER

In 2013, Convene Chair Tom Lutz and Perimeter Church in Atlanta created a program called Gospel at Work Day. Those who are employed in full-time pastoral work came to better understand the challenges faced by church members who are called to full time work in non-pastoral roles. Likewise, those who are employed in non-pastoral roles, whether they in business, education, arts and media, medicine or other venues, began to grasp new ways that they could live out their Christian convictions and have a meaningful ministry in the middle of their work setting.

It is with special thanks and deep gratefulness to Atlanta Convene Chair Tom Lutz, Convene member Alf Rhea, President of Business Innovations www.bi-ww.com and Rev. Bob Carter from Perimeter Church for their work on suggesting and originally crafting the basis of this small group content piece.

To Learn More About Convene visit <http://www.convenenow.com> or contact Tom Lutz at 404.401.7139.

Learning Objective:

Learn how to experience business travel using God's guardrails. Pre-decide how to handle the sexual temptation that comes with travel. Consider healthy travel policies to protect yourself and your organization.

**Isolation + temptation makes for a deadly cocktail.
Are you drinking one without knowing it?**

“The more involved you are in serving Christ, the greater vested interests Satan has in destroying you and God’s work in and through you. The evil one wants to take you down and to use your life as a bad example to other Christians, who will imitate your moral compromise. God requires that we be holy and pure instruments to be used by him (2 Timothy 2:20-21). More Christians—including Christian leaders—become useless and are lost to serving Christ due to sexual immorality than anything else.”

- Randy Alcorn,
The Purity Principle

Isolation + temptation makes for a deadly cocktail. Are you drinking one without knowing it?

You say your last goodbyes to your family or team at work at head out on the road. There may be a rush of excitement and energy or maybe a weariness as you face another trip. In either case, as in the old television series intro which said, “You are about to enter the twilight zone”, you, Mr. or Mrs. Traveler, are about to enter the “No Accountability Zone”, unless of course you put some boundaries in place.

Psychologist Dave Carder, a family therapist in Fullerton, California, says business travelers “are on a slippery slope headed for trouble” any time they go out to an entertainment venue, drink alcohol, eat expensive meals together, have time “to build a social, platonic friendship” and return to the same hotel. “Secrecy is the protection; alcohol is the barrier buster; and availability lights the fire.”

Howard Hendricks, Dallas Theological Seminary professor, studied 237 instances of Christian leaders who experienced moral failure. He found one common factor: not one of the 237 had accountability relationships with others.

An affair led to the downfall of former Boeing CEO Harry Stonecipher, who worked in Chicago and was asked to resign in 2005 after he had an extramarital affair with Debra Peabody, a Washington, D.C.-based vice president at the company. Both subsequently resigned.

In December, Julie Roehm, a former senior vice president at Wal-Mart, sued the company, claiming that it had violated her contract when she was fired that month. Wal-Mart countersued, alleging that she went on business trips and violated company policy by having an affair with a married man who worked for her. Wal-Mart said it is against company policy for an employee to become romantically involved with someone he or she supervises. "Associates who violate this policy will be subject to immediate termination," it said.

Only time will tell, but many other marriages dissolve after a spouse cheats on a business trip, says infidelity expert Anne Bercht. She wrote a book about her husband Brian's affair.

Many business travelers "have aged 10 years in two years," she says, "and lost jobs, marriages, respect of children, self-respect, friends and a great amount of wealth as a result of what began as a business trip, a drink or two and some flattery." Solomon was a wealthy, powerful, wise business leader and ruler. Here's what he wrote about illicit seduction in the Bible in Proverbs, "Don't lust for her beauty. Don't let her coy glances seduce you. For a prostitute will bring you to poverty, but sleeping with another man's wife will cost you your life. Can a man scoop a flame into his lap and not have his clothes catch on fire?" Proverbs 6:25-28 NLT

The facts are that our culture is filled with sexual freedom and images. The first cover of Playboy magazine in 1953 had a shot of Marilyn Monroe fully clothed in a dress. Today, we can turn on the TV or look at ads that make that cover look magazine. Everywhere we turn, advertising uses sex to sell products.

Marriage Infidelity Statistics Increase On Business Trips:

% of married men who admit to infidelity	22%
% of married women who admit to infidelity	14%
% of men & women who admit to infidelity on business trips	35%

*Source: Associated Press, Journal of Marital & Family Therapy
Research Date: April 8, 2016*

According to “The Normal Bar” by Chrisanna Northrup, Pepper Schwartz and James Witte; 36 percent of men and 13 percent of women told the authors that they gave into temptation while on a business trip — even if they said they were happily married. An out-of-town trip can allow a cheating spouse the luxury of conducting his or her affair in a location that’s far from the sight of prying eyes.

Because the risks involved with business travel are high, we need to prepare to protect ourselves and our company.

CASE STUDY: Nate Larkin

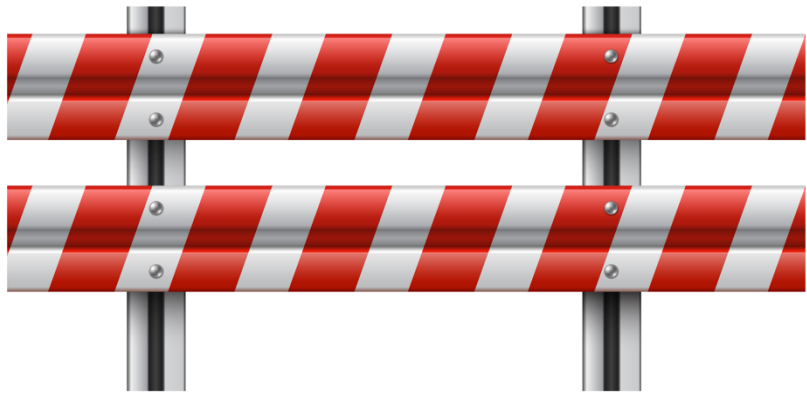
After just five years in the pastorate, Nate quit. An obsession had developed into a virulent addiction to pornography and commercial sex. His decision to abandon vocational ministry was driven largely by private despair about his moral failures and the fear of public exposure. He took a job with a construction consultant and redirected his sermon-writing skills to producing technical reports. But even with the change in careers, his addiction continued. His wife Allie was his only friend and confidante. Nate had achieved his childhood ambition—to live like Samson. And like Samson, he found himself living in isolation and futility.

Watch the 8 minute Nate Larkin Video Below:

[Nate Larkin - I am Second.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cw7aWUQeWY)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Cw7aWUQeWY>

Group Discussion Questions:

1. What lessons did you learn from the events that led to Nate's fall?
2. What were some of the strategies he used to protect his lie?
3. Why did Nate decide to come clean?
4. Are there any ways in which you identify with Nate's story?
5. What is stake for your company related to the risks of business travel?



Guard against Danger Zones

God's Guardrails: Are you entering the "No Accountability DangerZone"?

Rate how you're doing staying within these biblical guardrails.
(1-10 scale, 10 high)

1. Guard your heart (Proverbs 4:23)

Don't share too much about the inner you with a colleague of the opposite sex.

Pack a "home memories kit" in your suitcase; a picture of your spouse, kids, accountability partner or Bible study group. Call home more than once a day and keep telling your family or friends your schedule.

Question: Is there anyone in your work environment with whom you are over-sharing about your personal life?

Rating _____

2. Walk humbly. Don't be too proud that you're standing tall, instead take heed for you may fall. (1 Cor 10:12)

"These are all warning markers—danger! —in our history books, written down so that we don't repeat their mistakes. Our positions in the story are parallel—they at the beginning, we at the end—and we are just as capable of messing it up as they were. Don't be so naive and self-confident. You're not exempt. You could fall flat on your face as easily as anyone else. Forget about self-confidence; it's useless. Cultivate God-confidence." 1 Cor. 10:12 MSG

It's foolish to willingly place yourself in tempting situations and think somehow, you'll find a way to escape. To exhibit wisdom is to understand that you are capable of "falling" if you freely put yourself in certain positions.

Rating _____

3. Live in community. Be open, honest, available and transparent to your support community.

Gal 6:2, Eph 4:15

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

We all need each other. Don't hide or live alone tactically or emotionally.

Questions:

- Are you alone too much when you travel?
- How are you doing with being open and transparent with a few close friends?
- Do you have a trusted accountability partner to help you before, during and after your business travel trips?

**We all need each other.
Don't hide or live alone
tactically or emotionally.**

Rating _____

4. Pre-decide how you will act BEFORE you arrive in a future scenario.

What about alcohol? If you do drink, is consuming alcohol a danger zone while travelling? You may say it's not, but can you (and do you) say "no" to more than one to two drinks? Consuming alcohol for some can weaken your inhibitions and bad ideas become irresistible temptations resulting in damaging consequences.

If you don't want to drink alcohol, you can pre-decide not to watch television in a bar. In the same way, if you love expensive cars, but can't afford one at this moment in your life, you might decide not to test drive one "just for fun" if it's hard for you to resist the purchase.

- a. Proverbs 21:5 ESV "The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty."
- b. Proverbs 14:8 ESV The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

Rating _____

5. Live with margin

Without proper rest and life balance, it's easier for you to fail. Football Coach Vince Lombardi reminds us that "Fatigue makes cowards of us all"

- a. Exodus 34:21 ESV "Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In plowing time and in harvest you shall rest."

Question: How are you doing at protecting your physical health with time away from work, rest, family time, proper sleep and good eating habits?

Rating _____

6. Flee sexualimmorality.

I Corinthians 6:18a

Flee from sexual immorality.

To flee suggests that danger is imminent. That may seem obvious but what often happens is people place themselves in compromising situations, then hope they can say “no.” The point is not being in that situation in the first place.

Do you have boundaries with members of the opposite sex? It’s vitally important is to keep conversations on a “business” level. Don’t talk with members of the opposite sex while you’re alone about personal, intimate issues including problems or challenges you’re having, especially if you’re having marital struggles.

Do you have boundaries with members of the opposite sex? It’s vitally important is to keep conversations on a “business” level.

When you travel with a co-worker, **meet in public rooms**. Not in a room with a bed.

Question: How are your office routines? Are you planning things so that it’s very hard to fall into temptation?

Rating _____

7. Immorality often begins in the mind.

Matthew 5:27-28

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

We may think we are not committing sin if we don’t engage in physical activity with someone of the opposite sex. From this passage, Jesus tells us that lust really begins in the heart and sin is far more than behavior. When we engage the eyes and the mind, so as to “lust” after someone we’re not married to, we are in sin.

Question: Actions start with a thought and thoughts are fed by what we see, hear and read. Are you being careful with what you're filling your mind with? Should any of your habits be changed, such as watching movies with illicit sex scenes?

Rating _____

**8. The leader needs to protect his team members.
(Ezekiel 34:8)**



Ezekiel 34:8

As I live, declares the Lord GOD, surely because my sheep have become a prey, and my sheep have become food for all the wild beasts, since there was no shepherd, and because my shepherds have not searched for my sheep, but the shepherds have fed themselves and have not fed my sheep.

Though this Scripture specifically applies to the leaders of Israel in the Old Testament, business leaders can learn something here. That is, the CEO is to be concerned for his people and though he or she cannot control what they do, the CEO is conscious about placing his employees in places and positions in which potential "harm can come to them.

Question: Do your company travel policies create strong boundaries for your team members?

Rating _____

1. What positive trends did you notice as you interacted with the above questions?
2. What habits, triggering events or danger zones should you be concerned about?
3. What personal pre- and/or post-accountability do you have in place?
4. If a business owner, what steps are in place at your organization to protect your business travelers?
5. Share where you are struggling with your small group leader or another close friend in order to live well in community and allow others into your private world.

Soul Keeping Questions

In his book, Soul Keeping Pastor John Ortberg writes, “Your soul connects your thoughts, your sensations, your emotions, your will, and integrates them into an entire being.” Each part of a human being must be healthy and working as God intended it to, and that makes a healthy soul. It’s important that you “keep” your soul. You only have one soul and no matter how big you build your company or how many awards you accumulate, it won’t be much good if you lose your soul. The person responsible to maintain your soul is you.

Dr. Joanne Jung, professor of Biblical and Theological Studies at Talbot Theological Seminary in California and author of the book, Godly Conversation, reminds us that the Puritans placed a significant role on edifying conversation about spiritual topics that nurtured godliness in homes, friendships and congregations. Below are a series of “soul keeping” type questions worth asking yourself and each other.

Pastor and author Chuck Swindoll recommends these accountability questions:

1. Have you spent adequate time in Bible study and prayer?
2. Have you been in a compromising situation with a member of the opposite sex anywhere this past week?
3. Have you exposed yourself to any sexually explicit material?
4. Have you continued to remain angry towards anyone?
5. Have any of your financial dealings lacked integrity?
6. Have you given priority time to your family?
7. Have you just lied to me?

Road Warrior Recommendations

1. For Those Married

- Make an appointment to call your spouse every night. Make sure you schedule the time
- If you have to reschedule, decide on a time to call back.
- Talk to your spouse openly about your sexual needs.
- Bring your spouse along on some of your business trips if possible.

2. For Marrieds and Singles

- Have an accountability partner, someone you can be honest with and they can ask you the “tough” questions. This is not easy to find but look for someone you trust and is as committed to purity as you are.

3. Your Electronic Devices

- Make sure your electronic devices have some accountability software installed.

4. Hotel Rooms

- For marrieds, consider taking a photo of your hotel room phone and number and text it to your spouse. Call your spouse from that number.
- If possible, stay at hotels where adult movie channels are inaccessible. If they are accessible when you enter the hotel room, turn on the TV and place parental controls on the adult movie channels by using a random code you'll not remember as your stay progresses.
- Consider travelling with a roommate who is committed to the same values as you.

- Text your spouse or accountability partner when you are in the bed and about to go to sleep. This helps you get back to your room at a decent hour.

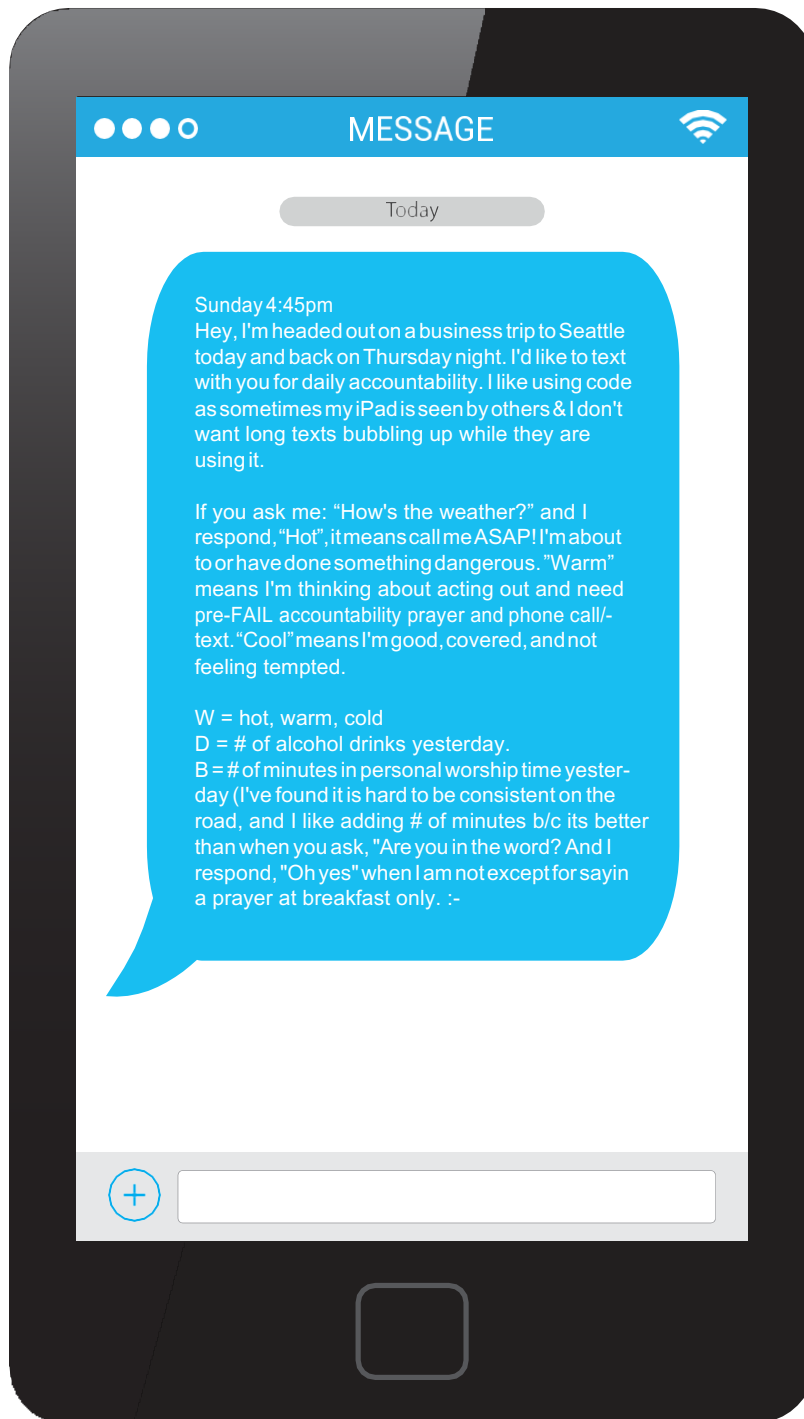
5. Traveling with Co-workers of the Opposite Sex

- If you're in the same hotel, book your room on separate floors.
- If you have to meet with your co-worker, meet them in public places. Don't meet them at their room door.
- If, for some reason, you have to go to their room, keep the door open or meet them out in the hallway.

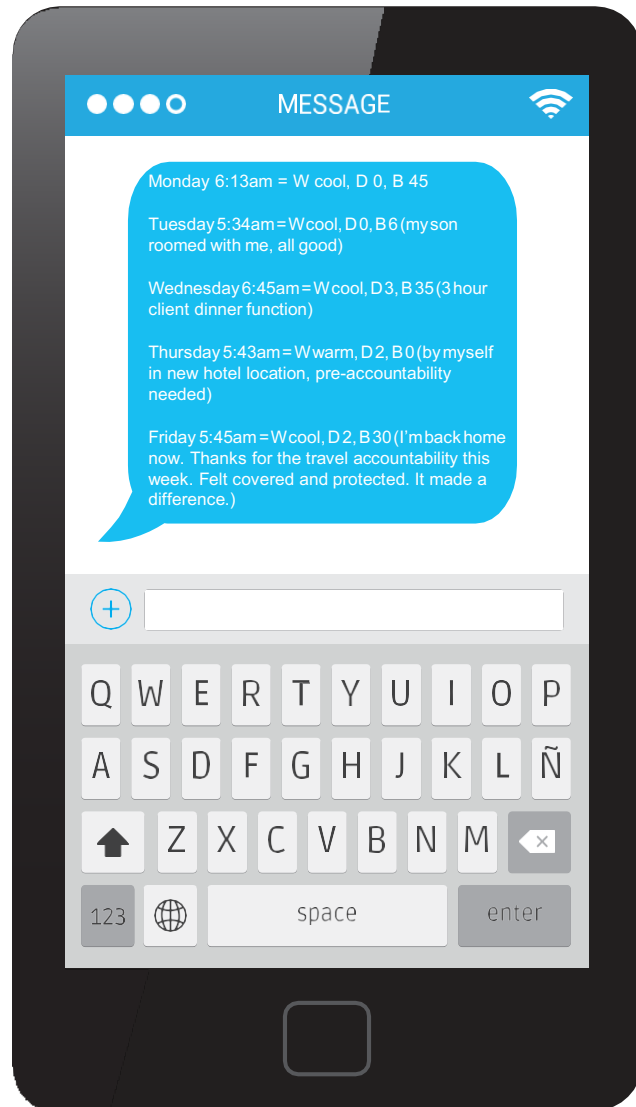
6. Meeting Others

- Don't socially meet someone of the opposite sex alone.
- Limit your alcohol intake.

Here's an example of a modified text thread between two Christian businessmen. Think about how you could adopt this with your spouse or accountability partner.



This is what the week's short texts might look like:



If you've done well in handling travel and sexual temptation, don't give up and weaken your boundaries. If you've not succeeded and had a moral failure, pick yourself up with the power of the Holy Spirit and begin again. Don't let Satan have his way with you. The power to win the battle is already in you. Gordon MacDonald, in his classic book, *Rebuilding Your Broken World*, writes, "almost everyone in the Bible had a broken world experience.....broken world experiences are usually turnaround moments ushering people into greater and more powerful performances of character, courage and achieving."

Suggested Business Policies For Business Owners

While each company is unique and no one policy will fit, all the following policies are actually enforced in some companies and may be useful as you consider developing your set of policies:

1. Consider creating guidelines such that when employee travel requires a male and female travel together, (in a plane, car, bus or train, for any distance), that they should take separate transportation (such as separate cars or different plane flights), or have a third party should also travel with the team so that no company trip will put a male and female in a private relationship.
2. Consider creating guidelines to discourage married staff of the opposite sex to not have meetings alone off-site in any setting (coffee, meals, etc).
3. Update your entertainment policy to prohibit any entertainment that involves sexual immorality.
4. Update your reimbursement policy to indicate that the company will not reimburse any expenses on sexually explicit material or activity.
5. Have an “open door” policy for all meetings between members of the opposite sex.
6. Have a company registry for all business travelers that can alert others of travel plans as a way to be open to accountability.
7. Consider limiting or curtailing reimbursement for alcohol.
8. Update your computer usage policy to restrict visitation to any explicitly sexual websites.
9. Consider adding a policy that pays for counselling assistance and guarantees employment to anyone who admits to an addiction and seeks help.