

A Message On Sexual Purity

by Donny Coulter

This sermon emphasizes the importance of dwelling on purity, particularly in the context of sexual purity. It delves into the biblical definition of purity as being morally clean, holy, and free from defilement, highlighting the need to present ourselves as pure vessels to God. The sermon addresses the struggle with sexual immorality, the impact of pornography, and the call to pursue purity both internally and externally. It calls for men and women to think on things that are pure, aligning their thoughts with the purity of Christ and emphasizing the power of the Holy Spirit in overcoming impurity.

Scripture: Philippians 4:6, 1 Thessalonians 4:3, 1 John 3:2, Ephesians 5:1, Psalm 12:6, James 3:17, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Corinthians 11:2

Topics: "Purity", "Overcoming Sexual Immorality"

Description

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Transcript

Well, you guys won't practical. Last week I said, here we go. Well, here we go.

Turn with me if you would to Philippians chapter four. Is it going to show up? Because I'm all of a sudden I can't. There it goes.

Philippians chapter four. Let's read together from verse six through nine. Be anxious for nothing but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving.

Let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever things.

We spoke. Things are true. Is that me going up and down or? Okay.

We talked about things which are true. That truth come combats lies that our struggle is not a struggle of power, but it is a struggle of truth that if we are ever going to be stable as believers, then we must dwell on

those things which are true. And it is true according to God's truth.

No one else's, but God's. Whatever things are true. Whatever things are noble or whatever things are honorable, not what things are dishonorable or that lack integrity, but those things which have integrity, those things which are honest, those things which are honorable.

We are to think on these things. Dwell on these things. We are to meditate on these things.

Things that are honorable. Whatever things are just. Last week, we spoke on those things that are meaning.

It's it speaks to the idea of following the standard of God. That which falls within the standard of God. That is just.

That is right. That is righteous. And we need to be thinking, dwelling, meditating on those things which are just.

That exist between the lines as we illustrated last week. And it's not just that we can stand against a particular sin, as we found out last week, but we also must have the proper heart, attitude, the thinking, the words and actions that line up with and in the lines of God's teaching about himself. The doctrine of God, the standard of God, all of that must line up, not just our disdain for the sin.

Our actions, attitudes and words must line up as well. Now, this week we are covering whatsoever things are pure. Let's continue reading.

Whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report. If there is any virtue and if there's anything praiseworthy, meditate, think, dwell on these things. And these things, the things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do.

And the God of peace will be with you. Let's pray together. Father, in these next few moments, I pray that your Holy Spirit would lead.

I pray that he would lead in the hearts of those that are here to listen and hear. God, I pray that your Holy Spirit right there at home, where your children are listening today, I pray that your Holy Spirit would do his work. May he teach as only he can teach.

I pray that he would convict as only he can convict. And then, Father, I pray that he would empower as only he can empower us to overcome. Father, I pray for myself this morning.

You know that there is trepidation. There is a little uneasiness in my own heart. And speaking of these kinds of things when we're up front.

But Lord, I pray that you would help me to be emboldened and empowered by your Holy Spirit. To speak as you have spoken. And to trust you to do your work.

We ask these things now in Jesus' name. Amen. We are talking today about whatever is pure.

Whatever is pure, dwell on these things. Dwell on things of purity. So what does the word pure mean in the Bible? What does it mean to me and you? Well, the word itself actually means that which is holy or that which is morally clean.

In other words, it means that it's something that can be presented to God. It means that it is ceremonially clean and can be presented to God. Does that bring you back to your old understanding of the Old Testament? That there was no gift that was supposed to be brought to God.

There was no animal for sacrifice that was to be brought to God that was not pure. In the sense that it was ceremonially clean to be able to be presented to God. It means that it is free.

Whatever it is that we are to be dwelling on. Whatever it is that we are to be thinking on is free from defilement. It's free from, it's uncontaminated by moral... My goodness, my brain just shut down.

Moral depravity, that's the word I was looking for. It's uncontaminated by moral depravity. It is stainless.

I really wanted to find a bright white cloth that I could bring here today and present it to you. And then as we move forward in the message present a different cloth. An old dirty dish rag.

And so that you could physically and visibly see the difference between that which is uncontaminated. That which is not defiled. That which is stainless.

That which is flawless. That which is guiltless. That which is morally and inwardly clean.

That is what pure means. Boy that, like me, you start thinking about your thought life. That gets rid of a lot of things that we think about, doesn't it? The word also means chaste.

It means blameless. Let's look at some of its uses in scripture. You should have those in your notes.

Psalms chapter 12 and verse 6, the words of the Lord are pure words. Like silver tried in the furnace of earth, purified seven times. James chapter 3 and verse 17 speaks of wisdom.

It says, but the wisdom that is from above is pure. Do you see that? Remember now, think about the definition that it is undefiled, that it is uncontaminated, that it is stainless. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable and gentle and willing to yield full of mercy and good fruits without partiality and without hypocrisy.

Um, 1 John chapter 3, 1 John chapter 3 and verse 3. And everyone who has this hope in him, capital H, okay? Everyone who has this hope in him, that is in Jesus, purifies, same word, except it's an action, purifies himself just as he, that is Jesus, is pure. Now let me read it again and think through where this verse is taking us. And everyone who has this hope in him, in Christ, purifies himself.

That is the person, every person who has hope in him purifies himself. Cleanses himself just as he, Christ, is pure. 2 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 2. This is a verse that we've been talking about in a couple of places with folks around here because it's been used in counseling.

2 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 2. Paul is speaking to the Corinthian church and his desire is for them to be active in their pursuit of holiness. And look what he says, for I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. Paul is saying, I am jealous for you, Corinthian church, with a godly jealousy.

For I have not betrothed you, I have not engaged you to, says for I have betrothed you, I have engaged you to one husband that I might present you as a chaste or pure virgin to Christ. You see the picture now, you're beginning to see, and there's others that we could bring out. I wanted to bring out its uses in Scripture.

That's what we've done each week. We've gone through, we've looked at the word, tried to define the word, and then look how it's used in Scripture. And then we've gone from there to try to see if we can make a practical application in our lives where we are and how we live, okay? So we have this idea that pure means stainless.

It means uncontaminated. It means to be undefiled. It is not defiled.

It has no adherent of evil in it. It is pure, it is chaste, it is blameless. Now as I begin to think through this, with all of the things that go around in my life and all of the people that I get to talk to, when I thought about a practical application, I want you to understand that last week we talked about a practical application, and it wasn't like I just picked that out of the sky last week just so I could talk about it.

That was not it because it was very prevalent in the weeks before that to me in my life and around us. Secondly, I want you to know that when we talk about these things, we're talking about things that I believe that God gives direction to me for. I can't talk about every practical application to all of these words, but I can talk about where the Spirit leads.

And today we're gonna talk about the area of purity and sexuality. Sexual purity. Turn to Ephesians chapter five.

Ephesians chapter five verses one through four. Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children. Say that again.

What are we supposed to do? Remember we're talking about the command to be holy? And he says to you, be holy as I am holy. And now we're getting the command here, look what he says, to be an imitator of who? Not of Donnie. Not of Joel Osteen.

Not of Peter. Not of Norma. But of God.

Be imitators of God as dear children. You get the picture? My old friend Tony Ellenberg had a song, I probably shared this with you before, but my old friend Tony Ellenberg had a song that he wrote because he has polio. Tony has polio and so he walks with a very distinct limp.

He had polio when he was a child and he walks with a very distinct limp. He's a big man and when his son was growing up, he was mowing the grass. And as he's mowing the grass, his son is walking behind him with his little mower and he's limping just like his dad.

And so he came up with a song that says, I want to be just like you. Imitators, be imitators of God. We are called to holiness, therefore we imitate a holy God.

And he says, in that imitation of God, walk in love as Christ has also loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma. Now how much are you supposed to love one another? How are you supposed to love one another? As Christ loved us. We are to love as Christ loved so much that he was willing to give himself up.

Now look at verse three. Now he's told us, we are to imitate God, we are to love as Christ loved and to be a sacrificial sweet smelling aroma in the incense that rises up to God, that we are to be that sweet smelling aroma. Now look at verse three.

But fornication, now this word fornication here is, the Greek word is pornea. Does that sound familiar? It's actually where we get our word about pornography. But it's pornea.

It says here, but fornication or sexual, some of your versions will say, but sexual immorality, but fornication or sexual immorality are all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you as is fitting for saints. You see why I think it's important that we talk about it? Because here, Scripture says that within the body of believers, within this body, whether here or whether at home, if you're a part of this body, He says here that we are to not let sexual immorality or uncleanness or covetousness even to be named among us. It's spoken of any one of us in the body.

Let that sink in a moment, that we as the body ought to be such imitators of God that there is no uncleanness, covetousness, and no sexual immorality, no fornication among us. Let me read it to you in NIV, verse 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. I love that translation.

I'm not huge on the NIV, but every once in a while they get it. And that one gets it. But you, but among you, there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality or any kind of impurity or of greed because these are improper for God's people.

Nor should there be any obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking which are out of place but rather thanksgiving. You see it? So when I think of, here's the reason why we're talking about this, because when I think of things that are pure, when I think of a subject that has the most impact on our lives, the most impact on society, the most impact on our young people, is this idea of sexual purity. Now listen, when we were growing up, for some reason the church talked about this.

We talked about promoting and encouraging sexual purity among our young people. As a matter of fact, I gave my daughters sexual purity rings. We talked about it in our house.

We talked about it in our church. And I wonder how many of our young people actually know that this is the design of God. It's not been long ago that I had a conversation with our young people.

And when I mentioned the fact that you could have a relationship without sex, they were snickering and laughing. Because, and it made me wonder then, do they even know? Do they even know the design and the plan of God? Well today, they will know a little bit. Young people, you're in the back and I need you to listen.

Pay attention for a moment. The word for sexual immorality in the Greek is pornea. Matthew chapter 7 says that those kind of things come out of the heart, the seat of man.

We've been talking about that. The mind and the heart is the seat of man. And he says that those kinds of things, sexual immorality, that is sex outside of the design of God, that those things come out of the heart.

1 Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 18 says that we are to flee. We are to run away from. We are to run as fast as we can away from sexual immorality.

Listen to this verse. I am afraid that when I come to you, when I come again, my God will humble me. This is Paul speaking to the Corinthians.

I am afraid that when I come again, my God will humble me before you and I will be grieved over many who have sinned earlier and have not repented of the impurity, sexual sin, and debauchery in which they have indulged. Paul is saying, I'm afraid that when I come, I'm going to find people that have, that have named among you. You see what he's saying? When I come and show up that I'm afraid, that when I show up that I'm going to find people there that have not repented and turned away from their indulgences.

So the Old Testament word for sexual immorality was used to describe spiritual harlotry. It was often contained the idea of idolatry mixed with sexual pleasure to appease the gods so that the lands could be blessed and fertile, so that the women could be fertile. I think about the children of Israel and I think about Abraham.

God chose Abraham from the midst of a wicked people. He chose Abraham and he covenanted with him and he sealed that covenant with circumcision. And then Moses is raised up and Moses meets God in the desert in a burning bush and there he for the first time recognizes the immensity of God's name, I am.

He goes and delivers the children of Israel. They go out into the desert and there on Mount Sinai, God speaks with them. And God lays down His covenant laws.

He establishes His covenant with the children of Israel. And they off into the wilderness because of their disobedience for 40 years and then finally they come to a place where they can enter into the promised land. And the promised land was Canaan.

And when they got to Canaan, it was a land flowing with milk and honey. It was plentiful. Everywhere you looked was plenty.

It was beautiful. It was lush. It was green.

It was fruitful. Everything they saw. I wonder if they thought of the God of the desert.

Was it that God of the desert that was making this place this way? Or was it the God of the people? And I think that they never truly decided that in their hearts because you know the story of the children of Israel. They oftentimes went whoring after the gods of the people of the land. And it didn't take long until they were following the rites and the rituals and the gods of the lands.

As a matter of fact, we get to Ahab and Jezebel and what did they do? They built the temple to Baal. And there they worshipped Baal and Asherah, the goddess of fertility by having sex with prostitutes. God's people following man's ways.

Unclean and ungodly ways. And so the Old Testament has this idea of idolatry. Let me be bold enough to say that I don't believe it's changed very much since then.

We may not have an idol of a lot of gods that we have to appease. But when it comes to the realm of sexuality, we have one God that we'd like to please. One God that has become our idol and that is ourselves.

To bring pleasure to ourselves. Young people, I want to say to you that if you look through, and I don't have the time to really disseminate all that needs to be said today. But I want you to know that God's design is for you to wait until you are married to participate in sex.

And I want to say that in saying this. That God has designed it for that very purpose. God has designed it for that relationship.

The relationship of marriage. As a matter of fact, God says in 1 Corinthians chapter 7. I don't know if I put this one in there. I did not.

1 Corinthians chapter 7. God says to us that we are, that to avoid fornication. To avoid sexual immorality. To avoid the uncleanness.

To avoid going outside of what God has designed. He says let every man have his wife and let every woman have her husband. You see what he's saying? That to avoid sexual immorality, be married.

And then the Bible tells us that in the marriage, the bed is undefiled. That it is meant to be a beautiful thing. It is meant to be by God to be enjoyed by His creation.

In its proper context, it is meant to be enjoyed and it can be a wonderful thing. And I want to say to you young people, trust and believe and wait on God. Wait and do it right.

Think about sex that way. Listen, I know that all of the stuff that you read, all of the stuff that you see and all the stuff that you hear gives you a completely opposite message. I know it does.

But I want to say to you, don't listen to the outside voices. If you are a child of God, if you're a follower of Jesus Christ, then you listen to what God says is His design. And His design is beautiful.

And I also want to say to that, if you fail, if you falter, I want you to know that the cross is for that. You do not have to live in guilt and shame. The cross takes care of that.

But we should not be pursuing those things which require the power of the cross. Now let me turn it to us men. Ladies, I know that this applies to you as well.

But for today, I want to speak to our men. I have had stories, story after story, that have come into my ears and into my heart over the last few years, that shows me that we do not, that we as men do not take this seriously. That we don't think on things that are pure.

I've heard stories, I even said, I think maybe this morning, I said that if I were, if I were able to do it, and you were able to be completely honest and transparent and raise your hands this morning, if I were to ask every woman in here who has been somehow in some way affected by the untowardness of a man, then I bet you that 100% of the hands would be raised. It means treating you wrong. The story of so many women, I'll tell you one we just heard last night.

We're sitting in a living room with a couple in Calgary, and they told us about a story about some friends of theirs living in South Africa. Husband, wife, three daughters. The husband has been addicted to pornography for years.

And now it has come out, in the last couple of three years, it has come out that his daughters became the object of his pornography. He's now divorced, facing jail time. I want to say, don't think that to be something that doesn't happen often.

It happens way more than we would like to think it does. In my small sphere of women in my life, of my family, all of them, every one of them have been abused. That ought to make us men, that ought to make

us, it ought to make the hero rise up in you, shouldn't it? When you hear something like that? Maybe you don't know that, telling you in a role as a pastor, it happens a lot.

And it comes down to you and me as men. Being godly fathers to our girls, to being godly husbands to our wives, and being godly mentors to our sons. When you speak of sexuality, do you speak of it in a way that brings thoughts of purity to your son or to your daughter? We struggle.

It is a struggle. Men seem to struggle with sexuality. And one of the greatest tools to take purity away from sexuality is the word that we get from sexual immorality in the Greek, and that is pornography.

I know we're not supposed to talk about these kind of things in church, but we're going to today. We are dealing with an epidemic among men. I can't remember now the numbers.

I looked them up and I won't tell them because I can't tell you the truth. But you would be astounded if you saw the numbers. Men, if you're struggling, if you're struggling with pornography, then I want to draw you to these verses here in 1 Thessalonians.

Oh, I don't know how to go back. There we go. Sorry.

1 Thessalonians chapter four, verses one through eight. Are you going to give me a few extra minutes this morning, will you? Okay. I'm sorry.

I'm not sorry. I shouldn't say that. I think this is important.

Finally, then, brothers and sisters, we urge and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more just as you have received from us how you ought to walk and to please God. You see what he's saying? We want you. It is our heart's desire for you to walk in such a way in the Lord Jesus every day, more and more and more in such a way that you please God.

You see the cry of holiness, the drive to live out holiness? For you know what commandments we gave you through our Lord Jesus? For this is the will of God. Watch this. This is the will of God.

Your sanctification or your holiness, some of your versions may say, your sanctification, that you should abstain from sexual immorality, fornication, that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification, in holiness, and in honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God. Don't act like those who are not covenanted with God. That's what he's saying.

Don't act like those. That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter if you think that it only affects you, you are wrong. That no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter because the Lord is the avenger of all such as we also forewarned you and testified.

For God did not call us to uncleanness, but to holiness. Therefore, he who rejects this does not reject man, but God who has also given us the Holy Spirit. Let's walk through this.

I don't think that if you struggle with homosexuality, you will never get victory over that struggle unless you take a two-pronged approach at working on it. The problem is we oftentimes in the Christian world take the one-pronged approach. We either do one or the other of these things.

Either we go after the external, so I believe it needs to be an internal and an external thing that we do, a fight that we wage. Oftentimes, we do the external. We net nannies on our phones or covenant eyes or

some kind of a program or we'll move our computers into the living room or we'll throw our laptop out the second story floor.

I will do something like that, but we don't deal with the internal. The struggle that's internally, we don't deal with that. We just deal with the outside and just dealing with the outside, just putting enforcement in place will never, ever fix the problem of purity.

Or we go to the internal. We work on our motivations. We work on our lusts and we work on our hearts, but we don't do anything externally to work and the flesh is willing or the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.

And when we don't do stuff externally, then we're setting ourselves up for failure. So I believe that if we're going to overcome the struggle of pornography, then we must work on the internal and the external. Can I tell you a personal story? I'm about to be transparent with you.

I don't know how many preachers you'll have that will ever admit it, but there was a time in my ministry life when I traveled and I was away from home about two weeks out of every month and I found myself alone in hotels and for the first time in my life exposed to pornography. And I dabbled. I was not addicted.

I know that there is an addiction problem that can happen to us men. That's not where my problem was. I wasn't addicted, but I dabbled and I excused it.

I convinced myself that nobody would know. My wife doesn't know. It only happens when I'm away.

It doesn't have a hold on me. Until that night, I can picture the hotel room in Saskatoon when the loving, ever-present Spirit of God met me in my room and said these words, this is offensive to me. This is offensive to God.

This is offensive to the cross. To the cross. It was at that moment when I heard the words offensive to God that I had on several occasions offended God that my struggle turned.

I began to deal with the internal and the external. And I believe, fellas, if we're ever going to overcome this internal struggle, it has to begin with the stark reality that we are offensive to God and that we are committing infidelity. Listen, men, we are committing infidelity to Jesus Christ, our husband, because he is looking for a pure and chaste bride.

And that by participating in that which God is outside of the lines and the standard of God, by participating in that and dwelling on that and living in that, that we are offensive to him and that we are committing adultery against our God. And may I say, infidelity to our wives. So we need to learn that this is the will of God.

There's the command, 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. We're not going to break it down as much as I wanted to. I don't got time. 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. This is the will of God.

That's where it starts, fellas. It is the will of God that we not walk down those paths, that we not live in that way. That is not.

And then we have to realize that you don't have the power. How many of you in your struggle have said, I'm not doing this no more. And you do good for a week or two or three.

And then something clicks, trips, and there we go again. And it takes over worse than it did the first time. Realize that you cannot do this in your own power alone.

You have been given the Holy Spirit. Look what that verse says, verse 8. Therefore, he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us the Holy Spirit. He has given us the Holy Spirit and everything that we need to find success in our battles with the flesh and with the devil and with this world.

He's given us everything, but especially the Holy Spirit. He has given you the Holy Spirit. First John chapter 3. Listen to what John says.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us that we should be called the children of God. That's who you are. Watch this, men, women, every one of us.

That's who you are. You are a child of God. You have been loved by him.

Therefore, the world does not know us because it did not know him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be. But we know that when he is revealed, we shall be like him.

For when we see, for we shall see him as he is. That's who we will be. So verse 1 is who we are.

Verse 2 is who we will be. Look at verse 3. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he is pure. Verse 1, who we are.

Verse 2, who we will be. Verse 3, who we should be. And who we should be is men and women who dwell and think on the purity of Christ.

In all areas of our lives, we are to pursue purity. Men, if the world that we live in is going to change, and the story becomes different, especially within the church, then you and I are going to have to be pursuers. Of purity.

We're going to have to dwell on that which is pure. And I promise you when you open up your computer or your phone and look at those images, it is not dwelling on the purity that God has called you to. I know this has been a difficult message for both the men and the women here.

I don't, I want to emphasize to you the same that I emphasize to our young people. If you have been caught in pornography, then I want you to know that's what the cross is for. If you've been abused and used by someone, I want you to know that's what the cross is for.

It's what it's for. And so the encouragement to you as a man, as a woman, and as young people is to dwell on and think on the things that are pure, not on the things that the world produces. Imagine if all the TV shows and all of the songs and all of the stuff we see on our phones and our computers were to be gone.

Can you imagine how different it would be? It would be so different. Do you dwell on purity? Is what I'm dwelling on, you ready? Is what I'm dwelling on lead me to the purity of Christ? And if it doesn't, then it's not worth our spending time in. Amen.

And that goes for men and women and young people. Let me pray for you. Father, I know this has been difficult.

Your Holy Spirit is good and gracious and kind and he is at work. I pray for our young people that you would raise up young men and women who will stand for sexual purity, who will stand no matter what it makes them look like or who laughs. They will stand and wait for the woman that you have given them or the man that you have given them.

Help them to wait. I pray for those in our congregation and those who may be listening who have been abused. I pray, Father, that you would forgive us as men in our church, as men in our community who have not stood up for that which is pure.

I pray, Father, that you would help those who are struggling with the abuse that's happened to them. I pray that they would know the power of the forgiveness of the cross, the power and the release from the shame that they feel that really is not theirs. I pray for those, us men, fathers, husbands.

I pray, Father, that you would help us to change what we think on, what we dwell on, to think on those things which are pure. I pray, Father, that you would help those who are struggling with pornography this morning. I pray that they would begin this day to live as if every time they think on it, it is an offense to the holy God and the holy cross by which they have been saved.

And God, may it lead them down a path through the empowerment of your Holy Spirit to find the strength and the will through him to be able to overcome and then be examples in the church, in the family, and in the community. Lord, I trust you with this kind of message. There's so much left hanging, but I do pray that you would help us and give us grace.

We ask these things now in Jesus' name, amen.

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