

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues

Topic 19 – Sexual Sin and Purity

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Introduction

Those who have exercised the gift of true saving faith have been changed; God has done a supernatural work in their heart and they have been made new in Christ (2 Cor 5:17; Gal 2:20) and will therefore bring about fruits in their life in keeping with repentance (1 Pet 1:8-9; John 14:14, 23; 1 John 2:3-6). This is a forever-change and one that has practical implications for our life.

The Scriptures declare that our calling is toward holiness and purity.

⁹who has saved us and **called us with a holy calling**, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, 1 Tim 1:9

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹²instructing us to **deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly** in the present age, ¹³looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to **purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.** Titus 2:11-14

One of the areas of holiness which should display a marked difference from the world is the believer's view of sex and sexual immorality.

❖ **Where do you get your thinking of sex from, the world or the Bible?**

It is God's will that the believer be set apart in practice from sin and increase in sanctification. Specifically related to sex, the believer is to abstain from sexual immorality.

³For this is the will of God, **your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;** 1 Thess 4:3

❖ **Do you view the involvement in sexual sin as an activity for unbelievers?**

The only kind of sexual activity that is acceptable to God is sex between a man and a woman who are married to each other. Everything else is sin. The purpose of sex in marriage is to glorify God (1 Cor 10:31; 6:20), procreate (Gen 1:28), express marital intimacy (entire Song of Solomon), deepen marriage companionship (Song 3:1), and physical pleasure (Prov 5:18-19; Song 1:2).

Paul says that some of us were steeped in sexual immorality, but in salvation we have been changed.

⁹Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; **neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals,** ¹⁰nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹**Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.** 1 Cor 6:9-11

There are several sexual sins listed in this and other passages in the NT.

“fornicators” [pornos] means one who is sexually immoral or who commits sexual immorality.

“idolaters” [eidololatrias] is someone who worships something created which is in direct opposition to the worship of the Creator Himself.

“adulterers” [moichos] describes one who is unfaithful to a spouse.

“effeminate” [malakos] means soft or soft to the touch and metaphorically a male who submits his body to unnatural lewdness.

“homosexuals” [arsenokoites] means one who lies with a male as with a female.

¹¹Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. ¹²The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in **sexual promiscuity and sensuality**, not in strife and jealousy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts. Rom 13:11-14

“sexual promiscuity” [koite] negatively describes illicit sexual promiscuity.

“sensuality” [aselegia] referred to any excess or lack of restraint but came to convey the idea of shameless excess and the absence of restraint, especially with sexual excess and lewd sexual immorality, of uninhibited and unabashed lasciviousness.

¹⁹Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: **immorality, impurity, sensuality**, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, ²¹envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Gal 5:19-21

“immorality” [porneia] is associated with with sexual excess and indulgence, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse.

“impurity” [akatharsia] is a broad term describing a state of moral uncleanness in thought, word, and deed, especially sexual sin.

“sensuality” (see “sensuality” above)

⁵For this you know with certainty, that **no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.** Eph 5:5

“immoral” [pornos] (see “immorality” above)

“impure” [akathartos] (see “impurity” above)

We can see from these passages what God thinks of sex outside of marriage: “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9-10); “those that practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal 5:19-21); and “fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb 13:4).

⁴Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*; for **fornicators and adulterers God will judge.** Heb 13:4

Those that **walk** in sin (including sexual sin) show that regeneration has not taken place.

❖ How do you walk?

Lust

Many people often think that the problem with sexual sins are the acts of sexual immorality. However, the problem, as with all sin, is at the heart level.

¹⁸But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.

¹⁹For out **of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.** Matt 15:18-19

Lust is the normal English word that is used to describe evil sexual heart motives. However, the Greek word translated “lust” [epithumai] simply conveys the idea of “having one’s passion toward”. It is a neutral term denoting the presence of strong desire (whether it is good or evil is determined by the context). It is used in a positive sense to mean “earnestly desire” and refers to God given desires which are fulfilled in a God honoring way.

¹⁵And He said to them, “I have **earnestly desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; Luke 22:15

²³But I am hard-pressed from both *directions*, having the **desire** to depart and be with Christ, for *that* is very much better; Phil 1:23

⁷But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short while—in person, not in spirit—were all the more eager with **great desire** to see your face. 1 Thess 2:17

❖ **What God-honoring things do you earnestly desire?**

Most often, “lust” is used negatively to describe strong desires which are perverted by the totally depraved sin nature. For the believer, they are set free from the power of sin over their life and do not have to give in to the depraved strong desires.

²⁴Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and **desires**. Gal 5:24

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil **desire**, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. Col 3:5

¹²Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its **lusts**, Rom 6:12

¹¹For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹²instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly **desires** and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, Titus 2:12-13

¹⁶But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the **desire** of the flesh. Gal 5:16

❖ **Are you living in the power of the Holy Spirit free from lust?**

So, what is the relationship between lust and temptation and sin? James gives us useful insight.

¹³Let no one say when he is tempted, “I am being tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. ¹⁴But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. ¹⁵Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. James 1:13-15

“carried away” [exelko] means to draw out, drag forth, or draw away. It pictures luring a fish from its place of safety by bait.

“enticed” [deleazo] means to beguile, entrap, entice. It pictures catching fish by use of bait.

The problem is not “strong desire”. The problem is perverted strong desire which is “fleshly lust” (1 Pet 2:11). God has given people a strong desire for sex. The strong desire becomes perverted by our total depravity. Without the control of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to live God-honorably and exercise self-control over this fleshly lust. The strong desire draws us out from the safety of living the Spirit filled life and entices us to entertain the strong desire in a God dishonoring way. That fleshly lust then is conceived and it gives birth to sin.

Look at what Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount about the sexual fleshly lust in the heart.

²⁷“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; ²⁸but I say to you that **everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her** has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Matt 5:27-28

Looks [blepo] means to look at and is in the present tense which pictures continually looking.

Everyone (who is married) who continually looks (gazes) at a woman with perverted strong desire (lust) “for her” is sinning in his heart. Piper says that this sexual lust (strong desire) “dishonors its object and disregards God”. Sexual fleshly lust is based on selfishness not on service. Piper goes on to say that “It’s the corruption of a good thing by the absence of honorable commitment and by the absence of a supreme regard for God. If your sexual desire is not guided by respect for the honor of others and regard for the holiness of God, it is lust.”

❖ **Do you consider sexual lust as serious as sins of sexual acts ?**

It is the corruption of sexual desire (fleshly lusts) that wages war against the soul.

¹¹Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. 1 Pet 2:11

❖ **Do you consider yourself in a war against fleshly lust?**

Sexual Sin

Sexual immorality is sin. This is clear teaching from the Scriptures. The Spirit through Paul provides several truths regarding sexual sin that inform our thinking.

¹²All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything. ¹³Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. ¹⁴Now God has not only raised the Lord, but will also raise us up through His power. ¹⁵Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! ¹⁶Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, “THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.” ¹⁷But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. ¹⁸Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. ¹⁹Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? ²⁰For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body. 1 Cor 6:12-20

1. The body is not for immorality, but for the Lord (v13).
2. Our bodies are members of Christ (v15).
3. Sexual sin joins the members of Christ’s body to an immoral person (v15-16).
4. The believer is indwelt with the Spirit (v17).
5. Sexual sin is a sin against God and his own body (v18).
6. The indwelt believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (v19).
7. The believer’s purpose is to glorify God even with our body (v20).

The cost of sexual sin is high. Sexual sin, like all sin for the believer, brings disgrace upon the name of God. Sexual sin has the added consequences of destroying marriages, families, ministries, churches, etc.

²Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them **the way of the truth will be maligned**; 2 Pet 2:2

Sexual sin does not just happen out of the blue. The physical act is the culmination of previous sins that have not been repented of and forsaken. Sexual sins must be avoided at all costs.

❖ **What are you doing to protect God’s reputation?**

The Scriptures give us an indication of the insidiousness of sexual sin. It is a greed-like sin; a sin that involves insatiable appetites.

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to **immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed**, which amounts to idolatry. Col 3:5

❖ **What are you doing to protect yourself from the insidiousness of sexual sins?**

Strategies for Sexual Purity

1. Walk in the Spirit (above the line)

¹Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, **to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Rom 12:1-2

²²But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. ²⁴**Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.** ²⁵**If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.** Gal 5:22-25

2. Be taking in God's Word continually

⁹How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping *it* according to Your word. ... ¹¹Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You. Psa 119:9, 11

3. Guard your mind

³For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, ⁴for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. ⁵**We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ,** 2 Cor 10:3-5

4. Set your mind on things above

¹Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, **keep seeking the things above**, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²**Set your mind on the things above**, not on the things that are on earth. Col 3:1-2

5. Keep alert

⁸Be of sober *spirit*, **be on the alert**. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 1 Pet 5:8

6. Be serious

³But **immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you**, as is proper among saints; Eph 5:3

7. Be careful of your relationships

³³Do not be deceived: **“Bad company corrupts good morals.”** 1 Cor 15:33

8. Do not put yourself in a place to sin

¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and **make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.** Rom 13:14

9. Guard your eyes

¹**“I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?”** Job 31:1

10. Guard your lips

²⁹**Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth**, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29

⁴and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. Eph 5:4

11. Guard your ears

³For the lips of an adulteress drip honey And smoother than oil is her speech; ⁴But in the end she is bitter as wormwood, Sharp as a two-edged sword. Prov 5:3-4

¹⁰As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her *or* be with her. Gen 39:10

12. Guard your reputation

But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; Eph 5:3

13. Run!

¹²She caught him by his garment, saying, “Lie with me!” **And he left his garment in her hand and fled**, and went outside. Gen 39:12

²²Now **flee from youthful lusts** and pursue righteousness, faith, love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. 2 Tim 2:22

14. Have Accountability

⁵Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. ⁶For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. ⁹**Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices**, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him Col 3:5-10

Evaluation Questions for Sexual Purity:

- Do I intentionally view (purpose to look at and linger on) sexually explicit material (TV, computer, magazines, etc.)?
- Do I spend any time alone with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I look forward to time with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I try to justify time alone with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I confide in someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I have emotional bonds with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I joke and flirt with someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?
- Do I ever touch or am I ever touched by someone of the opposite sex that is not my spouse?

Real Life Scenarios

Yourself #1: You are married. Recently, you find yourself having sexual daydreams about a co-worker. What is the first thing you need to do? What are some other things you can do to be protecting yourself and your marriage?

Someone Else: A single young person at church has confided in you that they are struggling with sexual lust. What is the most important thing for you to know about him at this time? What are some things that you can share with this person?

Biblical Solutions for Life Issues
Topic 19 – Sexual Sin and Purity – Additional Study

Re-read today's study. What principle do you find most critical in your life to battle sexual lust?

What relationships do you have in your life where sexual lust is an issue?

Re-read the evaluation questions and determine behavior that needs to be changed to promote purity.

Re-read the principles for purity and determine which ones need to be applied in these relationships.

Read 1 Peter 2:11 and what personal strategies do you have in place will you put in place be engaged in the war against fleshly lusts?

Who do you have in your life to aid you through accountability in the battle against sexual lust?