

## Purity in an Impure World

*“As for other matters, brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit.”* - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

### Some Points to Ponder

1. Some have more struggle with this issue than others. But a large percentage of men and women in North America say that this issue is their most difficult temptation.
2. Sexual impurity is a problem for both men and women.
  - For men it usually involves looking and/or fantasy.  
*“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.”* - Job 31:1
  - For women it usually involves relationships.
3. The driving force behind sexual temptation is not as much hormones as it is the mind.
4. There has never been a time in all of history where sexually stimulating material has been so prominent and available.
5. Many in our culture have given up on the issue of abstinence, seeing it as impossible or only for the ultra-religious.
6. Where sexual relationships outside of marriage are cautioned today, it is usually because of pregnancy or disease.
7. BUT, any sexual activity outside of marriage is still sin.

### Some False Notions in Dealing with Sexual Temptations

1. Some say, “I can’t defeat this temptation; so I might as well give in to it.”  
*“For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, **adultery**, **sexual immorality**, theft, false testimony, slander. <sup>20</sup>These are what **make a person ‘unclean’**.”* - Matt. 15:19

2. Some think, “Once I’ve seen enough, I won’t desire it anymore.”  
*“Death and Destruction are never satisfied, and neither are the eyes of mankind.”*  
 - Proverbs 27:20
3. Some think that if they remove themselves from temptation, the problem with sexual temptation will be solved.
4. Some think that if they “sow their wild oats” or have “one fling” it will somehow be to their benefit.
5. Some believe that if they get out of their current relationship and find someone else, it will somehow be better.

### So, What Should I Do?

1. I should make sure that my heart and mind are in communion with the Father.  
 (1 Timothy 4:7)
2. I should control my thought life.  
*“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”*  
 - Philippians 4:8  
*How?* Share my temptations with my spouse. (*Be cautious*)  
 Share my temptations with my ministry partner.  
 Practice holy thinking (see Philippians 4:8 above).
3. I should stay away from situations where temptations are most powerful.  
*“Jesus said to him, ‘Away from me, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.’”*  
 - Matthew 4:10
4. I should take drastic measures to remove myself from anything that causes me to stumble.  
*“If your **right eye** causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup>And if your **right hand** causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away.”*  
 - Matthew 5:29, 30

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