

Keep Thyself Pure

Thank you, kind people of Christchurch, for your understanding hearts as we travel throughout the United States at this time ministering in youth camps and conferences. I marvel that I am still invited to these venues after all these years. To the glory of God, one of my problems is that I receive more invitations than I can accept. One of the criteria with which I determine what meetings to take is assessing the answer to this question, where may I do most good? One of the undeniable harvest points of my ministry is that throughout the summers, we see thousands of young people make holy vows to keep themselves pure for marriage. Even as I write these words, I am preparing to close out the encampment at Timberline on the perimeters of a little town that time forgot named Lindale, Texas. We have seen teens saved everyday and now this morning as I close out, I will be speaking to 410 teenagers on the subject of chastity before marriage and God willing, we shall have 99 to 100 percent committals to promise purity in their lives.

My wife and I are looking forward with joyful anticipation to this coming week, because our youth are going to Teen Extreme in Pensacola, Florida and I shall be able to speak to our youth for five days in the dedicated environment of camp. My heart is stirred to see our youth give their all to Christ and be pure!

The Bible says, “...*keep thyself pure*” (I Timothy 5:22). This inspired phrase made an indelible impression on my young heart, because my mother always displayed the small but conspicuous plaque with these words where everyday its message would address us. When we left for school, came home, went to play, or just to hang out with friends – we were confronted with God’s, and our parent’s, deep desire for us to be holy. And now, hopefully, I put in your face (and heart) the same desire, “*keep thyself pure!*”

I. Purity is an emphatic command of the Bible.

The Bible says in I Thessalonians 4:3, “*For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*” There are not a lot of places in the Bible where God comes right and says this is the will of God. As far as I can tell, there is only one other place in the Word of God where this exact phrase is used, and this has to do with being thankful (I Thessalonians 5:18).

Many a youth try to bypass this plain command and expectation from God on our behalf and expect to find the will and plan of God for their life. If you ignore this truth, the more detailed plan of God for your life will not be revealed. Jesus said in Mark 4:23 and 24, “*If any man have ears to hear, let him hear...and unto you that hear shall more be given.*” If we ignore the plain and understood will of God for life, He will not give us more information for His greater custom designed purposes of our life. This is why many teens and young adults (and sadly many older adults) wander aimlessly through life. They don’t have a clue to what God wants them to do because they ignore the principle of obedience to known light, “*...in thy light shall we see light*”(Psalm 36:9).

The word fornication comes to us from the Greek word: “porneia” meaning to be illicitly sexually active. This is the word from which we get “pornography.” The command is emphatic; God says we are forbidden under every circumstance to be sexually active outside the bounds of holy matrimony.

II. Obedience to godly parents helps to keep youth pure.

Proverbs 6:20-24a: “*My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck. When thou goest, it*

shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee. For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil woman....”

Christian parents always have your best interests in mind. God has assigned them “you” as one of their main tasks in life. Your purity and happiness for the future are all one in the same. Please consider your dad and mom as gifts from God!

III. Good friends are conducive to good behavior.

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (I Corinthians 15:33). Another way of saying this is: “Don’t be foolish! When you associate with people who have no character and morals, soon you will be defiled and not only think the same way but you will behave the same way!” This truth is found throughout the Bible. It is apparent that Amnon, who sexually defiled his own precious virgin half-sister, would have never done it had it not been for the wicked influence of one man. God wisely inserts for our admonition one indicting sentence, *“But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah David's brother: and Jonadab was a very subtil (cunning and wickedly clever) man”* (II Samuel 13:3). There is a telltale phrase in the sad biography of young King Rehoboam, *“And the young men that were grown up with him spake unto him, saying...”* (I Kings 12:10). Because Rehoboam listened to the undisciplined “punks” with whom he grew up with, instead of the wise counselors who advised his father, King Solomon, the kingdom was severed!

Solomon warned, *“He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed”* (Proverbs 13:20).

IV. Keep the laissez-faire rule when you court or date.

Laissez-faire informally means “hands off.” Paul said, *“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman”* (I Corinthians 7:1) The word “touch” is from the Greek word, “” which means “to attach oneself to.” It is reflexive of “hapto,” a primary verb; properly, to fasten to, i.e. (specially) to set on fire: kindle, light. Allow me to break down this revealing definition. It is an embracing that sets you on fire! The Bible says, *“...it is better to marry than to burn”* (I Corinthians 7:9). Petting or “making-out” is like lighting a candle in a room full of dynamite. Therefore, don’t play with matches; this is how homes are burned down and forests fires begin. Keep your hands off each other!

V. Make a vow to God to keep yourself pure.

If you have not been involved in fornication, do not become sexually active until marriage. If you have made the mistake and become sexually active, ask God to forgive you (I John 1:9) and from this point onward, remain pure for the person God will give you in marriage. The Word of God says, *“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge”* (Hebrews 13:4). A bride and bride-groom make holy vows of fidelity for life. This is good; the Bible says so. Also, is a vow to remain faithful to Christ until He presents you to your spouse on your wedding day. Vows are sacred, *“Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay”* (Ecclesiastes 5:5). Make a vow! God will help you keep it: *“I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me”* (Philippians 4:13).

- Pastor Pope -

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