



Strengthening Your Grip on Key Areas of Your Christian Life

Purity

Introduction:

1. We're continuing our series this morning : **Strengthening Your Grip on KEY AREAS in your Christian Life**

- The goal is to help us to follow through on our theme: *Gearing Up for Greater Effectiveness* which implies staying on top of KEY AREAS in our Christian walk

Q: *What's going to happen to our church/ministry if we are not strong in key areas of our Christian life?*

> we're not going to be growing and we're really NOT going to be ready to meet the challenge that lies ahead of us

2. Our emphasis is: 'people, people, people' – reaching out, building bridges, getting out of our comfort zones, and 'Gearing Up for the fall' if the Lord allows us to minister then

❖ Our goal is NOT 'pleasing people' – but to glorify God by showing love to one another, demonstrating we are the disciples of Christ, and reaching out to others!

> meeting people where they are and helping them take the NEXT step of growth

4. We want to keep the following question in front of all of us!

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you . . .for us?

[serving, leadership, evangelism, hospitality to others, prayer life, study of the Word, etc.]

5. So far, we studied 3 important areas in which we need to strengthen our grip:

⇒ *Strengthen Our Grip on Relationships* – how that is important to God, and it takes work on purpose to make it happen, and God's love for US should motivate us to love others

⇒ *Strengthening Your Grip on Missions* – thank Dave Selvey for teaching us about that subject [comment on Faith Global Ministries] – effective missions ministry flows out of the right view of the Lord (holy), a right view of man (sinful), and a willingness to be part of the solution (send me) – from Isaiah 6

Key point: *"Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't."* - [Let the Nations Be Glad](#), Piper, p. 17

⇒ Last Week: *Strengthening Your Grip on Aging!* – thank Doc Smith for teaching that lesson – what an example he and Leona are to this very subject!

- I want to be like them when Laurie and I grow up – aggressively serving the Lord and being a good steward of our gifts/abilities and our TIME (and the clock is ticking!).]

6. Our study today is probably one of the most important subjects – and also one of the most difficult: **Strengthening Your Grip . . . on Purity!**

Input: How would you respond to the following statement? (agree/in what ways/how?):

"Christianity is supremely the champion of purity." – William Barclay, [The Daily Study Bible](#), p. 232
(quoted by Swindoll, [Strengthening Your Grip](#), p. 55)

[various answers]

- I would agree with the statement because purity is rooted in the nature of the Creator
- In addition, Christ lived a pure and sinless life – He is our model – the champion of purity!

“There has never been a more valiant defender of Purity than Christianity. Nothing can compare to the power of Christ when it comes to cleaning up a life. His liberating strength has broken the yoke of slavery to sin. His death and resurrection have come to our rescue, offering us dignity in place of moral misery and hope instead of degenerating despair. Unlike the helpless victims without the Savior who try and try to get their act together in their own strength—only to fail again and again—the person who knows Jesus Christ personally, having received Him by faith, has available to himself or herself all the power needed to walk in purity. But let’s understand, that walk is not automatic.” – Swindoll, p. 55

- we have to remember where the ‘standard’ for right/wrong, pure/impure is determined

I. The Source of Moral Standards: A Holy God

- if I had to pick a key verse for this subject, it would be:

- ❖ **1 Peter 1:14 As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts *which were yours* in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all *your* behavior; 16 because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."**

* **Holiness = being separate from sin** – it flows from the very nature of God – He is holy

- we have to keep that in mind (start there) when the subject of purity comes up – especially in the area of moral purity, or dealing with temptation toward sexual sins

A. Sex was God’s idea

1. Revealed in the creation of male and female

- ❖ **Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.**

- the fact that men and women differ physically ought to send a message!
- the male and female – NOT two men or two women and he called them ‘partners’

2. Revealed in the ability to be fruitful and multiply

- the natural ability for a man and woman to reproduce other human beings flows from the mind of God who created man/woman!

- ❖ **Gen. 1:28 God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."**

- you can’t do that with two members of the same sex

Point: Sex is a holy subject – Gen. 2:25 ‘not ashamed’ (no guilt)

- the real question is not, “Is sex holy?”, but how are you handling temptation because . . .

B. Sex has boundaries

1. Male and female

- > God’s comments were directed to two people – opposite sex!

2. Husband and wife

- this passage could not be more clear:

❖ **Genesis 2:25** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

3. Practice: Unselfish – 1 Cor. 7

❖ **1 Corinthians 7:1** Now concerning the things about which you wrote, it is good for a man not to touch a woman. **2** But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife, and each woman is to have her own husband. **3** The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. **4** The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband *does*; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife *does*. **5** Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

- this whole passage is sacrificed on the altar of sexual temptation

> i.e. a person is using his/her body for self-gratification ('getting' sex from someone else) or to please someone other than their spouse

- there are also implications to this of a spouse withholding sexual relations – using it as a tool of manipulation, or control

> but there is also the selfishness of simply wanting SEX but there is no real quality of a relationship in the process

4. Commands

a. OT Law: Exodus 20:14

❖ Exodus 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.

- not if you're going to please God, it's not an option, yet it's often ignored

- and this sin can happen without committing the actual ACT of adultery!

b. NT – Matt. 5:27-28

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

- moral purity is not just a behavioral issue – it's an issue of the heart (inner man)

- we need to remember the words of James:

❖ **James 1:13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. **16** Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren.

- and the fact is, our country/culture is not doing very well in this area of purity – and it's not just the WORLD, it's CHRISTIANS as well

II. The Reality of Moral Erosion: An Inescapable Fact

A. It's beginning – Gen. 3

* Fig leaves communicated a message: What was called 'very good' (Gen. 1:31) and was 'not ashamed' (Gen. 2:25) became 'shameful'

B. It continued: OT Examples

Input: Examples in the OT of people who failed to get a grip on the area of purity:

- Abraham

- David
- Solomon
- Joseph – faced it and won – i.e. there is hope!

C. And continued: NT Examples: Corinth

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 6:15** Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! **16** Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body *with her*? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." **17** But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit *with Him*. **18** Flee immorality. Every *other* sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. **19** Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

- let's face it, we live in a Corinthian type culture . . .

D. And will continue: The reality of our culture – it's going to get worse!

- ❖ **2 Timothy 3:1** But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

- the 1st step in solving a problem is to realize you have one – then we turn to God for answers

III. The Truth about Moral Purity: An Attainable Goal

"The Roman world of that day was a climate much like ours today. Impurity was viewed either with passive indifference or open favor. Christians back then (and now) were like tiny islands of morality surrounded by vast oceans of illicit sex and promiscuity. Knowing the current of temptation that swirled around them, he counseled them to 'abstain'—an open and shut case for total abstention from sexual immorality. For Christianity to retain its role as 'the champion of purity,' the Christian is expected to be above reproach. The same is true today as it was in the first century." – Swindol, p. 60

A. God has called us to be people of purity.

- ❖ **1 Thessalonians 4:7** For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. **8** So, he who rejects *this* is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.
- ❖ **Titus 2:11** For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, **12** instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, **13** looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus, **14** who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.
- ❖ **1 John 3:1** See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is. **3** And everyone who has this hope *fixed* on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

- ❖ **1 Peter 2:11** Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul. **12** Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

- so the question is: How do I do that?

B. Take control of the body

- in short, you tell your body what to do – * **The body is your servant, not your master!**

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 9:24** Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but *only* one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. **25** Everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then *do it* to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. **26** Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air; **27** but **I discipline my body and make it my slave**, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.

Input: What are some ways that can be accomplished?

1) Run – cf. **1 Cor. 6:18** “flee immorality”; Ex: Joseph – Gen. 39:12 fled from Potipher’s wife

2) Avoid the temptation -- Rom. 13:14

- ❖ **Romans 13:14** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to *its* lusts.

- don’t make it easy to sin – avoid the situation all together

3) Remember: God is here and watching!

- ❖ **Proverbs 15:3** The eyes of the LORD are in every place, Watching the evil and the good.

C. Be accountable to the Body

- i.e. the body of Christ – your local church, your brothers/sisters in Christ – on two levels:

1. If you know someone who is struggling and needs help:

- ❖ **Galatians 6:1** Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. **2** Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

- refer to the steps of **Matthew 18:15-17**

- ❖ **Proverbs 27:17** Iron sharpens iron, So one man sharpens another.

2. If you are struggling and need accountability:

- ❖ **Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

D. Remember, our goal is to be Christ-like, and He modeled purity for us!

- ❖ **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.

Conclusion:

Q: How are you doing on the purity level? Growing or not growing?

Key Verse: **Proverbs 4:23** Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life.

Input: Why does Satan not want the church, your family, you personally to be pure in all areas?

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Purity — 1Peter 1:14-16

Introduction:

Q: What is the NEXT step of growth for you . . . for us as?

Input: How would you respond to the following statement?

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“There has never been a more valiant defender of Purity than Christianity. Nothing can compare to the power of Christ when it comes to cleaning up a life. His liberating strength has broken the yoke of slavery to sin. His death and resurrection have come to our rescue, offering us dignity in place of moral misery and hope instead of degenerating despair. Unlike the helpless victims without the Savior who try and try to get their act together in their own strength—only to fail again and again—the person who knows Jesus Christ personally, having received Him by faith, has available to himself or herself all the power needed to walk in purity. But let’s understand, that walk is not automatic.” – Swindoll, p. 55

I. The Source of Moral Standards: A Holy God

* **Holiness = being separate from sin** – it flows from the very nature of God – He is holy

A. Sex was _____

1. Revealed in the creation of _____ and _____
2. Revealed in the ability to be _____ and _____

Point: Sex is a _____ subject – Gen. 2:25 ‘not ashamed’ (no guilt)

B. Sex has _____

1. _____ and _____
2. _____ and _____
3. Practice: _____ – 1 Cor. 7:1-5
4. _____
 - a. OT Law: Exodus 20:14
 - b. NT – Matt. 5:27-28

II. The Reality of Moral Erosion: An Inescapable Fact

A. It’s _____ – Gen. 3

B. It continued: OT Examples

Input: Examples in the OT of people who failed to get a grip on the area of purity:

C. And continued: NT Examples: _____**D. And will continue: The reality of our culture – it's going to get _____!****III. The Truth about Moral Purity: An _____**

“The Roman world of that day was a climate much like ours today. Impurity was viewed either with passive indifference or open favor. Christians back then (and now) were like tiny islands of morality surrounded by vast oceans of illicit sex and promiscuity. Knowing the current of temptation that swirled around them, he counseled them to ‘abstain’—an open and shut case for total abstention from sexual immorality. For Christianity to retain its role as ‘the champion of purity,’ the Christian is expected to be above reproach. The same is true today as it was in the first century.” – Swindol, p. 60

A. God has _____ us to be people of purity.**B. _____ - _____ - of the body**

* The body is your _____, not your _____!

Input: What are some ways that can be accomplished?

C. Be _____ to the Body

1. If you know someone who is struggling and needs help:

2. If you are struggling and need accountability:

D. Remember, our goal is to be _____, and He _____ purity for us!

Conclusion:

Key Verse: _____ **Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life.**

Input: Why does Satan not want the church, your family, you personally to be pure in all areas?

