

Growing in Purity

2 Samuel 11

THRIVE! Growing and Changing in the Christian Life

Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, January 31, 2016, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

livinghopechurch.net

“At that moment when lust takes control of your heart, God loses all reality. Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Announcements

1. Welcome to visitors / welcome packet
2. No expositor’s class today
3. Don’t miss evening worship, 5pm

If you don’t have a Bible, there should be one in the seat in front of you. Open your Bible to **2 Samuel 11**. The title of our message this morning is “Growing in Purity.”

There’s an old saying that goes. “Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you’ll ever want to pay!” This morning we come to the saddest chapter in King David’s life—his adulterous affair with Bathsheba, Uriah’s wife, and his murder of Uriah.

A Strategy for Purity

No one starts out planning for moral failure. Yet it is so prevalent in our churches today. We have seen a Corinthian culture infect Christ’s beloved church. Sensuality is available and being accessed by God’s people, and we as a church – each of us as followers of Christ need a strategy for purity. Purity is an issue for both men and women. At any time we could be drawn away into the bondage of lust. We cannot serve two masters. Either we are going to serve Jesus Christ or not, but He will not share the throne of your heart with any other master.

Forgetfulness of God: Bonhoeffer

Every servant of God will be tempted to sin in lust and immorality. It is a forgetfulness we are subject to if we are not careful to walk with God.

The beloved German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “At that moment when lust takes control of your heart, God loses all reality. Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

We are all going to give an account before God. So I want to read this account from the life of David.

Reading of Holy Scripture

2 Samuel 11:1-27, "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem.

2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. 3 And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" 4 So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, "I am pregnant."

6 So David sent word to Joab, "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king. 9 But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and did not go down to his house. 10 When they told David, "Uriah did not go down to his house," David said to Uriah, "Have you not come from a journey? Why did you not go down to your house?" 11 Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing." 12 Then David said to Uriah, "Remain here today also, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13 And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house.

14 In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die." 16 And as Joab was besieging the city, he assigned Uriah to the place where he knew there were valiant men. 17 And the men of the city came out and fought with Joab, and some of the servants of David among the people fell. Uriah the Hittite also died. 18 Then Joab sent and told David all the news about the fighting. 19 And he instructed the messenger, "When you have finished telling all the news about the fighting to the king, 20 then, if the king's anger rises, and if he says to you, 'Why did you go so near the city to fight? Did you not know that they would shoot from the wall? 21 Who killed Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth? Did not a woman cast an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez? Why did you go so near the wall?' then you shall say, 'Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.'"

22 So the messenger went and came and told David all that Joab had sent him to tell. 23 The messenger said to David, "The men gained an advantage over us and came out against us in the field, but we drove them back to the entrance of the gate. 24 Then the archers shot at your servants from the wall. Some of the king's servants are dead, and your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also." 25 David said to the messenger, "Thus shall you say to Joab, 'Do not let this matter displease you, for the sword devours now one and now another. Strengthen your attack against the city and overthrow it.' And encourage him."

26 When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband. 27 And when the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.”

Outline

Today I want to us learn five lessons about purity. We will likely only get to three today.

- The **prevalence** of moral failure, vs. 1-2
- The **pathway** to moral failure, vs. 2-5
- The **marks** of moral failure, vs. 6-26
- God’s **grace** for moral failure, Psalm 51
- A **strategy** for purity, vs. 27

I. The **Prevalence** of moral failure, vs.1-2, “it happened...”

David, a Man after God’s Own Heart

David was a man after God’s own heart. He had over 20 years of success before all of this mess happened. Be warned older men and women. Just because you have had great spiritual success in life, does not mean you are immune for the sin of lust and immorality. We are all susceptible.

It was not a passionate youth who deliberately walked into this sin, but a man of God who had now reached middle age.¹ David wrote one-half of the Psalms. It seems he was for most of his ministry as King and prophet a man of exemplary character and purity.

But then one day it happened. It shows that moral failure is possible with the best of God’s saints. We want to be warned today that moral failure is spreading like a disease in the church today. It ought not to be, but the rate that it happens is alarming. We see if it can happen in David’s life, the temptation is fierce for every one of us.

It Happened!

And so we come to a very telling verse in Scripture. **2 Sam. 11:1-2**, “In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. 2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king’s house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing...”

It happened late one afternoon. We wonder how did this happen? We are going to find out in detail in a moment. But know this it does happen. It is prevalent in the church.

The Prevalence of moral failure in the Church

Dear saints, there is a great prevalence of moral failure in the church. I bring it to you because I want you to consider what it will do if we do not kill it and nail it to the cross. We are at war.

Recently Leadership Magazine commissioned a poll of a thousand pastors. The pastors indicated that

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament* (2 Sa 11:1–4). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- 12 percent of them had committed adultery while in the ministry — one out of eight pastors! — and
- 23 percent had done something they considered sexually inappropriate such as view pornography.

Christianity Today surveyed a thousand of its subscribers both men and women and found the figure to be nearly double, with

- 23 percent saying they had had extramarital intercourse and
- 45 percent indicating they had done something they themselves deemed sexually inappropriate like viewing pornography.

One in four Christians are unfaithful, and nearly one half have behaved unbecomingly! Shocking statistics! Especially when we remember that Christianity Today readers tend to be college-educated church leaders, elders, deacons, Ladies' ministry leaders, Sunday school superintendents, and teachers. If this is so for the Church's leadership, how much more for the average member of the congregation? Only God knows!

This leads us to an inescapable conclusion: The contemporary evangelical Church, broadly considered, is "Corinthian" to the core. It is no wonder...

- No wonder the Church has lost its grip on holiness.
- No wonder it is so slow to discipline its members.
- No wonder it is dismissed by the world as irrelevant.
- No wonder so many of its children reject it.
- No wonder it has lost its power in many places

Where are we to turn for help? The most instructive example in all of God's Word is the experience of King David as it is told in 2 Samuel 11.

The Seventh Commandment

The 7th Commandment still tells us that we ought to be faithful to our spouse if we are married. We are to keep a promise of purity as well if you are single today. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." When God says don't, He's saying, "Don't hurt yourself." Yet we are constantly under assault. I want to give relief to our congregation this morning. But we must understand the scope of the commandment. It's much larger than being faithful merely with your body.

The seventh commandment is about keeping your promise through sexual purity both in your mind and in your body. God's wants us to be holy in our hearts and imaginations.

Jesus made it clear that the scope of the seventh commandment includes our thoughts, words, and actions: "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Mt. 5:27-28).²

² Smith, Colin S. (2006-02-01). The 10 Greatest Struggles of Your Life (Kindle Locations 1334-1336). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

II. The Pathway to moral failure, vs.2-5.

David had an exemplary sanguine personality brimming with joy, enthusiasm, and confidence and overflowing with irresistible charisma. He was the poet — the sweet Psalmist of Israel — so in touch with God and himself that his Psalms pluck the heartstrings of man even today, writing half or more of the Psalter. Under his leadership all Israel had been united. David hardly seemed a candidate for moral disaster. But the king was vulnerable, for there were definite flaws in his conduct which left him open to tragedy.³ In 2 Samuel 11, we see David's pathway to moral failure, and it is a warning to every sincere believer in Jesus Christ today.

Kent Hughes' gives several steps to moral failure in his book *Disciplines of a Godly Man*: (1) Pride, (2) Desensitization, (3) Relaxation, (4) Fixation, (5)

1. PRIDE

Pride is the first step in the pathway to moral failure. David was not always proud. He was mostly humble. But Satan just needs you to think you are a mature and that you are special and stronger in your spiritual life than most people. You can handle it!

Remember Samuel said of David, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). God liked what He saw. God liked David's heart! David was a man after God's own heart.

David had a brave heart. He was not afraid of the great Philistine giant Goliath. He stood courageously against God's enemies and smote Goliath with a sling and a stone. And then David stood over the fallen giant and cut off his head (1 Sam. 17:45–49).

But we read in **verse 1**, "In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem." It was the season when kings go to war, but David was satisfied with his victories. We might call that spiritual pride. That's where it all begins.

When we come to this story we all say, "David should have known better". He was 50 years old. There is a temptation to think that as saints of God mature spiritually, that they become immune to temptation. This morning's message is hopefully going to be a wakeup call and a warning to us all. There is no one at any stage of his spiritual life that is beyond even grievous sin.

2. DESENSITIZATION

2 Samuel 5, which records David's initial assumption of power in Jerusalem, mentions almost as an aside that "after he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem" (v. 13). We must note, and note well, that David's taking additional wives was sin!

Deuteronomy 17, which set down the standards for Hebrew kings, commanded that they refrain from three things:

- 1) acquiring many horses,
- 2) taking many wives, and
- 3) accumulating much silver and gold (cf. vv. 14–17).

David did fine on one and three, but he completely failed on number two by willfully collecting a considerable harem.

³ R. Kent Hughes. *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (p. 20ff). Kindle Edition.

Seeking Pleasure Outside God's Order

We must understand that a progressive desensitization to sin and an inner fall from a sincere pursuit of God had taken root in David's life and left him vulnerable to seek pleasure outside of God and God's order. God has ordered in creation that two should be one flesh. A third party is never acceptable in God's order.

Hebrews 13:4, "Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous."

David's collection of wives, though it was "legal" and not considered adultery in the culture of the day, was nevertheless sin. King David's sensual indulgence desensitized him to God's holy calling in his life. These things were socially permitted, but spiritually deadly.

Culturally Acceptable Indulgences

Men, it is the "legal" sensualities, the culturally acceptable indulgences, which will take us down. The long hours of indiscriminate TV watching, which is not only culturally cachet but is expected of the American male, is a massive culprit of desensitization. The expected male talk — double entendre, coarse humor, laughter at things which ought to make us blush — is another deadly agent. Acceptable sensualities have insidiously softened Christian men, as statistics well attest. A man who succumbs to desensitization of the "legal" sensualities is primed for a fall.

3. RELAXATION

Another step in David's pathway to moral failure was his relaxation from the rigors and discipline which had been part of his active life. David was at midlife, about fifty years old, and his military campaigns had been so successful, it was not necessary for him to personally go off to war. He rightly gave the "mopping up" job to his capable general, Joab — and then relaxed. The problem was, his relaxation extended to his moral life. It is hard to maintain inner discipline when you are relaxing in this way. David was imminently vulnerable.

No one Says, "I'll Commit Adultery Today"

David did not suspect anything unusual was going to happen on that fatal spring day. He did not get up and say, "My, what a beautiful day. I think I will commit adultery today!" May this lesson not be wasted on us, men. Just when we think we are the safest, when we feel no need to keep our guard up, to work on our inner integrity, to discipline ourselves for godliness — temptation will come!

4. FIXATION

"In the spring of the year, the time when kings go out to battle, David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel. And they ravaged the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem. 2 It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful. 3 And David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" (2 Sam. 11:1–3)

It had been a warm day, and evening was falling. The king strode out on the rooftop for some cool air and a look at his city at dusk. As he gazed, his eye caught the form of an unusually beautiful woman who was bathing without modesty. As to how beautiful she was, the Hebrew is explicit: the woman was *"beautiful of appearance, very"* (v. 2).

David Continued to Look: Sinful Stare

She was young, in the flower of life, and the evening shadows made her even more enticing. The king looked at her, and **this is where he fell** – he **continued** to look at her form. After the first glance David should have turned **ran** the other way and retired to his chamber, but he did **not**. His look became a **sinful stare** and then a burning, piercing leer. In that moment David, who had been a man after God’s own heart, became a dirty, leering, defiled old man. A lustful fixation overcame him, and David decided he would not be denied.

Bonhoeffer Quote

The beloved German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer said: “At that moment when lust takes control of your heart, God loses all reality. Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

Lust Numbs Us

Lust numbs us so powerfully and dangerously that we forget God.

When we are in the grip of lust, the reality of God’s presence fades. We become “practical atheists.” The longer King David leered, the less real God became to him. David also lost awareness everything God made him to be: his holy calling as king, a mighty warrior for God. David also forgot he was a frail sinner and he forgot the disastrous consequences of sin. This is what lust does! It has done it millions of times. God disappears to lust-glazed eyes.

Brothers and sisters, the truth demands some serious questions: Has God faded you’re your view? Did you once see Him in bright hues, but now His memory is blurred like an old faded photograph? Do you have an illicit fixation which has become all you can see? Is the most real thing in your life your desire? If so, you are in deep trouble. Some decisive steps are necessary, as we will see.

5. RATIONALIZATION

From deadly fixation, King David descended to the next level down, which is rationalization. When his intent became apparent to his servants, one tried to dissuade him, saying, “Isn’t this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” (vs. 3). But David would not be rebuffed. Some massive rationalization took place in David’s mind, perhaps he said something like this:

Uriah’s can’t be much of a husband or lover – he’s so old!

He’ll be away for a long time.

I’m the king. It’s so hard being the king. This is a special situation. I deserve a break.

God knows how hard it is to be king.

Then David says to the servant, “Bring her to me.”

The mind controlled by lust has an infinite capacity for rationalization.

- “How can something that has brought such enjoyment be wrong?”
- “God’s will for me is to be happy; certainly He would not deny me anything which is essential to my happiness.”
- “The question here is one of love — I’m acting in love, not lust.”
- “My marriage was never God’s will in the first place.”

- “You Christians and your narrow judgmental attitudes make me sick. You are judging me. You are a greater sinner than I’ll ever be!”

6. DEGENERATION (ADULTERY, LIES, MURDER)

2 Sam. 11:4-5, “So David sent messengers and took her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. (Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house. 5 And the woman conceived, and she sent and told David, “I am pregnant.””

David was unaware he had stepped off the precipice and was falling, and that reality would soon arrive — the bottom was coming up fast.

Before he knew it he was going from a man who was lukewarm, to a man who was cold and calculated.

David went from being a man after God’s own heart to an adulterer, a liar, and finally a murderer.

Transition: This is the pathway to moral failure. Now we look at the marks of this moral failure.

III. The Marks of moral failure,

Sin Will Take You Farther!

Proverbs 13:15 says, “the way of transgressor is hard.” Hear me now! Don’t get near sin. Someone said it this way: “Sin will take you farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you’ll ever want to pay!”

1. DECEIT

First, let’s see the first particular mark of sin is deceit. Rather than confessing his sin, David executed a murderous cover-up process that led to more sins, holding God and his Word in contempt. For the rest of his life, David bore the scars and consequences of this sin; however, in grace, God forgave him.

If You Never Lie... Never Have to Remember

Someone said, “If you never lie, then you never have to remember what you said.” Oh, that King David had taken that advice! But he didn’t. The sin of lust is closely linked with deceit. When David

Weaving a Web of Lies with Uriah

Consider Uriah is a married man. **2 Sam. 11:6-8**, “So David sent word to Joab, “Send me Uriah the Hittite.” And Joab sent Uriah to David. 7 When Uriah came to him, David asked how Joab was doing and how the people were doing and how the war was going. 8 Then David said to Uriah, “Go down to your house and wash your feet.” And Uriah went out of the king's house, and there followed him a present from the king.”

“Wash your feet” was a euphemism for *“spend a night of marital intimacy with your wife!”* David thinks he can get out of this one by having Uriah have relations with Bathsheba.

Sin will cause you to lie. It will cause you to be deceitful.

Uriah the Hittite's Loyalty to Israel

Look at Uriah's response in **2 Sam. 11:11**, "Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel and Judah dwell in booths, and my lord Joab and the servants of my lord are camping in the open field. Shall I then go to my house, to eat and to drink and to lie with my wife? As you live, and as your soul lives, I will not do this thing.""

You need to see the irony in this. Uriah is a HITTITE. He is a FORGEINGER. And He has more loyalty to Israel than Israel's king. This is what the deceitfulness of sin will do to you.

2. DEPRAVITY

Sadly, deceit turns much darker as the heart grows colder. This is what happens when you don't maintain your walk with God. Deceit turns into depravity. David starts doing extreme things to cover up for his deceit.

David Makes Uriah Drunk

We read next that David gets Uriah drunk hoping that he would stumble home into the arms of his wife Bathsheba. But once again the plan failed as Uriah, ever loyal and humble, simply slept on his mat among the David's servants. **2 Sam. 11:13**, "And David invited him, and he ate in his presence and drank, so that he made him drunk. And in the evening he went out to lie on his couch with the servants of his lord, but he did not go down to his house."

David's Heart Turns Cold: Murder

When Uriah did not want to have relations with his wife out of loyalty to the army of Israel, David grew even more desperate, and the deceit led **his heart to grow so cold** that he decided to have Uriah killed in battle! David ordered Joab to put Uriah at the front of the battle lines.

David's Deceit Leads to Murder

In fact, David's heart is so deceitful it has grown murderous, and he has Uriah deliver his own death sentence to further his lies. **2 Sam. 11:14-15**, "In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it by the hand of Uriah. 15 In the letter he wrote, "Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, that he may be struck down, and die."

Now David's deceit and depravity begins to destroy lives.

2. DESTRUCTION OF LIVES

Bathsheba, Robbed of her Virtue

David ruined Bathsheba's life. Matthew Henry said, "The adulterer not only wrongs and ruins his own soul, but, as much as he can, another's soul too."

The latter part of verse 4 states David's sin in stark terms—"he lay with her." Then verse 4 states, "(Now she had been purifying herself from her uncleanness.) Then she returned to her house". The mention of Bathsheba's act of purification serves to confirm that she was not pregnant when she was brought to David. *Bathsheba was robbed of her virtue*. She was likely a Hittite. She knew in the ancient world that a woman had no rights and was like property. This was especially true with a king.

Following their sexual encounter, however, she soon began to notice the bodily changes signaling her pregnancy. **Verse 5** records that she sent a message to the King declaring "I am pregnant."

She was pure. David violated her. Then David violated her husband.

Uriah the Hittite / Bathsheba Wails!

David ruined Uriah's life. He murdered him. We read in **2 Sam. 11:26**, "When the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she lamented over her husband." Upon learning of her husband's death, Bathsheba began to mourn for him in the customary manner. One historian describes this ritual as including

"weeping; wailing—... expressing a mournful, high-pitched cry; rolling in dust; modifying one's diet for a period of time; and modifying one's [clothing], either putting on sackcloth or, in the case of a woman who lost her spouse, wearing garments that identified her as a widow."⁴

Sin does not take into account the harm it does to others. It is even blind to the harm done to one's self.

David's Life and Reputation

David ruined his own life and reputation. He was blind to these consequences when he sinned. He only listened to his lustful heart and then tried to cover it up.

David's Children

David ruined his children's life. Oh, the price they paid! We read in **2 Sam. 12:11** Nathan was given a message to give to David. Part of it was about his family. "Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.'"

Premature Death to 4 Sons

History would soon reveal that David would lose four sons to premature death (Bathsheba's baby—12:18; Amnon—13:29; Absalom—18:14-15; Adonijah—1 Kings 2:25).

Tragic Lives of David's Sons

Look at the havoc that David's actions cause his sons.

- **Absalom** died, he would try to usurp the kingdom from David. He was a rebel.
- **Amnon** would become a rapist of his sister and be killed by Absalom.
- **Solomon** would have his brother **Adonijah** executed in a power struggle.
- **Solomon** would then multiply many foreign and pagan wives that would turn his heart from God.

The kingdom would split and go into apostasy. The sword would never depart from David's family. What a disaster sin brings with it!

3. DEADNESS

The third particular mark of sin is Deadness. Sin can render one unable to feel. There can be a searing of the conscience for a time.

When King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, over **9 months** went by before Nathan confronted him and he confessed. Bathsheba had already given birth to David's child by the time David was confronted by Nathan and confessed his sin. Sometimes we may think God has forgotten—that He really does not care or does not see. This is the deceitfulness of sin.

⁴ (Bergen, 367).

Unconfessed sin was the cause of the storm in David's life—look at David's description of this time of deadness in his life in **Psalm 32:3-4**:

“For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.”

Later he describes the joy which comes to the upright in heart when they confess.

Sin will render you **unfeeling** if you continue in it. At first you will feel the sting of sin. But if you continue, it will render you numb, and the chastening to bring you back may be severe.

IV. **God's grace for moral failure**, Rom. 5:20; Psalm 51

Where Sin Abounds... Grace Super Abounds

Remember **Romans 5:20**, “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” John Bunyan wrote an autobiography entitled, “Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners.” Don't we all feel that way. That could be the title of each one of our biographies.

Where sin abounds, grace literally super abounds!

You are Worse than You Think (Spurgeon)

Perhaps you are here today and you don't feel the need of God's grace. Oh, if you could see yourself through the pure eyes of God, your own depravity would be infinitely shocking to you.

Charles Spurgeon said, “If any person thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him, for you are worse than he thinks you to be. If he charges you falsely on some point, yet be satisfied, for if he knew you better he might change the accusation, and you would be no gainer by the correction. If you have your moral portrait painted and it is ugly, be satisfied, for it only needs a few blacker touches, and it would be still nearer the truth.”⁵

Remember Psalm 51

Consider Psalm 51. David wrote a whole Psalm of repentance. He didn't make excuses. He received God's grace, but God's grace isn't cheap.

He asked for and got cleansing.

Verses 1-2, “Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions.

2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and **cleanse me from my sin!**”

He acknowledged that His sin was not just horizontal in the human realm, but that his sin was ultimately against Almighty God. David says in **verse 4**, “Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.”

⁵ Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892)_Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit_ Vol. 34 [1888].

Verse 11, says he wanted to stop grieving the Holy Spirit and be restored to the Spirit's fellowship.

Allusion to Christ

Verse 7, he asked to be cleansed with hisop and then he would be clean and "whiter than snow." This is an allusion to Christ. When the Israelites left Egypt they had to put the blood of the lamb on the door posts with a hisop branch.

If the blood was on the door then the angel of death who brought God's justice and wrath would "pass over" that home.

Dear child of God, there is forgiveness for sins of lust like David sinned, but it's not cheap grace. Jesus paid it all. Jesus poured out His life's blood for this sin. Hallelujah.

He will restore your joy!

Restore the Years the Locusts Have Eaten

Remember **Joel 2:25**, "I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten," God's grace is amazing.

V. The **Strategy** for purity, Job 31:30; Gen. 39:9

1. MAKE A COVENANT WITH YOUR EYES

Job gave us a strategy, "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze upon a young woman?" (**Job 31:30**).

Psalms 101:3, David says, "I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes: I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me."

Joseph had a similar philosophy. When he was propositioned day after day from Mrs. Potiphar, do you remember his response? "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (**Gen. 39:9**).

Proverbs 6:23-29, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching a light,
and the reproofs of discipline are the way of life,

24 to preserve you from the evil woman,

from the smooth tongue of the adulteress.

25 Do not desire her beauty in your heart.

and do not let her capture you with her eyelashes;

26 for the price of a prostitute is only a loaf of bread,

but a married woman hunts down a precious life.

27 Can a man carry fire next to his chest

and his clothes not be burned?

28 Or can one walk on hot coals

and his feet not be scorched?

29 So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife;

none who touches her will go unpunished."

2. DELIGHT IN YOUR SPOUSE [SINGLES-SAVE YOURSELF FOR MARRIAGE]

If you are married work at delighting in your spouse. This is a way to cultivate your marriage. Be thankful for your beloved. How are we to do that? Let's look to wise King Solomon.

Song of Solomon and the Picture of Christ

Solomon in his Song of songs gives us an example of his delight in his wife in **Song 4:1**, "Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful!" My married brother in Christ, your wife ought to hear from your own lips how much you delight in her.

He continues to delight in her in **Song 4:7**, "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you." No flaw? This is the power of love! But Solomon's bride had flaws. She was a rugged Shulamite farm girl. She was a country girl used to hard work, and here she was in the refined presence of her husband Solomon.

You see a godly husband gives a place of safety and delights in his wife. He makes her feel flawless, because he is a representative and picture of Christ.

Christ's Words: You are flawless!

You see a Christian is spotless and lovely in the eyes of Christ. Christ tells us, "You are altogether beautiful, my love; there is no flaw in you" (**Song 4:7**). The One who has saved you has made you this way. He has declared you to be like this. He shed his blood for you.

Your marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Christ delights in you!

What if I'm Single?

What if I'm single? I can't delight in my spouse. No, but you can save yourself in case God wants you to be married someday. You need to be the person that a godly person will want to marry. Reflect with your body and mind that Christ delights in you.

If you are single, protect and preserve the temple of your body. You are not your own. Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Your sexuality belongs to your future spouse. Keep it locked until the day of your wedding, when you and your spouse can enter and enjoy God's gifts without shame or regret.

3. GROW YOUR MARRIAGE

Marriage can be difficult. The wife of David's youth was Michal, the daughter of Saul. When she was illegally given away to another man, David got her back, but he allowed his marriage to grow distant, and Michal despised David even when he brought the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem when he danced before the Ark.

Married men and women, do all that you can to cultivate your marriage. Don't let your love grow cold.

Enjoy Your Hamster Wheel Days

I love **Ecclesiastes 9:9**, "Enjoy life with the wife whom you love, all the days of your vain [fleeting] life that he has given you under the sun, because that is your portion in life."

There are what I call "hamster wheel" days. Solomon calls these days "vain" or "fleeting." The days are flying by aren't they? Enjoy those "hamster wheel" days. They feel perhaps like you are getting on the same wheel day after day, doing the same thing. In that monotony, Solomon, the great lover of the Song of songs says, "Enjoy life with the wife whom you love!"

4. DIRECT ALL SEXUAL DESIRE TOWARD MARRIAGE

Consider **Prov. 5:15–17**, “Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well.

¹⁶Should your springs be scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets?

¹⁷Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you.”

Better to Marry than to Burn with Passion

The answer to sexual desire is not mere abstinence but marital delight. **1 Cor. 7:9** tells us if single people “cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.”

Sex itself is not evil but rather is a gift of God when enjoyed by two people who have entered into the covenant of marriage. The New Testament also teaches that marriage, including the sexual union, is honorable before God.

A man is to drink exclusively from his ‘own cistern’ (**Prov. 5:15**), which means that all of a man’s sexual energy is to be directed to his wife. She is his exclusive source of sexual refreshment.

Negatively, none of us is to drink from a “broken cistern” and disperse sexual energy outside marriage (**Prov. 5:16–17**).

Fantasies About Another is Adultery

Any sexual act or thought which is not directed towards his wife is sinful and destructive. This truth is reinforced by our Lord Jesus, who makes it clear that even looking at or thinking (fantasizing) about someone other than your wife is adultery (Matt. 5:27–28). To look on another that is not your spouse is “committing the act of adultery in your heart.”

The Snuggle Test

If you want to know where your marriage is at, perhaps on a superficial level, consider the snuggle test. If you and your spouse are on good terms, you will often snuggle during the week. If that’s not there, that’s a good barometer that you are growing distant in even more important areas.

The proper place for unbridled romance and desire is marriage. The marriage bed is a holy place. **Hebrews 13:4**, “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”

The marriage bed is holy, and it is to be kept that way. The marriage bed, conjugal relations in marriage are to be kept active and holy. Romance is not the main thing, but it is a barometer of more important things. If that area’s not healthy it is a sign of much deeper problems.

Singles: Save Yourself for Marriage!

Single people: save yourselves for marriage. God may want you to pure for him without marriage till the day you die. You would be following in the steps of Jesus and Paul and Timothy.

Marriage is not the cure for lust. Jesus is. Let Him be your Savior. Don’t look for a spouse to cure you of lust. Find that cure in Jesus!

5. SEE PEOPLE AS GOD'S IMAGE BEARERS. Another strategy to defeat lust and to live in purity is to view things through God's eyes.

Genesis 1:27 says we are made in God's image. Romans 8:29 says God is restoring that image again in man by conforming us to Jesus.

You should look woman someone made in the image of God not as an object. One woman is portrayed as a piece of merchandise there ought to be an anger that rises up within us.

That person you are looking at is God's image bearer. That's someone's son or daughter. You ought to see them as someone who should be your brother or sister in Christ.

You ought to pray for the people plastered naked on the billboards and in the commercials to come to Christ.

6. PRACTICE "RADICAL AMPUTATION."

We cannot serve two masters. Jesus must be our master. Sometimes we have to blind ourselves to the old masters through radical amputation.

Listen to the words of Jesus in **Matthew 5:28-30**, "But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

The solution is not mutilation of the body, but *mortification* of sin. We call it "radical amputation". John Owen said, "Be killing sin or sin will be killing you".

1.) **Kill What You See** – "If your eye offends you, rip it out" that is if **what you see** causes you to sin, pluck your eye out – that is, cut off access to your eyes so your heart is not tempted to sin. **Blind yourself to the things that cause you to sin.** There are times when all I can do is look at my shoes. Behave as if you've plucked your eyes out – mortify your sin. You may need to change the route that you go home because of a billboard. You may need to cut off internet access for a while.

Television fills our living rooms with sex-filled advertisements for toothpaste ("give your mouth sex appeal"), shaving cream ("take it off; take it all off"). Whether it's beer, basketball, or Windex, everything is sold with sex. We have to **blind ourselves** to those things that tempt us. Don't give your eyes access to tempt your heart.

2.) **Kill What You Do** – "If your hand offends you, cut it off", that is **what you do**. You may need to not pick up certain literature.

3.) **Kill Where you Go** – "If your foot offends you, cut it off," (Mt. 18:8) that is **where you go**. If there are places your feet carry you that cause you to sin, DON'T GO!

Movie Theater Illustration – I can remember getting to the door of a movie theater, sneaking into a movie, and I had to "*act as if I was lame*". I had to cut off my foot! I told my friends, "I can't do this, I'm a Christian". That's mortification.

7. FIGHT WITH GOD'S SWORD (THE BIBLE)

In human warfare, there is no flawless weapon with 100% success. But there is one in spiritual warfare. The Bible is sufficient to win the battle for purity. You can win! Christ has already won. You just have to use Christ's all-powerful sword, the Bible.

Satan is constantly hurling lies at us. What, then, should you do when tempted? Unsheathe your sword and go on the offensive, rejecting lies and rehearsing truth:

When it comes to our temptations with lust, we must reject the lies and tell the truth to ourselves:

- God is not stingy, but good (Deut. 10:12-13).
- Sinful pleasures are not filling, but fleeting, leaving you empty (Heb. 11:24-26).
- People are not objects, but image bearers (Gen. 1:27).
- This is not private, but in the sight of a holy God (Psalm 51:4).
- God forgives us of sin in order to free us from sin, not to give us a license to sin (Rom. 6:1-2).
- Sexual sin isn't harmless, but defrauding – it hurts everyone around us (1 Thess. 4:3-6).
- It will not be easy to turn back, as you are already hardening your heart (Heb. 3:13).
- This sin of lust is not inevitable, since God provides a way of escape (1 Cor.10:13).
- Your past does not define you, Christ's blood does (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 1).

Are you embracing lies, or exchanging them for the truth? Are you glorifying the body, or are you glorifying God with your body? When seductive speech calls out, remember, “all her slain are a mighty throng” (Proverbs 7:26).

8. GET ACCOUNTABILITY

Coming to Christ means coming out of hiding to be exposed by the light and covered with Christ's blood. As Christians, the best thing to do, of course, is just stay in the light. But the best thing to do when we wander into the shadows is to run back. Confession is where that starts.

So, are you hiding? Confess your sins to God. He forgives! But don't stop there. “Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another” (James 5:16). That's what Christian friends are for.

9. DELIGHT IN CHRIST

This should be first. Getting married will not solve your lust problem. You will just bring it into marriage. You need to realize that a spouse can never be your savior. There is one Savior, and His name is Jesus.

David had to pray Psalm 51 and have the “joy of his salvation” restored. O, dear saint. This battle is tough, but it is not impossible. You will fail, but Christ is merciful.

David Brainerd Quote

Colonial Missionary to the Indians, David Brainerd said, “O how much better than life is the presence of God.”⁶

Jolted with Joy!

In Psalm 63, King David is jolted with joy while he is praying. He lifts up his hands to heaven, as if to touch and embrace God.

Psalm 63:3-5, “Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.”

⁶ Jonathan Edwards. *Memoirs of the Rev. David Brainerd* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, UK, 1818), 207.

For David, this experience of God was not comparable to anything on this earth. Actually it was worth the total abandonment of his life that he might gain it. He says the experience of God is “better than life”—better than the very best this world could hope to offer him. This world offers a lot of counterfeit pleasures, but it can never deliver what it offers. God alone is the only one who always delivers what He promises. He is ready to give you more than you can ever handle of Him. This kind of experience filled David with overwhelming praise, to the point where he raised his hands to heaven. He was addicted to God, absolutely addicted. He was satisfied with God!

Conclusion: The Sad Story of My Mother

Some of you have been deeply wounded by the sins of others because of lust. Some of you were in homes that neglected you and did not protect your eyes, and you became enslaved at an early age to this filth and wickedness.

When I was a child, my mother divorced my dad. She was truly the “strange woman” the immoral woman of Proverbs 5.

She worked at a video store. She brought home the most wicked videos and magazines to me because she thought without a father that would make me a man.

How devastating this was to my view of women. But I want you to know something. God can cleanse and transform our minds.

So let me give you hope! God is in the business of healing and renewing. There is hope. Turn to God with all your heart.

Read Romans 12:1-2 Together

Let’s close by reading **Romans 12:1-2**, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”