



The Character of a Disciple

Purity



Introduction

Purity is essential in every Christian's life. But men in particular face a struggle with purity of the sexual kind. It is a battle that every man faces, but few are equipped to win. This study will explore the necessity of sexual purity in the life of a disciple and some suggestions for winning the battle for purity.

While women may also indulge in sexual immorality, they are rarely the instigator of immoral acts. By understanding the struggle that men face, women can help their brothers in Christ to a life of sexual purity. So even though the focus of these thoughts is aimed at men, women seeking a pure life can benefit from this study as well.

God's Standard for Purity

God has high standards for those who put their faith in the Lord Jesus.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Ephesians 5:3-5

- In verse 3, circle the amount of impurity that should be allowed among Christians.
- In verse 3, underline why there should be no sexual immorality or impurity or greed.
- In verse 4, circle the kinds of talking that are out of place.
- In verse 5, circle the phrase used to describe the immoral, impure or greedy person.
- In verse 5, underline the reward that will be withheld from an idolater.

The practice of purity is clearly a central part of God's will for each Christian. Consider the revelation that God made to the Thessalonian Church.

³ It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; ⁴ that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, ⁵ not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; ⁶ and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. ⁷ For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

- Underline each word or phrase that describes or explains God's Will. Look in verses 3 through 6
- In verse 6, draw a box around what is promised to those who practice impurity.
- In verse 7, circle how we are **not** to live.
- In verse 7, underline the type of life to which God has called us.

Purity's Domain

The word **purity** as used in scripture addresses many issues of life. It applies to our speech, our thoughts, our actions, and our motives. The root of the word means, "**not mixed with anything else**".

This study is focused on *sexual* purity simply because that aspect of purity is a source of failure for many Christians.

Immorality in scripture is always measured using God's standards, not man's standard. Therefore, an action may be legally permissible "between consenting adults" but still be immoral from God's view.

Some activities that scripture classifies as immoral include:

Adultery – voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband

Fornication - consensual sexual intercourse between two persons not married to each other.

Sodomy – copulation with a member of the same sex or an animal.

Temptation's Pattern

There is a pattern to temptation that results in failing to live according to God's standards. Adam and Eve followed the pattern. But, more to the point of sexual purity, David followed the pattern in his act of adultery. Understanding the pattern is the first step in resisting temptation.

Fill out the following comparative Table. In the text, circle the answer, then record a summary of your findings in the "Record your answer" column.

Question	Adam & Eve Genesis 3:6-8	David and Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11:2-4	Record your answer
What physical sense was stimulated?	⁶ When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye,	² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing.	
What feeling resulted?	and also desirable for gaining wisdom,	The woman was very beautiful, ³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "Isn't this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"	
What act resulted?	she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.	⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (She had purified herself from her uncleanness.) Then she went back home. * * * ¹⁴ In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah.	
What was done with the evidence?	⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.	¹⁵ In it he wrote, "Put Uriah in the front line where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."	

The pattern of Looking, Desiring, Taking and Hiding is common to those who are tempted to sexual impurity. Let's explore them more fully.

Dealing with Temptation is the subject of the vDRC study "Assured Victory". You can find it at www.vdrc.org in the Bible study section entitled 'Getting Started'.

Joseph: Another story

Joseph is one of those characters in the Bible who successfully withstood the temptation to sexual immorality. His master's wife constantly pestered him, asking him to lie with her. His refusal ultimately led to false accusations against him and imprisonment.

Read about Joseph's struggle in Genesis 39.

Immorality's First Step: Looking

Controlling the eyes is extremely difficult for a man. God has made men to be sexually stimulated by what they see. So when an opportunity presents itself to see a woman with little or nothing on, strong impulses introduce themselves. Job had a way of escape from such temptation.

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

Job 31:1

- Circle the covenant Job made.
- Underline with whom the covenant was made.
- *The NIV translation of the Hebrew word 'etbowneen inserts the idea of lust. In Hebrew, the word means to think on or observe. Do you think adding the word "lustfully" in the translation broadens or narrows the English meaning?*

Jesus also taught about the danger of looking.

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

- Underline the phrase that describes the act that is the same as adultery.
- Circle the place in verse 28 where the adultery occurs.

***Death and Destruction are never satisfied,
and neither are the eyes of man.***

Proverbs 27:20

Immorality's Second Step: Desiring

The things the eye sees leads to a desire that forms in the heart.

but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.

James 1:14

- Circle the source of temptation.
- Underline the effect that evil desire has on a person.
- *The Greek word that is translated "dragged away" means to draw away as a hunter would draw away the animal being hunted with some sound or food. Our own desire entices us to sin.*

A desire, in and of itself is not necessarily wrong. Often you cannot control the fact that you are attracted or that you have a desire. The real issue that needs to be dealt with is how you act upon the desire. Paul gave some useful direction to Timothy about dealing with lustful desire.

A suggestion to our Christian sisters

The clothing you wear can easily lead a man into lustful thoughts.



Dressing modestly can help a brother in his battle with purity.

1 Timothy 2:9

Pornography

Looking at pornography is one of the traps that easily ensnares a man. Once you look, the images are indelibly stored in your mind. And, as you continue to digest the images with your eyes, it becomes more difficult for you to find satisfaction with what you see. Pornography is like an anchor dragging a man deeper and deeper into the sea of impurity.

While the Holy Spirit

will not stop you from yielding to your desire, He does provide the necessary equipment to resist. One fruit of the Holy Spirit is **Self-control**. You have all the resources needed for resisting the desire.



Galatians 5:23
2 Timothy 1:7

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
2 Timothy 2:22

- Circle the action one should take in regard to the evil desires of youth.
- Underline the things you should pursue.

Joseph is an example of a young man who fled the ensnarement of immorality.

⁷ and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" ⁸ But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. ⁹ No one is greater in this house than I am. My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" ¹⁰ And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. ¹¹ One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. ¹² She caught him by his cloak and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.
Genesis 39:7-12

After reading Joseph's story, describe why Joseph refused the advances of his master's wife.

Immorality's Third Step: Taking

Once desire gets in control momentum takes over. Immoral actions follow closely after desire that goes unchecked. Solomon warned his sons about the danger of unbridled immorality.

³ For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; ⁴ but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. ⁵ Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. ⁶ She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not. ⁷ Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. ⁸ Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, ⁹ lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel,
Proverbs 5:3-9

- Circle the words describing an adulteress in verse 3.
- Underline in verse 4 what the end of an affair with an adulteress is like.
- Draw a box around the instruction that is given to the son in verse 8.

What do you think?

Being a young man, do you think Joseph had the same sexual energy that ordinary young men have?

Was Joseph fighting any desire that he might have had for his master's wife?

How was it a "sin against God" to go to bed with her?

What inner mechanism enabled Joseph to flee from her grasp?

Living together

One form of "taking" involves two unmarried people of the opposite sex living together. Typically people do this to determine if they are "compatible" for marriage. It's like taking a car for a test drive.

Here's the problem with the car analogy: the car doesn't have hurt feelings if the driver dumps it back at the used car lot and decides not to buy it. The analogy works great if you picture yourself as the driver. It stinks if you picture yourself as the car.

God's plan is for a couple to refrain from sexual activity until they are married.

Paul also has some guidelines for those involved in **taking**.

¹⁵ Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! ¹⁶ Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh." ¹⁷ But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit. ¹⁸ Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; ²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

- Underline the reason in verse 15 that a person should not join himself to a prostitute.
- Circle in verse 16 the effect of uniting with a prostitute.
- Underline in verse 18 why you should flee sexual immorality.
- In verse 19, circle the phrase that describes the purpose of our body.
- Underline in verse 19 and 20 the reason we cannot give ourselves sexually to just anyone.

Immorality's Fourth Step: Hiding

The thing that typically happens to one who is involved in sexual sin is an attempt to hide the evidence. Hiding is a protective action. Those who try to hide their sin will always fail because God is present everywhere. Solomon wrote of God's capability to his sons.

For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths.

Proverbs 5:21

- Underline those whose ways are in full view of the Lord.
- Circle what the Lord does to the path's of a man.

Job was also aware of this characteristic of God.

Does he not see my ways and count my every step?

Job 31:4

- Circle the thing God sees.
- Underline how many steps He counts.

God spoke through Jeremiah concerning the uselessness of hiding.

Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 23:24

- Underline why it is useless to try and hide from God.

Because God fills His creation, He knows all that goes on and watches every act whether good or evil.

A way of Escape

God promises a way of escape from every temptation. In most cases it boils down to things you must do before temptation attacks:

- **Hide God's Word in your heart (Psalms 119:9-11)**
- **Treat younger women as sisters, older women as mothers (1 Timothy 5:2)**
- **Enter into an accountability relationship with a trusted friend. Give him the right to ask probing questions about your personal life. (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12)**

Unwanted pregnancy

One of the byproducts of sexual activity is the creation of another living being. Not all immoral behavior results in pregnancy. But when a child is conceived some are tempted to hide the evidence through **abortion**.

If you are facing such a choice, seek the advice of a man or woman who can counsel you using God's Word. The Bible has answers for every dilemma.

Here are some verses to help you understand the point in time where life begins:



Psalms 139:13-16
Isaiah 46:3
Isaiah 49:1
Jeremiah 1:5
Luke 1:44

Review

Using the section titles of this study as a guide, summarize the teaching of each section in the space below:

God's Standard for Purity

Temptation's Pattern

Immorality's First Step: Looking

Immorality's Second Step: Desiring

Immorality's Third Step: Taking

Immorality's Fourth Step: Hiding

Application

Is there something that God is speaking to you about through this study?

What action do you intend to take?

How do you plan to check-up on yourself?

Why a Summary?

A summary is an important tool in Bible Study. It forces you to evaluate the material and find the parts that are the most important from **your** point of view. It also forces you to combine thoughts and words in describing the overall teaching.

So **don't skip this part**. It will help you grasp the overview and will also help you personalize the teaching.

Don't Skip the Application!

It is the most important part of the study.