

October 25: Philippians 4:8

Contrary to popular opinion, we can talk about sex in Christ's church. Sex is not a dirty word. God created man and woman, giving us our specific gender. The question is not whether we have a sex-desire, but whether sex-desire has us. When a civilization loses respect for marriage faithfulness, giving itself up to an orgy of sinful indulgence, that society will fall with a terrible crash, no matter how externally powerful or rich it may be. The beauty of sexual love as God intended it is found only in the context of the life-long commitment of marriage as God intended, one man, one woman, for life. Apart from this godly purpose, the sex urge becomes a harmful thing, destroying both souls and bodies of those who commit sexual immorality.

So where are we as a society – when so many people abuse God's gift of sex, when the public media approve and promote sinful sexual expression, when the heroes of culture flagrantly flaunt God's will about sex and marriage, when evolutionary mis-belief implies you can act on any impulse like an animal acting on instinct?

Where are we as Christians – when sexual permissiveness in our society can dull our consciences and distort our understanding of right and wrong? Oh, the spirit is willing, but as Jesus warned, the flesh is weak.

Remember who you are. God created you. He saw you dying in your sin, destined to hell's sorrow forever. He bought you back from eternal damnation to be His forgiven child and heir of eternal life – at the price of the blood of His own Son. He gave you the gift of faith in Jesus. So you are not your own. You were bought at a price. Don't you want to glorify God by holy living, for your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit? The Lord knows the influence of our thoughts on our life. What we allow to dwell in our mind will sooner or later determine how we behave. Therefore as God's Word directs us today, "Think about whatever is pure."

God created Adam, and Eve from Adam and brought them together in their union as one flesh. God instituted marriage as a holy union, and we must regard and keep it so. It is a union of one man and one woman – a union of one flesh, the most intimate union possible between two human beings. God blesses marriage by using the one flesh union to create the life of children. God entrusts those children to the husband and wife to raise as His dear children that they might let Christ's light shine in this world and know God's love forever.

God further blesses husbands and wives with mutual companionship and helpfulness. When two people are united for life they can strengthen each other in all trial, comfort each other in all sorrow, serve and support each other as one with each other throughout a life filled with beautiful memories. The Lord tells us it is better to marry than to burn with passion. In marriage a man and women can find true sexual happiness. Within marriage a man and woman can give themselves to one another without shame, without fear of disease or having a child they don't want or can't care for, and without concern their loved one will be gone when someone else comes along who seems more desirable. Don't you agree that the Lord who created and who blesses marriage has the right to regulate it? Therefore He commands, "You shall not commit adultery." Don't make your mind or body or your marriage love impure.

Sex outside of marriage breaks the one flesh of marriage. So does refusing to life with a spouse as a life-long companion, what we call desertion. These are not casual sins. They affect spouse and children, sometimes throughout their lives. They affect extended families. They affect emotions and finances. They often lead people to turn away from God and fail to train their children in God's Word. Without repentance they will damn your soul. So think about whatever is pure in marriage.

God brought you and your spouse together as one flesh. You belong to each other. Your first love, after God, is not for your parents, your children, or yourself, but for your spouse. Remember, love is not a feeling, but rather an attitude that moves you to go into action to serve others. How do we show love in marriage? God says, **“Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord...as the church submits to Christ. Husbands, love your wife as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for it.”** Wives will willingly place themselves under their husbands in all things involved in the marriage or home relation, as we Christians lovingly and joyfully submit to Christ. Husbands put their wife's needs first, loving their wives as their own bodies and as fellow heirs of eternal life, leading wife and children in the truths of God's Word on the path to eternal life.

Whether married or unmarried, when the Lord says, “Think about whatever is pure,” he wants us all to strive for purity in our lives. **“Marriage is honored in all, and the marriage bed kept pure. But God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”** Since God intends the powerful bond created in the sexual union only for the married, He judges those who have sexual relationships outside of marriage. Premarital sex is sinful. A man and woman can't live together without being married and somehow justify it in God's eyes. That too is a sinful relationship. If someone claims he loves you, prove your love by marriage first and then the sexual union afterwards bonds you as one flesh in a life of committed love.

Jesus also warns, **“Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”** Reading suggestive stories, viewing suggestive TV shows, movies, or magazines, listening to or telling impure jokes, participating in dances that arouse impure desires, allowing alcohol to weaken our self control, arousing impure passions by the way someone behaves on a date, dressing in a way that may tempt someone to lust – child of God, these all pollute the Christian's body and mind, which are temples of the Holy Spirit.

So think about whatever is pure. Pray for the Lord's power and help to overcome temptation. Occupy your mind with wholesome reading and activities. Avoid people and places that would lead you astray. Like Joseph, when tempted by Potiphar's wife, refuse, avoid, and flee temptation with the cry, **“How could I do this wicked thing and sin against God?”** Crucify your flesh by daily repentance of sin, and turn to Jesus for his forgiveness.

We know the powerful temptations to sin against this commandment, and if we fall, we wonder, “Will God still love and accept me? I feel so dirty!” Thank the Lord Jesus that He lived a holy life. He kept this commandment perfectly, serving the Father and us by offering His holy life as the sacrifice to pay for our sins. He proclaims to the repentant believer, “Your sins are forgiven! Now go and leaver your life if sin.” Won't His love and forgiveness will move us all to honor marriage? Therefore, think about whatever is pure – think about Jesus. Amen