Spiritual Disciplines

Lesson 22: Wednesday March 2nd, 2022

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**TEACHING NOTES**

**Spiritual Discipline: Chastity / Purity**

# Introduction

Good evening church. It is always my joy to be able to teach, and I am excited for our lesson tonight!

As a reminder:

**1 Timothy 4:7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness**

This year our Midweek focus is on the Spiritual Disciplines and the fruit of the Spirit.

The spiritual disciplines are practices that we as Christians perform. They are not just something we learn about, but something we actually do and carry out. We find in Holy Scripture that these practices honor God and promote spiritual growth among believers.

Spiritual disciplines are practices or habits that Christians prioritize because they help us grow in Christlikeness and remind us of our dependence upon Christ.

Spiritual disciplines are things we do regularly and they require practice to grow in them.

Please pray with me before we get into our lesson.

Pray:

**1 John 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.**

Tonight, I get to teach on the spiritual discipline of chastity & purity. Chastity is from the Latin word castus and it simply means purity. However in our context, when we think about or use the word chastity it is more specifically done in regards to sexuality purity.

Before we dig in let’s consider why this is so important. God is pure, there is no imperfection no mixing of bad with God’s goodness. If we are called by God, purchased by God and given new life in His name we ought to desire to honor God and His pureness by striving for our own purity.

So what I aim to do tonight is begin with a focus on general purity within a variety of areas of life, then I will turn to chastity and end our time with a practical application.

**Purity:**

Let’s start with purity. Purity defined is as follows: not mixed or adulterated with any other substance or material. Now the definition of purity and of perfection are slightly different but many times these two words are used interchangeably. There is an understanding that if something is unadulterated then it is pure and it is perfect. There are a few verses in scripture that would present a similar likeness:

**Matthew 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”**

This passage is found in the beatitudes. Jesus declares that the pure in heart will see God. He goes on to say a lot of very clear things and then wraps all of it up with this verse found at the very end of the chapter.

**Matthew 5:48 You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**

Now in order to be perfect as Jesus commands here you would have to honor or obey each of the commands Christ gave, not just here in the sermon on the mount but all of Christ’s commands all throughout scripture. Not only would you have to honor or obey them, you would have to honor them perfectly. Your obedience would have be done in a pure way without any mixing of obedience with disobedience. So if you are pure in your obedience to God, not just physically but in heart and thought and deed, then you would be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. I hope that helps you see how close the use of the words perfect and pure are. I bring this to your attention because God truly does call us to perfection. This applies to every area of life. In all that you do or think you must be pure, if your thoughts about God and His word are corrupted in any way then they are not pure and therefore not perfectly correct. If your obedience to Gods commands are adulterated in any way then you are not truly obedient, you are un-pure.

Considering this, right off the bat I have to say the spiritual discipline of purity seems impossible. You cannot work hard enough to finally achieve purity in the fullest sense of the word. Just like you cannot be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. In fact prior to glorification, we will always have the remnants of sin defiling and corrupting our faculties in some manner even though it may be very small, it will affect our purity and perfection. But aren’t we commanded to be perfect? Don’t we need pure hearts to see God?

Church I hope you know this by now but I would be remiss if I did not remind you of this fact; unless we are hidden in Christ through faith none of us will see God, none of us will be saved. We are indeed commanded to be perfect and pure of heart, but we also see clearly in scripture that we cannot achieve this so we need a representative who did! We love you church and we desire to see you grow and mature for God’s glory and for your good. With our focus on spiritual disciplines and the doing of them, the putting of these disciplines to practice, we also know that these disciplines cannot be done perfectly. We know and have faithfully preached the absolute need of our salvation in Christ. Our right standing our ability to meet these requirements by God in scripture lay solely with the finished work of Christ on our behalf. That does not mean we don’t strive and fight and strain and make every effort to honor our Lord.

We who have been saved love the Lord Jesus and we desire above all things to honor and obey Him because of our love for Him or even more so because of His love for us. So church I wanted to begin with the clarity of scripture that “we must be perfect,” primarily to point you back to your desperate need for Christ, your only hope of perfection is to be found hidden in Him. Outside of salvation in Christ none of us will be found worthy. Secondarily to remind you that when we speak of purity or perfection we speak of these terms with the right understanding of our inability to meet these standards without the stain of sin that will not be removed until glorification. So let me re-state that point, we will in this life do things that honor God but we will not do them without some hint or stain of sin because until glorification we will always be fighting the old self and the sin that was once enslaving us.

We want to strive for purity and perfection. We want to do this in our obedience and all the areas of life that God has blessed us to steward. We cannot do this perfectly or purely but we can do it in such a way that we honor the Lord who bought us with His blood. We also must be clear that unless God has granted you faith in Christ Jesus as Lord and Savior then you cannot please the Lord (for apart from faith no one can please God Heb. 11:6) and therefore we are not calling you to strive for purity, rather we are calling you to repent of your sin and trust in the lord Jesus Christ for salvation.

So with that undergirding, how do we strive for purity in life as a spiritual discipline in such a way that we grow and honor God?

The first and most practical way we do that is to study and know the scriptures and what God requires of us in all the aspects of life. As Christians we must consider all aspects of life through the lens of Scripture which is truth.

Here is a practical example:

**Proverbs 16:11 A just balance and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are his work.**

**Proverbs 20:23 Unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good.**

Considering these two scriptures how might they apply to various areas of life? If God has given you employment to provide for your family then you strive for purity by being honest in your work. You don’t convince yourself that it’s okay to cheat the company or the customer for whatever reasons you can come up with. This would not be a striving for purity in the area of employment that God has blessed you with to steward. Believe me, I’ve made all the excuses. The boss is cruel or a jerk, the customer was rude or they were getting way too good of a deal, I’ll make it up on the next day it’s okay if I cut out early and cheat the company. None of these would line up with the previous passages and let me break them down just a bit for you.

Proverbs 16:11 A just balance and scales are the LORD’s; all the weights in the bag are His work. This simply means that God is the one who has decided what is just and fair. God is the decider of what makes the scale even. All the weights, all the ways you may try to measure justice and fairness are given to you by God. He owns justice, He owns fairness or evenness of weights. That’s what the passage means.

So when scripture declare in Proverbs 20:23 that unequal weights are an abomination then who decides if the weights are unequal? God does right! He owns the weights, He is the decider of equal and just and right weights balancing the scale. That’s the very reason that false scales false ways of weighing things out to make them equal are an abomination to God. They are against God’s good design of justice.

I hope that is a very practical example for you. If God has blessed you with work and income then honor those things according to God’s requirement of equal scales and balances. Striving for purity in this area of life is considering God’s word about work and what is just and carrying that out when you work. That’s the doing of this discipline in regards to work.

I hope you see why it’s important to know what scripture teaches about fairness or equal weights and a variety of other things. Here’s another simple and practical example. God commands us to not lie. He does this because He is truth and when we lie we misrepresent His character and therefore it is sin. So practically speaking how do we strive for purity in honesty?

Students, sorry to pick on you but give me a second and I’ll share the love. If God has blessed you with parents and they come to you about something you’ve done against their command, do you lie to them to try and avoid punishment? Well striving for purity as a spiritual discipline means you strive here and be honest instead of lying. Parents will discipline their kids as God declares in scripture that the dad who loves his son is diligent to discipline him. So for the rest of you, what relationships do you have where you are regularly being dishonest? You see you are not striving for purity to continue those practices. If you want a practical way of doing this discipline then strive to honor God’s commandments in all areas. Purity in truth telling gets exercised by us when we, even at the risk of affecting our relationships, speak the truth and face the consequence rather than lying and continuing on with our mask.

So in order to strive for Purity in general we need to know what God has called us to do in the various areas of life or in all of life in general and then live out our life with those glasses on. When things happen we must consider what God has declared and then respond with the biblical lens of truth in that given situation. When we strive to do this according to Hos word we are practicing the discipline of purity.

It should be helpful to note that this discipline is a blanket type of discipline right. It covers all areas of life because purity is applied to everything we do. All that we do should be done with a desire to do it with a pure heart, with pure intentions, to honor our God who is pure.

You may have noticed that when I spoke of equal weights I was very careful to not use the term equality. I did this because in our current culture that term is used by a prominent movement and it does not line up with God’s righteous and just scales. This movement which declares we must all be equal not just in opportunity but also in outcome do not use the proper scales that God gives us in His word. Therefore the push from the culture for equality is unbiblical and does not honor God, remember an unjust scale is an abomination to God church. Here are a few examples:

**2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 10For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. 11For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. 12Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.**

If a person is capable of working then they should or they should not eat. So should we promote or accept programs designed to give food to capable people who truly are idle not because they cannot work but because they do not want to? Why should someone who honors God in their work be forced to give a part of their food their earnings to someone who doesn’t? This is similar to the equality being pushed by the current cultural movement. Now I most certainly simplified it for example, and equality and the movement behind it are not the focus of this lesson. However if you would strive for purity in your life then knowing God’s word and therefore being able to live in a way that is pure would protect you from these false teachings of a culture that typically pulls at your emotions to try and convince you that something is good and right. Church God owns the scale and the weights. His word tells us what is just and right and fair. To strive for purity in life we must know God’s word and apply it by living with a biblical lens as we walk through life.

I hope that helpful in a practical way. For clarity, God calls us to care for the orphan and the widow, he calls us to care for the poor and those who are disabled. There is nothing wrong with those things, they are good and we ought to be doing them if we are striving for purity. In light of that though we do not adopt an unjust view that blankets over these details. All the details need to be considered in light of God’s word in order to be just and pure.

With that let’s move to the second part of our lesson tonight.

**Chastity:**

Chastity is purity specifically applied to sexuality. God has designed us as two sexes. Male and female He created them. God also designed the two sexes to be the way His creation sustains itself through reproduction. God said to man and woman after creating them to be fruitful and multiply. God created physical intimacy. God created man and woman to enjoy this intimacy in the confines of marriage. God designed this for our pleasure to enjoy as well. When it comes to sexuality church we must see that God has designed us specifically in these ways and God has declared that His design is good.

I don’t need to prove to you that the world we live in has done and is doing all that it can to destroy God’s good design of male and female and God’s good design for sexual intimacy. Our country has run headlong into the greatest press towards the destruction of God’s design in these areas. I could not have imagined as a teenager in school learning about the human anatomy only to hear an ideology as an adult that declares men can feel like they are women and vice versa, and if we don’t approve and promote those things then we are hateful and bigoted. This kind of God hating rhetoric is rampant in our government, in our school systems, in our workplaces, and in our media. You can hardly find a movie that isn’t full on promoting some form of corruption aimed at God’s design of male and female in some manner.

Open your bibles to:

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 3For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, 5not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6that 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. 7For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. 8Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.**

Church as Paul writes this letter to the church is Thessalonica he overwhelmingly praises them for their growth and love for God and for each other. If you haven’t read this book it is quite short. I think it took me about 8 minutes to read it entirely. What was interesting to me was that the first thing really singled out by Paul is what we see in this particular passage. There is other exhortation from chapter 4 on but this one is first and has more verses devoted to it than the others that Paul gives. In chapter 5 Paul gives a general press to the church in all sorts of areas but it reads like a general summary statement to remind the church that our purity in all these things is important, however none of those things are given this attention and focus. I’d encourage you to read it when you have 10 minutes and see for yourself this unique focus and point made by Paul.

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

Now Paul is making a general statement, it is God’s will for all whom He saves that they grow in sanctification. Maturing and growing in Christlikeness is the aim of the Christian life. God begins this at conversion but carries it along in the individual lives of those whom He has given the Holy Spirit to dwell in. Each of us ought to be cautious with how we judge others in this account, sometimes God is more gracious to some in an increased way of sanctifying them than others. What we know to be true is that for the Christian we all should be on this trajectory of growing in our sanctification. We will all give an account for how we worked out our own salvation as God commands us to in Philippians 2.

That being said it is also clear that Paul is concerned about a massive stumbling block to this sanctification and he draws that point so clearly in the end of the verse. He declares first that it is the revealed will of God that we grow in sanctification and that a major area of life that must have growth is the abstaining from sexual immorality.

Sanctification is not just putting on the righteousness of Christ but it is also putting off the old self. When God tells us to abstain from sexual immorality it goes far deeper than unfaithfulness in marriage. This is a general immorality in regards to sexuality. Verse 4 reads:

**4that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor,**

That each of you know how to control his own body. Sanctity and purity are about holiness. They are about being set apart as different and pure. When we consider sexual immorality this pushes out to self-control. Do you consider what God has said about our sexuality and His design for it? Do you consider how you use your body and what ways you dishonor God in these things?

In regards to chastity how do you control your body? How do you use your body? For those of you who aren’t married are you in control of your physical desires or do you justify sin because your single and not married? For those of you who are married is your body reserved for you spouse? Do you like getting attention from others with it? Do you use others and or other means to enjoy physical pleasure and not your spouse? All of these would be encompassed in this command.

This is more than just what you do with your body when interacting with others, it includes how you use your body to draw the attention of others? A pastor that I’ve enjoyed in the past had a very famous sermon he gave at a youth conference, and in the sermon he said something along the lines of how do your clothes frame your body? If you clothes were a picture frame what do they show people? What are they framing for others to look at and see? Is it your face? If it is then praise God that would be good. If it’s something else, then I’d urge you to consider why you are trying to draw attention to something else and to say clearly that it is likely not God honoring. Now I’m not promoting that you all go out and buy moomoo’s, but just because a culture has promoted ridiculous attire and scandalous dressing doesn’t mean that we should not be carefully looking at what we wear and how we are to honor the Lord with our bodies and what we put on. Church it is easy to fall into a cultural idea or trend and think that it is beautiful and to desire to dress and look like it. But do you really consider why the culture declares that’s good and does that honor God? I’m afraid far too many of us may even be ignorantly dishonoring God with false views of what is acceptable and what is not. So again I would remind you that a good weight to use in your scale of considering this is simply what does this outfit frame and what purpose do I have for framing that thing. One way to consider this as it does become a real point of contention at times; when you consider what kind of outfit would honor the Lord and guard sexual purity, do you justify dressing a certain way with culturally reasons or biblical ones? As a youth director for many years I would have parents argue with me about our dress code and many times they would bring up that they dressed like that or even their grandmother did so it must be okay, but you see that is not a biblical argument for the type of dress they wear right? I really want you all men and women to simply consider why you think about attire a certain way and to ask if it lines up with God’s word in regards to purity and protecting yourself and others from sexual immorality.

**Matthew 6:22-23 22“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

I will address this more later on in the lesson but as I’ve asked you to consider what you put on and how it frames you I want you to see that the scriptures tell us to guard what we take in. Now each of us is responsible for what we do with what we look at but if scripture has such staunch warnings then shouldn’t we also be considering others in regards to what we are trying to draw them to see. I really hope that’s helpful and not condemning, please come talk to me afterward if your struggling with this area I’d love to flesh out this more but do not have time in the lesson.

Because this passage points to self-control over your body there is a clear aim of addressing physical interaction that is sexual in nature. We are called to honor God’s design for these things and therefore the physical intimacy is to be enjoyed in the confines of marriage and marriage alone. I do not have to be explicit for you all to understand what this means. We must not give in to temptation in these areas for that would be the opposite of striving for purity. How many churches are wrecked by unfaithful leaders and pastors in regards to this very thing?

This goes into the thoughts that we wrestle with as well. Jesus declared in the Sermon on the Mount that if you have lusted in your heart you have already committed adultery. This battle and this keeping ourselves pure in regards to sexual immorality begins here in our minds. We must strive to put away lustful thoughts and desires. We must remind ourselves that these things do not honor God and we must pray regularly if this is your struggle for God to protect your mind and help you win this battle. Paul’s reasoning at the end of the passage for this fight for purity is no less that the reality that God is the one who gives His Holy Spirit to dwell within you. So plead for the Spirit to be at work and to give you strength and purity this.

**Eph. 5:3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints.**

See how closely sexual immorality and purity are connected in this passage. These things must not even be named among you. Church one of the most haunting and lifelong effecting traumas that someone can experience come in the form of sexual immorality. When a person is forced to engage against their will in sexual interactions of any kind it robs them of their value and cripples them in ways that are heavy beyond imagination. This is why God commanded death to the person proven guilty of rape in the old covenant. God took it that seriously. Sexual immorality destroys lives, marriages, families, even generations to come. Sexual immorality also destroys your own body.

**1 Cor. 6:15-20 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16Or do you not know that he who is joinedd to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 17But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. 18Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sine a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. 19Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.**

You see all other sins are outside your body but sexual immorality is a sin even against your own body. Many studies have been done on the electrical impulses of our brains and the endorphins released when we engage or even look at images that are pornographic in nature. These studies show that even one exposure to such things causes the normal firing to be effected. It drives up our desire to see and engage because of the way our mind responds and this quickly becomes an addictive thing. “With pornography, however, the brain responds differently than it does with run of the mill stimulation, like a sugary snack or a simple game. For most daily behaviors, the brain has an “off” switch that stops the release of dopamine once a craving has been satisfied.

In contrast, pornography impacts the brain much like an addictive drug by triggering ever-increasing amounts of dopamine. Over time, the brain builds up a tolerance to the excess dopamine and requires either more access or more extreme content (or sometimes both) to achieve that same level of perceived pleasure.

Research from a Neuroscience of Internet Pornography Addiction report indicates that extended exposure to pornography correlates with less activity in the brain’s reward circuit.

In short, when viewing pornography, your brain gets less pleasure while wanting more, often causing desensitization and an escalation in behavior.” (<https://canopy.us/2020/10/19/what-viewing-pornography-does-to-your-brain/>

**Matthew 6:22-23 22“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!**

Church what we takeinwith our eyes effects our whole body, if your eye is bad your whole body is affected. This is deeper than just a gross sinful viewing of things. What TV shows or you tube videos do you watch that constantly promote false or impure views of sexuality. What things are we letting in that effect and stir up sinful sexual immorality within our heart? What social media app do you need to delete and walk away from that cause you to regularly be exposed to thing’s that do not honor God, church your whole body being full of darkness is not worth those thing’s.

It should not surprise us that God’s word proves true time and time again. Even if what you pursue in sexual immorality is not pornography, it still has an addicting effect and hurts your own body. So how do we practice purity in these things? We flee from it. We do not play with it or test it or excuse it as a small thing. How ridiculous is the phrase you can look but you cannot touch!? You see this ideology is not biblical and corrupts the good creation of God to become mere pleasures for you to enjoy. You rob people of their being made in God’s image when you go down these roads.

Here is an example, when God creates something beautiful and you see it and take it in and praise God for it points to the glory of God that is awesome. But when you practice sexual immorality you can no longer see another human and honor God for the beauty of that human’s creation, you take it further and you use the beauty to end on your own sinful pleasure therefore ruining your own body and sinning against your Creator.

There is something so sweet about being able to see God’s creation to praise Him for it and to do so in a way that honors God. It is okay to see someone of the opposite sex and see that they are beautiful. You can do this without sinning, but the corruption in our world has made that very hard. Many of us need to re-wire our brains to see the beauty of God’s creation even in those of the opposite sex without it then allowing that to stir up lust in our hearts. Striving for purity brings a peace to our conscious and allows us to do this very thing.

The scriptures cannot be clearer there is much destruction in sexual immorality. Parents if your children are struggling and have access to this through media devices I cannot urge you enough to remove those devices from them. God does not say flee from this as a gentle warning, so those who are entrusted with children to raise must put aside all the worldly reasons why we excuse the access we grant and be willing to take those steps out of love for our kids. Some of the darkest counseling moments and most of the long lasting effects in the lives of those counseled in my 19 years of ministry came out of this very reality. Again if you want to flush that out more please come grab me later and let’s talk.

I want to wrap up our time with this focus. Sexual immorality is not just lust or actions taken in regards to physical contact or sexually explicit reading or viewing of things. Sexual immorality includes the corruption of God’s design of mankind as male and female. I know I touched on this earlier but I think it necessary in considering the spiritual discipline of purity to circle back and make this point. Pastor Josh spoke about the fruit one produces in his sermon this Sunday. He made a similar point that those who promote false things produce bad fruit. I have often struggled due to some close experiences with people my wife and I dearly love. I have known people who are so kind, seem so loving, so tender hearted and seem to genuinely confess faith in Christ as Lord and Savior. Unfortunately these same people go on to promote sexual immorality like homosexuality, transgenderism, and all sorts of other perversions of God’s created order. I desire so deeply that they would repent and see the folly of what they promote. I have such a deep love for them but I fear they fall into the Romans chapter 1 category and I pray that they would turn from it and be saved.

**Romans 1:18-32 18For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

**22Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.**

**24Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, 25because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.**

**26For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; 27and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.**

**28And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32Though they know God’s righteous decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.**

If someone professes faith, perhaps they genuinely believe they trust in Christ Jesus as Savior, but they do not honor Him as Lord for they promote the very things He died to save sinners from as if they are good, then they are not saved.

**1 Cor. 6:9-11 9Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.**

It is so clear that Jesus died to save men from such sins and yet when people promote these sinful sexually immoral life styles as good and even say that these can be practiced and those who practice them can be good with God they lie and they will be held accountable for this. Consider what Jesus says as a woe to the Pharisees:

**Matthew 23:13-15 13“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people’s faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in. 15Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel across sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when he becomes a proselyte, you make him twice as much a child of hell as yourselves.**

This is a hard conclusion to come to but I believe scripture is clear, unless they repent of false teaching and turn to Jesus as Savior and Lord then I believe their fruit will prove them to not have been truly saved by God. How can one who is in a position of authority teach others, promote something that God clearly says will bring you to eternal death and still themselves be saved?

I bring this clarity because I fear that all too often Christians try to find a middle ground here. I do not mean that we should be violent or mean in any way church, or we ourselves would be hypocrites. What I mean is that we cannot be satisfied with simply saying in our minds its okay for those who profess Christ to promote what God call wicked as good. If we are to practice purity then we must speak the truth in love to these things and we must love those who perhaps even profess Christ as Lord but are clearly promoting things Christ condemned as sin. We must be willing to lose relationships and be separated for the truth of God and Lord willing for the good of those we love. We cannot join them in saying they are okay. If their failure is telling others who practice sin they can be good with God then our failure would be not telling them they are in danger of proving to be a false believer by promoting those things. You see otherwise we are doing the same thing they are. If we are to practice purity in this area of life we must be speaking truth in love.

For clarities sake, I do not think it wise or loving to go looking for people who would fit this category. I do not think it is your work to search it out and attack the individual who you do not know nor have any connection or relationship to. I am saying that those in your life those struggling with false views whom you know are in grave danger and you should be lovingly attempting to speak the truth in love to them. By doing so you are practicing in a very practical way the discipline or sanctity or purity. I really hope that makes sense. If we had more time we could unpack this to a greater degree but I really had aimed to cover a lot of ground in this lesson in regards to purity. Again if you’d like more clarity please come talk to e and let’s flesh it out so we honor God and love our neighbors.

Finally, I would encourage you to strive for purity in all areas of life. Purity is something high and lofty to be aimed at in every facet that we do life. God is pure and so we aim to be pure in all these things. We know that being hidden in Christ we are covered in His perfection and only through Him are we saved, therefore since He first loved us and gave His life for us we in our love for Him joyfully strive to be pure for His glory and our good.

**Conclusion:**

Church if you are struggling here the first step to growth is not to continue hiding it and allowing sin to rule you as if you were still enslaved to it. If Christ has set you free you are free indeed. Do not allow the shame of the sin to keep you in bondage, find a trusted mature believing friend to confess this sin and repent of it. Speak to one of the Elders or your table group leader. Let us walk these things out with you as we have with many others. God is good and more than capable to bring healing to these things and victory over this sin.

Be accountable, ask someone for help to put to death these things that are very challenging in the ways they enslave. Having someone walk with you in these things is vitally important and has proven successful time and time again in the lives of our church body.

Be regular in the word, you cannot strive for purity if you do not know what God says is proper when it comes to the various aspects of our lives. Remember how I made that point with proverbs passage.

Pray church, apply all of the other spiritual disciplines with the aim of purifying yourself and your walk. Pray for victory where sin is taken hold. Pray for wisdom and discernment for a proper application of scripture in your life.

Lastly I want to encourage to think about why you have particular desires and what God declares about them and how we use them. If your struggling with being modest in your dress and you hear what I’ve encouraged tonight ask yourself what if what you have come to believe is good and acceptable is truth from God or the influence of the world. In any of these areas mentioned if you are feeling convicted or defensive please ask yourself why? What have you come to believe about these things that God clearly speaks to in His word and why do you hold views contrary to scripture? If you cannot consider these things it may be very difficult for you to strive for purity according to Gods word which is truth.

Finally what do you need to put away and flee from? What access or show or outfit or thought is not honoring to God and you need to put it away for the sake of your purity and holiness? What social media platform or books or relationships do you need to end and close and shutdown? Many times these things can be good and used in a way that honors God but depending on where you struggle and where your flesh still finds victory over you, you are better off putting them away and shutting them down.

How can we walk these things out with you? Whenever we are giving counsel we often start by explaining that unless you are genuine with us we cannot truly help you. If you are presenting something to us and it is not true then we try to help that lie and it isn’t beneficial for you. The next thing we say is there is nothing that shock’s us, we your elders and many of your leaders have been in counsel with people who have had extremely dark pasts and yet we want you to know that we love and desire to walk with you through this so do not let the deception of the enemy or your flesh and sin keep you from true confession and repentance. There’s is freedom in Christ Jesus, He has paid for your sin and has covered your shame with His blood, trust Him and take that needed step toward a new life of striving for purity. These things do not go away on their own, God has designed us to walk these things out together and when you do you will find a new peace in Christ that is so sweet church.

**1 John 3:3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.**

**We love you, we pray that these disciplines would be put to practice for your good and for God’s glory!**

Pray with me.