

## MAINTAINING PURITY

Ten Values for God's People

Hillsboro Presbyterian Church

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**Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."** Jesus elaborated on this in **Matthew 5:27-28** saying **"anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** The concern of Jesus is the heart. What is the intent? Behind even that is the positive value of purity - godliness, holiness, or wholeness. **1 Thessalonians 4:7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.** Purity. As Americans, we care about pure air to breathe and pure water to drink, but we're not really that concerned about having pure minds. Is it even possible to live in a sex-saturated society and maintain a pure mind? Listen: The same God that can take a fish and keep it in salt its entire life and not be affected by it, can keep you in a polluted world and keep your mind pure. The answer to living in this world is not imitation, being like everybody else – and it's not isolation, disassociating from the world. The answer is insulation. Just like God can insulate ocean fish and yet not let it get salty, God can keep His people in a polluted world and keep us pure.

### HOW? SIX STEPS FOR REMAINING PURE IN A POLLUTED WORLD

**1<sup>st</sup>) MAKE A COMMITMENT TO GOD'S STANDARD** **Psalm 119:9 How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word.** On what am I going to base my life? Am I going to make a commitment to God's Word as my standard or am I just going to make up my own standard? Am I more committed to what I believe God says will meet my needs or am I more committed to what I think will meet my own needs? Does God know more about my life or do I?

**2<sup>nd</sup>) MANAGE THE MIND** **Proverbs 4:23(New Century Version) Be careful how you think, your life is shaped by your thoughts.** The battle is won or lost in your mind. When you've got an open mind it tends to get filled with garbage. Anytime you see someone messing up their life, it didn't start with the actions, it started with thoughts. They were thinking dumb thoughts before they started making dumb decisions. The way you think determines how you feel. Thoughts determine feelings. You feel a certain way because you're thinking a certain way. Feelings are what motivate you to action. If you want to change your action, you work on what caused it... the thoughts that caused the feelings that caused the action. God says your thoughts control your life. This is how you fall into temptation...by little decisions lowering barriers.

**3<sup>rd</sup>) MONITOR YOUR MEDIA INTAKE** **Proverbs 15:14(Living Bible) The fool feeds on trash.** That was written 2000 years before television. What you feed your mind is just as important as what you feed your body. You don't just indiscriminately allow garbage into your mind through movies, books, magazines, media, television. Do you just allow any thought into your mind? Could you live healthy on a diet of coke and Twinkies? No, you couldn't. Yet the moral equivalent of a Twinkie is network television. There's very little nutritional value in it. There is some but a lot is fluff and chemicals you don't need. Some TV statistics: In your life you will spend more time watching TV than you do any single thing else you do except sleep and work. You will amass about 9½ years of solid TV viewing. The TV is on in the average American home >7 hours a day. By the time a child finishes high school, he will have spent 18,000 hours with the TV and 12,000 hours at school. By kindergarten, a child has already spent more time watching TV than he will spend in college. The avg. teenager watches 22½ h/wk; avg. man 24½ h/wk; avg. woman 30 h/wk. In 1 year, prime time TV depicts 14,313 incidences of sex and 23,000 uses of profanity. 91% of all sex portrayed on TV is sex outside of marriage.

**4<sup>th</sup>) MINIMIZE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR TEMPTATION** **Matthew 6:11 and lead us not into temptation.** Think. Don't place yourself in a situation where you will be tempted. If you don't want to get burned, stay away from the fire. Here are 3 ways to help minimize temptation...

- 1) Recognize what tempts you. **1 Corinthians 10:12(LB) Be careful. If you're thinking, 'Oh, I'd never behave like that' let this be a warning to you. For you too may fall into sin.**
- 2) Choose your friends carefully. **1 Corinthians 15:33 "Bad company corrupts good character"**
- 3) Establish some protective guidelines. **Ephesians 5:3 among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity.**

**5. MAXIMIZE YOUR MARRIAGE** **Ecclesiastes 9:9 Enjoy life with your wife whom you love.** For those who are married - this means that a growing relationship with your spouse will reduce the pull and attraction of adultery or any other kind of relationship. God wants you to enjoy your spouse, not endure your spouse. We have to put as much energy into courting in the marriage as we did before. If there was more courting in marriages, there would be fewer marriages in court. God designed sex to be in a marriage. God said the act of being one should not be taken lightly! It parallels our relationship with Christ. For those who are single: one is a whole number. In fact, the Apostle Paul recommends singleness (**1 Corinthians 7**). Whichever, go for it God's way!

**6. MAGNIFY THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN** **Proverbs 6:26(NCV) (Immorality) may cost your life.** Today that literally can be true with aids and other sexually transmitted diseases. Hollywood has glamorized sex so much that it rarely shows the lives that it destroys. When sex is abused or misused it always costs. It is so much more than physical. Everybody loses. God wants to spare you this pain.

### WHAT IS THE PATH BACK TO PURITY?

**1. Repent.** **Psalm 51:3-4 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.** All sin is ultimately against God. To repent means "to change direction and go God's way". It means to "change your mind" and say, "You were right God. It's sin. It's my way, not your way. I was wrong." Don't rationalize it or excuse it. David did this after adultery with Bathsheba. (read **Psalms 32 & 51**) Come clean with God to be cleaned by God.

**2. Receive forgiveness.** **1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.** God says, "I'm waiting to forgive and cleanse and restore. I want to release you from the shame and the regrets and the pain and all the garbage that comes with immorality. Once a Christian knows God's "paid for on the cross" forgiveness, that Christ-one can truly forgive him/herself and others. We do not minimize sin...but neither do we minimize the power and the purpose of the cross.

**3. Refocus and replace.** **2 Timothy 2:22 Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.** Make a commitment to live morally pure by God's standard from this day forward - and do it.

**4. Request help daily and remember help is there.** **1 Corinthians 10:13(LB) Remember the wrong desires that come into your life aren't any new and different. Many others have faced exactly the same problems before you. And no temptation is irresistible. You can trust God to keep the temptation from becoming so strong that you can't stand up against it, for he has promised this and will do what he says. God will show you how to escape temptation's power so that you can bear up patiently against it. Daily ask God's help to know God's standard, to have pure thoughts, to avoid temptation, to enjoy marriage, and to view sex as God's good gift.**