

CONFRONTING SEXUAL IMPURITY

INTRODUCTION

The world is no friend to us in our fight for sexual purity. We daily inhale sexual air, are bombarded with sexual images, and are made to believe sexuality defines who we are. Sex sells, and even Christians who “wait” until marriage and confess their struggles to accountability partners are adept at buying the world’s sexual wares through the Internet, at the ticket counter, in the mall, and by a thousand other means. Sexual immorality is everywhere to see, and too few of us with the mind of Christ are bothering to close our eyes.

Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness*, 121.

- Our culture has taken what God intended to be beautiful and right and pleasurable within the confines of marriage and has turned it into something dirty, vile, and filthy
- Movies and TV glamorize sexual immorality
- Among the top 20 most watched shows by teens, 70% include sexual content, and nearly half (45%) include sexual behavior
- During prime time hours sex is even more common with nearly 8 in 10 (77%) shows including sexual content, averaging 5.9 sexual scenes per hour
- Two-thirds (68%) of all shows include talk about sex and 35% of all shows include sexual behaviors
- 94% of all sex acts in the media are between people who are not married (and not to mention that none are married in real life)
- The median age at first intercourse is 16.9 years for boys and 17.4 years for girls
- By age 20, 85% of males and over 60% of females have engaged in sexual intercourse
- 98% of young men and 91% of young women say that they get most of their information about sex from pornographic material
- Added to this is how language reflecting our sexualized culture has evolved:
 - "promiscuous" and "illegitimate" are gone
 - "immoral" has been replaced with "sexually active"
 - "adultery" has been replaced with "affair"
 - "pornography" has been replaced with "adult entertainment"
 - “homosexuality” has been replaced with “same sex marriage”
- Although it is easy to point out how bad the culture is “out there,” we ought to be primarily concerned with how we as believers are affected by this “in here”

If we could transport Christians from almost any other century to any of today’s “Christian” countries in the West, I believe what would surprise them most (besides our phenomenal affluence) is how at home Christians are with sexual impurity. It doesn’t shock us. It doesn’t upset us. It doesn’t offend our consciences. In fact, unless it’s really bad, sexual impurity seems normal, just a way of life, and often downright entertaining. This is a far cry from how the Bible views sexual sin...I fear many of us have become numb to the poison we are drinking. When it comes to sexual immorality, sin looks normal, righteousness looks very strange, and we look a lot like everybody else.

Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness*, 108, 120.

- As believers, we must understand that God’s standards for sexual purity may be higher than we think

“SECRET SIN” AREAS OF SEXUAL IMPURITY

Lustful Thoughts and Glances are Sinful

2 Samuel 11:2-3 ~ Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?”

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

Matthew 5:27-28 ~ You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

James 1:14-15 ~ But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

Ephesians 4:22 ~ that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit

- Sexual sin begins in the heart where sexual thoughts and desires are cultivated
- Failure to take these thoughts captive will allow the seeds of lust to grow and take root in one’s heart
- Thus, the key to gaining victory over sexual sin begins in the mind
- A mind that constantly feeds on sexually impure thoughts or images will not promote sexual purity!
- So am I dwelling on impure thoughts when they come? Am I looking at pornography? Am I reading books or novels that promote sexual fantasizing?
- Pornography has destroyed the lives of many people including many Christians
- Pornography has traditionally been an industry that caters almost entirely to men: men bought the magazines and videos in a pre-digital age.....men have made pornography a multi-billion dollar industry in the Internet age
- Women haven’t been drawn to pornography at least in part because the industry simply hasn’t attempted to create and market pornography that will appeal primarily to them
- But the pornography industry is working hard to create pornography for women: The book *50 Shades of Gray* set the record as the fastest-selling paperback of all time, surpassing the Harry Potter series
- There are millions of women who will *read* pornography even if they have little interest in *watching* it

Flirting is Sinful

Proverbs 7:10-21 ~ And behold, a woman *comes* to meet him, Dressed as a harlot and cunning of heart. She is boisterous and rebellious, Her feet do not remain at home; *She is* now in the streets, now in the squares, And lurks by every corner. So she seizes him and kisses him And with a brazen face she says to him: “I was due to offer peace offerings; Today I have paid my vows. Therefore I have come out to meet you. To seek your presence earnestly, and I have found you. I have spread my couch with coverings, With colored linens of Egypt. I have sprinkled my bed With myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. Come, let us drink our fill of love until morning; Let us delight ourselves with caresses. For my husband is not at home, He has gone on a long journey; He has taken a bag of money with him, At the full moon he will come home.” With her many persuasions she entices him; With her flattering lips she seduces him.

- The flirt in Proverbs is called the harlot; thus flirting is a vice, not a virtue
- To demonstrate the deceptive nature of sexual impurity, Solomon contrasts the initial appearance with the ultimate reality
- He cuts through the flirting and teasing and the flattery like a surgeon's knife to reveal the ruin that accompanies sexual sin

Sexually Inappropriate Shows, Dress, and Talk are Sinful

Ephesians 5:3-4 ~ But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and *there must be no* filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

- Notice the high standard that is set here: “not even be named among you;” NIV = not even a hint
- Such terminology forbids reveling in things that are scandalously unmentionable
- These things should not even be talked about among believers!
- That means that sexual sin is to be so foreign to our lives that it’s not even hinted at
- Why? → vs. 3 ~ as is proper among saints
- Sexual sin is not proper for one of God’s children....it is unbecoming
- Paul is reminding us that our lifestyle is to be consistent with this our holy calling
- It is not to find its way into our speech: No “filthiness” (indecent or offensive speech)...No “silly talk” (*morologia*= moronic talk, gutter speech)...No “coarse jesting” (dirty talk, vulgar talk, joking that revels in double entendre and innuendo)
- These instructions challenge what we laugh at, the way we dress, the TV shows/movies we choose to watch
- We must evaluate whether all the innuendo, all the shameful things put out in broad daylight, and all the sexual sin that is made to look normal and amusing by our culture has any place in the life of a believer

If we’re honest, we often seek exposure to sexual immorality and temptations to impurity and call it “innocent” relaxation. Commenting on Ephesians 5:3, Peter O’Brien observes that, as Christians, we should not only shun all forms of sexual immorality, we should “avoid thinking and talking about them.” Even our jesting should be pure, lest we show “a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar conversation.” If, as O’Brien remarks, “talking and thinking about sexual sins ‘creates an atmosphere in which they are tolerated and which can...promote their practice,’” how can we justify paying money to see, taste, and laugh at sexual sin? How can we stare at sensuality which aims to amuse and arouse and weaken our conscience and deaden our sense of spiritual things (even if it is on ordinary cable or only rated PG-13)? We must consider the possibility that much of what churchgoing people do to unwind would not pass muster for the apostle Paul. Not to mention God.

Kevin DeYoung, *The Hole in Our Holiness*, 119.

Failing to Satisfy Your Spouse Sexually is Sinful

1 Corinthians 7:3-5 ~ The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- There may be times in marriage when spouses don’t engage in physical intimacy, but notice there are some qualifications for that:
 - By agreement – both agree to this
 - For a time – a short time
 - To pray – a weighty spiritual issue in their lives has caused them to lose the desire for intimacy such that they take time to pray about that as a couple
- Times of abstinence between spouses should not last long (vs. 5 ~ come together again so that Satan will not tempt you)
- Failing to satisfy each other sexually only fuels the fires of sexual temptation outside marriage

Masturbation is Sinful

- Because masturbation is never mentioned in the Scriptures, some have concluded that it is simply a means of releasing sexual tension and, therefore, a preventative for falling into sexual sin
- But the following questions should be asked if there is no clear statement in Scripture:

1. Can masturbation be practiced without engaging in sensuality, which is clearly sin?

Romans 3:13~ Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy

2. Can the thought patterns that accompany masturbation be considered pure?

Philippians 4:8~ Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things

3. Can masturbation be practiced with a clear conscience?

1 John 3:21~ Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God

4. Is this practice an enslaving one or can it be stopped at anytime?

1 Corinthians 6:12~ All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything

5. Does this practice bring glory to God?

1 Corinthians 10:31 ~ Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God

6. Would Christ do this?

1 John 2:6 ~ the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked

7. Does masturbation prevent lust or incite it?

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

8. What is the goal of masturbation?

- Masturbation is an attempt to experience the same sensations meant to be experienced in marriage
- It is however a fake, a substitute for the real sexual relationship which God has designed to occur within the marriage of a man and a woman
- Masturbation has turned sex into a purely biological act that involves no real interpersonal relationship

Proverbs 5:15-19~ Drink water from your own cistern, And fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? Let them be yours alone, And not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; Be exhilarated always with her love

Conclusion: Masturbation is a sin and should be dealt with as radically as any other sexual sin

A BIBLICAL STRATEGY FOR FIGHTING SEXUAL IMPURITY

God's Standard is Absolute Purity in this Area

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 ~ Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

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

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 ~ For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; *and* that no man transgress and defraud his brother in the matter because the Lord is *the avenger* in all these things, just as we also told you before and solemnly warned *you*. For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. So, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

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

Steps for Battling Sexual Temptation

1. Believe that God is for You

- We must recognize that Biblical prohibitions are intended to protect something precious not deny something pleasant.

Psalm 84:11 ~ For the Lord God is a sun and shield; The Lord gives grace and glory; No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly

2. Tell Yourself That There is More Joy in God's Presence Than in Sexual Sin

- A Christian lifestyle without the pursuit of Christ cannot maintain true purity

Psalm 16:11 ~ Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fulness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever

3. Believe God Over Your Impulses and Desires

- Don't trust desires!

Jeremiah 17:9 ~ The heart is more deceitful than all else, And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

4. Protect and Feed Your Mind

- When someone falls into sexual sin, they don't fall very far...there is a long chain of choices that the person could have stopped before it got out of control, but chose not to

Proverbs 4:23 ~ Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life.

Proverbs 23:7 ~ For as he thinks within himself, so he is

- Winning this battle starts in the mind

Romans 12:2 ~ And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

5. Paralyze Your Glances

- Learn to love it more than you hate it

Psalm 101:3 ~ I will set no worthless thing before my eyes

6. Never Overestimate Your Resistance

- David was a man after God's own heart, yet he fell into sexual sin

1 Corinthians 10:12 ~ Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

7. Get Accountable but Remember God's Accountability

- Pursue accountability with fellow believers

James 5:16 ~ Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

- But remember that true accountability plan is the omniscience and omnipresence of God
- Secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven!

Hebrews 4:13 ~ And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.