

Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

A Plea for Purity, Part 1

Scripture: 1 Thessalonians 4:1-3

Code: 90-203

To put it mildly we're literally drowning in a barrage of sexual iniquity in this nation. It is everywhere, it is in our music which has become base in many, many senses, it is in our literature, books that say things the likes of which would never be allowed to be said in other times in our nation. It is in our television programs, it is in our films, it is everywhere, most recently it has become the preoccupation of millions of people on their computers as they access pornography on the internet.

We are not only a society that is literally drowning in a sea of sexual evil, but we seem to be enjoying it. It seems to be highly approved. As a nation we don't really care about the sexual sin of our leader, we don't care about anybody's sexual sin because that is a private matter that has nothing to do with anybody but them we think. It has nothing to do with how we view someone except for the fact that as a nation it seems as though Americans feel more comfortable with an adulterer than with anybody else.

People who appear to be pure and honest, and devout, and faithful to their spouse are the oddity, the curiosity, and in many cases the enemy. Our country feels very comfortable with a womanizer, an adulterer, an unfaithful man, and that's a sad, sad commentary on how effective the onslaught of sexual evil has been in our society. It really would tax the imagination far beyond its capability to conceive of a more sexually perverted and immoral society than the one we live in.

Not only is sexual sin tolerated in any form, by any one, with anyone else, any time and any place, but it is promoted and advocated through every means available to man. There really doesn't need to be any effort on my part to chronicle that as if you might not know it. No reason to give you a long list of statistics or somehow give you the record of sexual misconduct in our country. It's apparent to all of us that the sexual revolution which began in the 1960's has led us to the place where there are no absolutes, no standards, and no rules for sexual behavior.

For some people, amazing as it sounds, sexual sin is even more important than life. They play a kind of form of sexual Russian roulette as they spin the chamber going from one partner to another, and gambling that they're not going to get AIDS or some other venereal disease. People demand the freedom to fornicate, even if it means death. To them, or in some cases, death to the child they conceive. They want sexual promiscuity without consequences of course, but the passions run so strongly that they do them anyway even in light of deadly consequences.

I heard today as I was listening to a news program, there was recently a serious robbery in Europe in which \$16,000,000 worth of Viagra was stolen, that's some kind of commentary on our society. It's getting a value they say on the street equal to Cocaine. I suppose in some ways Hugh Hefner is the guru who started the rampant pornographic lifestyle with his sophisticated iniquitous playboy mentality. Very early in his career, and by the way, his career can be defined in one way. He is a panderer of vice; but early in his career he said this, "sex is a function of the body, a drive which man shares with animals like eating, drinking and sleeping. It is a physical demand that must be satisfied. If you don't satisfy it you will have all sorts of neurosis and repression psychosis, sex is here to stay, let's forget the prudery that makes us hide from it, throw away those inhibitions, find a girl who is like minded and let yourself go."

He really authored the underlying societal philosophy of our day. It's really not that new in actuality, in fact, it's really very, very old. He didn't invent it, he just reinvented it. In 1 Corinthians, chapter 6, verse 13, the Apostle Paul comments on a current philosophical statement, "Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, or food is for the belly and the belly is for food." Why does he say that? What a strange thing to say, because he follows it up by saying, "But God will do away with both of them, yet the body is not for immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is for the body." How does he get from food to immorality? Very simple, they had the Hugh Hefner philosophy; I just quoted you what Hefner said, "sex is a function of the body, a drive which man shares with animals like eating." It's simply biological and that's exactly what they said in Paul's day, food for the body, and the body for food. Sex for the body and the body for sex, it's just another part of normal life. That's what they said too and God said I'll destroy all of them. The body is not for immorality, the body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body.

Hugh Hefner frankly could have sold his sexual freedom philosophy in Corinth or any other part of Greece for that matter. He could have gone from Corinth up north to Thessalonica and sold it there. They had all experienced the sexual revolution in the Greek world. It included homosexuality; it included the very popular pedophilia in Paul's day. It included transvestism where men dress like women. It included every form of fornicating sexual perversion. It was all over that world, in fact, the Greeks had to develop words for all of it.

The Greek language had ample capability to catalog all kinds of deviant sexual sin because it was everywhere. Let me just give you part of a quick survey, it's not a happy list but these are the words that they had in their vocabulary to describe the various kinds of sexual behavior that were a part of their society. There's the word *pornea*, familiar words to anyone who knows the Greek of the New Testament. *Pornealiterally* means the purchasable one, a whore, a harlot, that's *pornea*.

Pornuo, from which we get the world pornography, was the filthy business of making a living by prostitution. Those words tend to be translated in the New Testament, fornication, which is a form of

prostitution. *Pornea*, *Pornuo*, and then there is the word ; is the Greek word used for a sex slave, sometimes called a concubine; sex slaves were desirable in marriages. Women were little more than chattel, little more than animals, little more than tools for cleaning and washing, and etc., and men chose to have sex slaves for the gratification of their physical desires, so they had a word for that .

Then there was the word *moichos*, *moichosis* the word for an adulterer. An adulterer is someone engaged in sexual activity with a person who is not their spouse. Someone engaged in sexual activity with a person who is not their spouse. Anybody who engages in sexual activity with anyone other than their marriage partner is a *moichos*, an adulterer.

Then there is in the Greek language , it's a word that means mistresses. This was one step up from a sexual slave, this was a friend, something more than a sexual slave, this was someone who was a friend, the Greeks said for conversation and intercourse. So there were enough different forms of this sexual sin to demand those five different words.

When it came to homosexuality they had a vocabulary to identify that. There is a term called , it's the word for homosexual, , man with man committing a coital act. Then there was another word that's used in the New Testament, *molakos*, it is translated, for example, in 1 Corinthians 6 as effeminate. It actually in the Greek was the technical term for the passive partner in a homosexual affair.

Now this is just how life was in those days. In 1 Corinthians chapter 6, the Apostle Paul says this, "Do not be deceived," verse 9, "Neither fornicators nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, or nor homosexuals." I gave you seven words, he uses four of them right there in one verse. None of those are going to inherit the Kingdom of God, then in verse 11, "And such were some of you, but you were washed and you were sanctified." You can say that that early church in Corinth had its share of harlots, it had its share of people who were engaged in the filthy business of prostitution, it had its share of fornicators, it had perhaps its share of those who were once sex slaves, it certainly had its share of adulterers who had been having sex relationships with someone who was not their spouse, it had its mistresses, it had its homosexuals, it had its passive partners for homosexuals who would be like male prostitutes, such were some of you.

That's right, those kinds of people were saved out of that and in verse 11 he says, "But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God." That was part of that culture.

You could add to that temple prostitutes; that was sort of the religious area of prostitution. You would go to the temple to worship, for example, Aphrodite or Diana of the Ephesians, or whoever it might have been. You'd go to the temple and the way you would commune with the god was by having a sexual relationship with a prostitute and there was not only heterosexual prostitution but homosexual as well. Sexual sins were common, they were acceptable, they were tolerated, and they were

advocated just as today they were socially acceptable. In some ways in Paul's time even more socially acceptable than now.

That was not only true in Corinth but that was true in the Greek world and Thessalonica, which was a part of ancient Greece, is the particular letter that I want you to look at. Open your Bible to 1 Thessalonians chapter 4, it's in this letter that I want you to focus, although we'll be bounce back to 1 Corinthians because Paul deals with it there also, but I think in this letter in the opening part of chapter 4, we have a concise plea for sexual purity. Now I'm not going to be able to get through all of this tonight, so tonight and two weeks from tonight we'll address this subject.

I want you to know how grateful I am that you're here tonight, that kind of a title is enough to drive people away, but I'm glad you're here to hear this wonderful instruction from the Word of God. Let me read this first eight verses of 1 Thessalonians 4, "Finally then brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God, just as you actually do walk, that you may excel still more. For you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that is that you have 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. Consequently, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you."

This is a passionate plea on the part of Paul to the Thessalonians and all other believers to maintain purity in the sexual area of their lives. He starts out in verses 1 and 2 with sort of a general beginning. He says, "We request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus," that is to say in the face of the Lord, before the Lord with Him watching and holding you accountable that as you received from us instruction as to how you ought to walk and please God, he had been there, he had taught them, they knew what they were to do in terms of behavior, and he says, you actually are doing it. I want you to excel still more for you know what commandments we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

What's he talking about? He tells us in verse 3, "This is the will of God, your sanctification and here's what I mean, abstain from sexual immorality." So really it takes him those three verses to get to the point, it's not anything new, you already received that instruction from us when we were there, we told you how to walk and please God, you're doing it but I want you to excel still more and you know exactly what commandments we gave you. We gave you commandments that relate to your sanctification, that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality.

He's building on his past teaching. Down at the end of verse 6, "Just as we also told you before and solemnly warned you." Paul knew what all of us know, that this is a problem, this is a major problem.

It's not something you mention once and never again, this is a huge problem. Why? Because desire is strong, temptation is compelling, and society is corrupt. In the day of the Apostle Paul, as today, and I never thought I'd - at least in my early years I never thought I'd live to see it so much like it was then. But in the day of the Apostle Paul and in our day there is no shame attached to sexual sin, no shame.

No shame attached with sex outside of marriage, no shame is attached to having a sexual relationship with someone's whose not your spouse, no shame is attached to being a pedophile, a homosexual, that's the way it was in the day of the Apostle Paul. Therefore, not only were those people dealing with their own desires, which all people deal with, not only were they dealing with the temptations that were still there because of the experiences in their former life before they were converted, that they've got recycled in their brains, and every time old sin is recycled it becomes new temptation.

As I told you some months ago, when you recycle your old sins you recommit them in your mind, and that's a kind of impurity that's so hard to get rid of. Not only were they dealing with their flesh and the desires of the flesh, and the temptations that were coming from the old life being recycled in their minds, but they were being literally battered by the wickedness of society and it was hard to stay pure. Society was for it, society supported it, there was no stigma, one bore no shame in committing sexual evil.

In spite of the strong desire, and in spite of the past, and in spite of the society, we're called to sexual purity. It doesn't matter what's going on around us, the Lord never tolerates a lowered standard. The church cannot live like the world. All forms of sexual gratification may be engaged in in the society, but not in the church of Jesus Christ.

We don't know what specific sins that occurred in the Thessalonian church; they're not mentioned, such as the ones that are mentioned in 1 Corinthians. Think of 1 Corinthians 5 where a man was having sexual relationships with his father's wife, either his mother or his stepmother, but we do know that all these sexual activities were a part of the society, and the pull and the push was strong, and Paul has to address it here.

As we look at this text three simple questions will open the passage to us. Question number one, what is the command here? What is the command? Well the command is pretty simple, come to verse 3, "This is the will of God, your sanctification; that is that you abstain from sexual immorality." In verse 2 Paul reminds them that they know what commandments the Apostles gave them. Back in verse 1 they have to be able to recall the instruction they received about how to live their lives, and than he gets to the point here, that they were taught, they were instructed, they were commanded to abstain from sexual immorality. If you could define life in that part of the world at that time, you would define it as simply life focused on sexual gratification that was the great theme of life as it is fast

becoming in our society, its mind boggling how sex has taken over this society.

Paul is saying now, we've already told you about this, but I'm going to tell you again, this is the will of God, your sanctification, that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality. Folks I don't know how it could said anymore clearly than that. I'm amazed sometimes how many people are confused about the will of God. Boy I don't know what God's will for my life is and the Bible says that God our Savior will have all men to be saved.

Romans 12 says that, "God desires not only you be saved but that you sacrifice your life, that your life would be given as a living sacrifice." Ephesians 5 says, "Be not unwise but understanding what the will of the Lord is, be filled with the spirit." The will of the Lord is revealed, He wants you to be saved, He wants you to be a sacrifice, He wants you to be filled with the spirit.

1 Peter says, "It's God's will that you submit. I mean there are a number of things that are clearly outlined in Scripture as God's will and here's one right here. I tell young people all the time if you are obedient to the will of God revealed in Scripture, the part that's not revealed will be easy. If you're saved and sacrificial, and spirit controlled, and submissive, and if you're satisfied as 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, "In everything give thanks for this is the will of God concerning you." If you're thankful for everything you demonstrate satisfaction. If you're suffering you're willing to suffer for righteousness sake because that's the will of God, 1 Peter 3:17 and if you're sanctified living a Holy life, if you're doing all the will of God that's revealed in Scripture, the part that's not revealed will be easy, you'll just step right into it because God will be controlling your desires.

He's talking here about your sanctification. Sanctification is the process of being Holy; the word literally means to be separated and it has to do with being separated from sin, all that is wicked, all that is impure, all that is fleshly. The word is ; it just means set apart, separated from sin to God. It's used again in verse 4, and again in verse 7, it's kind of the theme word here. God is calling for separated living, for separated living, to come apart from and be separate from sexual sin.

In Romans 6:19 Paul says, "Just as you presented your members," your bodily members, your physical body, and that would include your mind, "As you presented your members as slaves to impurity now present your members as slaves to righteousness resulting in separation or sanctification." That's what is being called for here is separation. Hebrews 12:14, "Pursue sanctification, separation," and what do you mean particularly? What is the command? Abstain from sexual immorality. Stay away from sexual sin.

Somebody always says how far away? Far enough away to be pure, far enough away to be Holy in thought and deed, that's how far. If you young people are courting someone and you have great affection and love for that person, and you're maybe headed down the road toward marriage, the question always comes up what am I free to do? The answer is you're free to do anything that

doesn't cause you to have sinful desires, and you've crossed the line.

The question is not how far can I go and get away with it; the question is how can I be separate from sin? Well this is a very, very important command. Every imaginable and frankly every unimaginable form of sexual vice was running loose in their world as I said, as it is in ours, and some of these Christians were new Christians, and like all assemblies of God's people, the church in Thessalonica had some believers weaker than others. Some of them would be more ignorant than others, shallower than others, and more strongly pulled by their lusts and coming out of more gross kind of backgrounds, find the lure stronger than others. In fact, in many cases those people would have had to cease practices that were frankly weekly, if not daily routines.

Things they used to do without any thought. Things they used to plan to do and they did with indifference, they lived to do them. Now all of a sudden they're to completely be separated from all of those behaviors. Abstain, , complete abstinence is what it calls for from immorality. The word is *porneia*, *porneia* is what I told you earlier, its root means a prostitute, a harlot, the business of harlotry and that's any kind of sexual behavior with anyone but your marriage partner, any kind of illicit sexual behavior. It's a big, broad word. In some ways it even encompasses the concept of adultery although adultery is specific in that it is a married person carrying on with someone other than their spouse, but *porneia* is just pornography, just all kinds of illicit behavior.

This is not to say that God hasn't given physical love and physical fulfillment as a gift, he has. In Hebrews 13:4 it says, "Let marriage be held in honor among all and let the marriage bed be undefiled." Or it could be read, "The marriage bed is undefiled." What you do in your marriage bed is a gift from God to you, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge, God will judge. God will judge those who commit sexual sin.

This is the basic command. Scripture has so much to say about this. I want to take a few minutes to show you some of the things that are important to know from Scripture. Turn back to 1 Corinthians chapter 1, verse 4, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you," he says to the Corinthians. "For the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus that in everything you were enriched in Him and all speech and all knowledge, even as the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you, so that you are not lacking in any gift awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." That is just an incredible statement. That is an affirmation.

Listen; of the genuineness of the Corinthian church, these were true believers. Verse 4, "Thanks God for them, the grace of God was given to them in Christ, they were enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge, Christ was confirmed in Him, the gospel was confirmed in them," I should say by the

way they lived their lives. They didn't lack any spiritual gift, they were hoping for the second coming of Christ when they would meet Him face to face and Christ would confirm them to the end and hold them blameless because Christ of course had paid for their sins. God was going to be faithful and those who were called into fellowship with His Son would be glorified in the end. I mean this is a tremendous statement about the fact that they were real Christians.

Yet you go to chapter 5 and it says that it actually reported that there is immorality among you, an immorality of such a kind as doesn't even exist among the Gentiles, the pagans that someone has his father's wife and you're arrogant about it, and you haven't mourned instead. Where was the church discipline here? In order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst. You were proud about it, how in the world could this church have converted people be proud about it? Well maybe they were proud because they were loving and they were forgiving, and they were tolerant. So he says the next time you meet through that person out, throw them out. "If I was there I'd do it," verse 3, so in the name of Lord Jesus, verse 4, "When you're assembled and I with you in spirit with the power of the Lord Jesus I've decided to deliver such a one to Satan."

"Don't you know," verse 7, "A little leaven, eleven's a whole lump, don't you know that's going to poison your fellowship. The disease of that iniquity is going to go right through the church?" The bottom line folks is this is a problem in the church, this is a problem with believers, that's who I'm addressing. I don't expect the world to act any different then they act, do you? I don't expect them to act any different; the things of God aren't available to them. I expect them to act the way they act. They're driven by the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, the pride of life and that's what they'll act out, and when the society doesn't constrain them at all, then they're free to live any way they want to live and that's exactly the way they'll live until society becomes more base, and more base, and more base, and more base; but we're not surprised.

What is intolerable and what the Apostle Paul is saying to the Corinthians and the Thessalonians is that this would exist in the church. Going into chapter 6 of 1 Corinthians he even gets more into this theme down in verse 13 as I noted for you, he comments on the common philosophy of the time, "Well food is for the stomach and the stomach for food," that's what they said. Sex is for the body and the body for sex, that's the whole idea.

Go down to verse 15, "Do you not know that our bodies are members of Christ?" Now this is in my judgment the strongest of Paul's arguments. Our bodies are members of Christ, shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot, and than he uses that Greek negative, the strongest in the language of the Greeks, translated may it never be, it's , no, no, no, not at all, impossible, can't happen, unthinkable.

Verse 15, "Do you not know that the one who joins himself to a harlot is one body with her? For he says the two will become one flesh." You join yourself to a harlot you have become one flesh.

Verse 17, "But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him." So here you are, you're one with the Lord, you're one spirit with the Lord, and you go join yourself to a harlot and you join Christ to the harlot, unthinkable. That's why he says in verse 18, "Flee immorality, flee immorality." Then he adds in verse 18, "For every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." What's he talking about here? I'll tell you what he's talking about, he's talking about venereal disease.

Every other sin he said is outside your body, but this one affects your body, and of course in ancient times venereal disease was rampant, and without the benefit of antibiotics that we have today and advances of medical science, it was indeed devastating and deadly. I mean don't you realize what you're getting into? Don't you realize that if this happens among believers you're joining Christ to a harlot? Don't you realize that the implications of this on your physical body are devastating? We know about that today because of the terrible, terrible AIDS virus.

Verse 19, "Don't you know that your body's a temple of the Holy Spirit who's in you, whom you have from God. You're not your own, you've been bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body." Very straight forward and he's talking to believers; believers can fall into this sin, believers can be subject to these great temptations, particularly if you had a prior lifestyle of sexual iniquity, all the recycling of that stuff constitutes pretty potent temptation and so the Apostle Paul reminds you why you should not do that because you are making the members of Christ to be joined with a harlot, and because you are bringing upon your body the potential of devastation and death, you are then desecrating the temple of the Holy Spirit.

This was a problem in the church, and folks, I think now today - well I'm confident of that, it is a greater problem in the church than it's ever been. I mean it is a problem in the church of massive proportions and sad to say it's a problem even, not only in the pew but in the pulpit as well. A week doesn't go by that I don't hear about another horrible case of sexual immorality in the life of pastors, church leaders. Nobody seems really to care that much. It is a more and more acceptable kind of behavior.

You remember when we were studying 2 Corinthians, look at 2 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 21, it says that - Paul is writing in this particular section telling them he's going to come and visit them and he said, "I'm afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they've practiced." What I afraid, he says, is I'm going to come to the church, the church that I love, the church that I've ministered too for nearly two years, the church that I've written, the church that I sent Titus too, this wonderful beloved church I'm afraid I'm going to come and I'm going to find a whole lot of sexual sin going on.

This is not to say that they were habitually in it, because I just read you 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 which says, "The people who continually practice that will not enter the Kingdom of Heaven." These are the kinds of the deeds of the flesh that Galatians 5 discusses, "Immorality, impurity, sensuality, and I forewarned you he says, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the Kingdom of God." In fact, at the end of the book of Revelation it says in chapter 21 and verse 8, "The cowardly unbelieving, abominable murders and immoral persons, their part will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone which is the second death," and in Revelation 22 and verse 15, he talks about who's inside heaven and who's outside and who's outside the immoral persons, along with the liars.

Those whose life pattern is immorality, those whose daily routine is immorality, they are not in the Kingdom. We're not talking about that habitual thing, we're talking about when believers fall victim to this in the church, and believers can. I just thought of 1 Corinthians 10 where Paul basically continues to write to these Corinthians and he is so concerned about how they conduct their lives and he says, "I don't want you to be unaware brethren that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were immersed into Moses as their leader and the cloud in the sea, they all ate the same spiritual food, they all had the same Word from God, they all ate the manna, they drank the water from the rock, the spiritual rock which followed them was Christ."

Nevertheless, with all the blessings being identified with the great leader, Moses having all the provisions, wandering through the wilderness and all of God's care, but most of them God wasn't well pleased and they were laid low in the wilderness, they died there, they died there. Why? These things happened as examples for us, that we should not crave evil things as they also craved, and not be idolaters as some of them were. Verse 8, "Nor let us act immorally as some of them did and 23,000 fell in one day."

Boy, can you imagine what would happen if 23,000 sexual sinners died in one day? What a message. He's saying to believers don't fall prey to this, look at that example in the Old Testament, look at the consequence of that kind of behavior. Consider that you're the temple of the Holy Spirit, that you're one with Christ. Consider the physical implications of this conduct.

Well back to our text in 1 Thessalonians, the basic command is abstain from sexual immorality. How far? Far enough away, not to be driven by evil desire. That's God's will for you, that's His will for you.

Don't be fussing around with God saying, "Lord I don't know what Your will is, I really wish You'd show me Your will." If this, which is His will, is not the pattern of your life. If you're not willing to obey the part of His will He's revealed here, why should He tell you things He hasn't revealed here? That's the command.

Well our time has gone, can you believe that? That's okay because we'll take another question next time and the other question is how can I keep that command, how can I keep that command? That is a very, very important question and that's the question He's going to answer in verse 4 through 6, how can I keep that command? We'll wait for next time.

Father, we have said enough to bring conviction to our hearts and make clear in no uncertain terms what it is that You require. We know Lord that You wouldn't ask us to do what we couldn't do. You wouldn't ask us to do what we didn't have the strength to do. Lord help us to make resolves in our hearts to stay away from the things that pander to evil, sinful, sexual desires. Keep us pure; keep us away from the garbage that pollutes us. Lord how tragic it is to think about the young people, young generation being raised with an incessant and relentless over exposure to pornography and how it will pollute their minds, how it will destroy their bodies, we can't even imagine how it will be possible in the future for them to recover from the kind of debauchery which is being pressed upon their young souls, the terrible sins of heterosexual evil as well as homosexual evil.

Lord, we know that as a church we need to be the shining light, the point of purity, and the midst of the impure. We need to shine on this dump without being touched by it like a beam from the sun which brings light to expose but is untouched by what it exposes. Father protect us, show us again the promise of 1 Corinthians 10:13, "That there is no temptation taken us but such is as common to man and Your faithful and will with that temptation make a way of escape that we may be able to endure it. That there's always a way out if we come to You." Father we pray that You'll protect the relationship of young people who are going together, who are dating, who are engaged, keep them pure, protect married couples, keep them pure, don't allow the marriage to be devastated by sexual sin, keep the minds of men pure from sinful things that are available to them at every turn, the same with women, protect our children Lord from these things. Help us to be models of spiritual virtue and moral purity before our children so that they can see not only the standard but they can see the reward and the blessing, and the joy, and the fulfillment that comes to those who maintain that standard by Your power and Your grace.

May our children see the best of what marriage is and the best of what marital love and affection is, may they see the best examples of integrity and purity, and Lord we pray that in the midst of the darkness, the church of Jesus Christ will shine as a light. We obviously Lord grieve because we live now in a society that applauds immorality in every way, and so we have to take a stand, another stand, another point in which our spiritual courage is tested and make us noble in our obedience to the commandment which we know, even as the Thessalonians knew, which has been told to us many times, that we might bring honor and glory to Your Name and no reproach on the spirit of God whose temple we are and know reproach on Christ whose we are.

May we be faithful and may we know then the full blessing that You bring to those who are obedient. Thank You Lord for this instruction and for the practicality of it; help us Lord to be obedient and for Your glory we ask, Amen.

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