

nowPURE: old sin, new grace

by Steve Cassarino

Session Two

INTRODUCTION

I Thessalonians 4:3-8, *“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.”*

- Personal testimony
- 3 reasons for the testimony

OBJECTIVE

‘How’ do we break patterns of old (sexual) sins and develop new patterns of purity and grace?

SERMON

I. Start with a clear standard

I Thessalonians 4:3, *“This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor!”*

- God’s will is not ambiguous! Sexual purity is God’s will!
- We need to be ‘*crystal clear*’ on what the standard actually is!
- Review Tim’s definition: ***Sexual sin happens whenever we choose to indulge or cause sexual desire (in the mind) or sensation (in the body), outside of a covenanted one man and one woman marriage relationship.***
- Jesus words in Matt 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.”*
- The danger of lowering or tampering with the standard!

- Our attitude going into this cannot be *“how close can I get to sexual sin w/o actually sinning...NO, our attitude must be how far can I get away from it, not merely outwardly, but inwardly!”*
- But now...how do we do it? I mean **‘how’** do we actually do it? How do we control our bodies??

II. Saturate your heart with God

Psalm 119: 9-11, *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.”*

- The consistent connection...our hearts must seek God (v.10), and our hearts must store up the word of God (v.11)!
- No one can fix you! Except God!
- **‘How’** do you control your body? By controlling your heart! The battle is on the inside!
- If we lose the battle on the inside it doesn’t matter what outward environment we’re in. You will eventually lose the battle with your eye and your hand if you lose the battle in your heart!

“Here we are informed that we are well fortified against the strategies of Satan when God’s law is deeply seated in our hearts. For unless it have a fast and firm hold there, we will readily fall into sin.”

John Calvin

- You see we need to get control from the inside out!! That's where the battle has to be won!
- **A very important truth we need to understand**...the only way you get the word into your heart is through your mind (*i.e. thinking*)!
- Ephesians 4:22-24, *“Put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.”*

Other passages for future study:

Romans 8:5-7 *“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on*

the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, or it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot."

Romans 12:2 *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

Philippians 3:18-19, *"For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things."*

Philippians 4:8, *"Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."*

Colossians 3:1-2, *"If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth."*

- The best defense is a good offense!
- A saturated heart doesn't mean perfection! Remember what Tim said, sanctification is a progressive act! The destination is purity...but the path is one in which we grow towards!! ***Sanctification is a direction, not perfection!***

III. Starve your flesh from passions

I Peter 2:11, *"Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul."*

- A biblical defense must consist of two things...
- **Number 1**, we have to guard the newly sown seed of God's word in our hearts by setting up boundaries!
- Proverbs 4: 23, *"We must keep or guard our heart with all vigilance for out of our heart flows the issues and realities of life!"*
- We must guard what comes into my eye gate and my ear gate!
- Without boundaries our heart is like a city without walls (*cf. Proverbs 25:28*)!

- **Number 2**, a biblical defense involves engaging in a rich and robust practice of biblical fellowship!
- We need to be **transparent** with one another and seek accountability from one another!
- Transparency of heart will lead to a transformation of heart!
- Transparency of heart **is a door!** Christians are a **massive means** of grace for me to overcome my sins!

“It is both foolish and wicked to suppose that we will make much progress in sanctification if we isolate ourselves from the visible church. Many people claim that their devotion is personal and private, not institutional or corporate. This is not the testimony of the great saints of history; it is the confession of fools.”

R.C. Sproul

- Reasons I hear for why people aren't transparent or seeking accountability.
- Reasons I believe people aren't transparent and seeking accountability.

CONCLUSION

- What frees me to share my heart (*whether past or present*)?
- God is not a respecter of persons!
- Know the standard, saturate your heart with God, starve your flesh and surround yourself and submit yourself to other Christians...and then watch how the Spirit makes you pure!