

**Reel Purity...Sticking  
to the Script****Core Competency  
Self-Control**Hebrews 13:4; I Corinthians  
6:18-7:5; Proverbs 5:1-23**Core Competencies****Core Beliefs**

- Trinity
- Salvation by Grace
- Authority of Bible
- Personal God
- Identity in Christ
- Church
- Humanity
- Compassion
- Eternity
- Stewardship

**Core Practices**

- Worship Prayer
- Bible Study
- Single-Mindedness
- Biblical Community
- Spiritual Gifts
- Giving Away My Time
- Giving Away My Money
- Giving Away My Faith
- Giving Away My Life

**Core Virtues**

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness/Goodness
- Faithfulness
- Gentleness
- **Self-Control**
- Hope
- Humility

Dear Friends,

“And God saw that it was very good.” This is God’s pronouncement about the crowning achievement of His creation—man and woman. “And the man and his wife were naked, and they were not ashamed.” This is a description of purity at its best—complete trust, abandon and intimacy, including (but not limited to) physical and sexual union. As God looks on our condition today, specifically around sexuality, what would He say? There is far too much that is “not good.” But it doesn’t have to be, or stay that way. Let’s look closely and clearly at God’s design and plan for us as sexual persons, and begin to reclaim what He desires to give us. What a beautiful gift our sexuality is—so let’s be clear and biblical in our thinking and practice!

In His Name,

*Richard Gotthardt***Engaging Our Minds & Hearts****Day 1****Today’s Passage: Hebrews 13:1-9**

This week we will look at what the Bible has to say in respect to sexual purity and self-control. Personal purity in every area of a believer’s life is a reflection of God’s character regardless of marital status.

Before we begin our time in God’s Word, go to Him in prayer. Ask Him to reveal to you His desires and will for your life in the area of sexual purity. **James 1:5-8** (*The Message*) gives us this encouragement:

*“If you don’t know what you’re doing, pray to the Father. He loves to help. You’ll get His help, and won’t be condescended to when you ask for it. Ask boldly, believingly, without a second thought. People who ‘worry their prayers’ are like wind-whipped waves. Don’t think you’re going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.”*

The writer of Hebrews gives us his purpose in writing this book in Hebrews 13:22, when he says, “**I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation.**” Read through **Hebrews 13:1-9** several times in several different versions. If you have internet capabilities, you may go to [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com) to access a variety of translations.

1. Make a list of the exhortations that you see in these nine verses. If the exhortations include a warning or reasoning, include that in your list.
2. Did you notice that **Hebrews 13:4** actually includes two exhortations and corresponding warnings? If you didn’t catch it in the previous question, look again and see if you can distinguish the subtle differences included in this verse.

3. The first part of the verse begins with an exhortation to **everyone whether married or single**. It uses the word “honor,” which in Greek carries the meaning of precious, of great price or value, esteemed, and especially dear. Is that the current value that marriage holds in our American culture? How does the current fight over the definition of marriage reflect whether we as a culture “honor” marriage?
4. Regardless of your current marriage status, do you personally hold the institution of marriage in “honor”? How is that evidenced by your life?
5. If you are married, do you “honor” your marriage? How is this evidenced by your life?
6. The second exhortation we see in verse four mentions specifically the marriage bed, signifying the sexual relationship within a marriage, and the exhortation to keep that sexual relationship pure and undefiled. Who is responsible for keeping it pure?
7. The very definition of the word “pure” requires nothing that would defile, pollute, stain, or soil. Something cannot be *mostly* pure. It is either pure or it is defiled. This verse clearly warns of God’s judgment for what two specific behaviors?

## Day 2

### Today’s Passages: Various Cross References

#### ***Pray first!***

Today we will look at a number of cross references that will give us more insight as to the purity that is God’s, and that He requires of His children.

Read through the following verses. Note what you learn about purity from each of them.

- Job 4:17:
  
- Psalm 19:8:
  
- Psalm 24:1-6:
  
- Matthew 5:8:

- Philippians 4:8:
- 1 Timothy 1:5:
- 1 Peter 2:2:
- Proverbs 22:11:
- 1 Timothy 4:12:
- Titus 2:7:

Now reflect back on the exhortation from Hebrews 13:4 that the marriage bed is to be kept pure. From the other truths that you have discovered from God's Word regarding purity, how is this possible? What is necessary for us to maintain purity in marriage?

## Day 3

**Today's Passages: 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5**

***Pray first!***

Read through the passage.

1. Mark every use of the word "body."
2. The verses in 1 Corinthians 6 seem to be addressing a broader audience than those in the first part of chapter 7. What are the distinctions that you see?
3. Now make a list of what you learn about your body. Include everything you see, whether it applies to being married or single.
4. In the New American Standard Version, verse two of chapter seven says, "But because of immoralities, each man is to have his own wife and each woman is to have her own husband." The word "immoralities" can be translated "illicit sexual intercourse." Of what does verse 5 warn us that seems to follow this same train of thought?

5. When we are commanded in verse 18 to “flee from sexual immorality,” what is the reason given?
  
6. As a believer who is not married, how do I honor God with my body?
  
7. As a believer who is married, how do I honor God with my body?

## Day 4

### Today’s Passages: Proverbs 5:1-23, Genesis 3

#### **Pray first!**

Read through this portion of scripture several times in different versions if possible. This will help you to better understand some of the poetic words and phrases.

On a separate piece of paper, make a chart using the following headings (or feel free to come up with your own) to help you record the wisdom contained in this Proverb. List all that you observe using the words from the text, or your own paraphrase of the ideas presented.

- WHAT WE NEED
- WHAT WE NEED TO AVOID
- SPECIFIC DO’S AND DON’TS
- WHY TO DO IT OR NOT DO IT
- STUMBLING BLOCKS TO MY SUCCESS

Once you have done that, compare what you see here with the interchange between the serpent and Eve in the garden (Genesis 3). In regards to purity, what truths of God have we refused to believe and hold to? What lies of Satan have we bought into? What has been the result in our world, our culture, our churches, our homes?

## Day 5

**Galatians 5:22-23** describes the fruit of the Spirit in the life of a believer. Included in this description and our core value for this week is the virtue of **self-control**. This same Greek word occurs four times in the New Testament, Acts 24:25, Galatians 5:23, 2 Peter 1:6 (twice).

The definition of the Greek word used here, (egkrateia), suggests “the virtue of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites.”<sup>1</sup>

Antonyms of this word include “excess, self-indulgence, senselessness, prodigality, pleasure, and drunkenness.”<sup>2</sup>

*Vines Complete Expository Dictionary* gives this further explanation for the word “self-control.” “The various powers bestowed by God upon man are capable of abuse; the right use demands the controlling power of the will under the operation of the Spirit of God; in Acts 24:25, the word follows “righteousness,” which represents God’s claims, self-control being man’s response thereto; in 2 Peter 1:6, it follows “knowledge,” suggesting that what is learned requires to be put into practice.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible : Showing every word of the test of the common English version of the canonical books, and every occurrence of each word in regular order.* (electronic ed.) (G1466). Ontario: Woodside Bible Fellowship.

<sup>2</sup>Zodhiates, S. (2000, c1992, c1993). *The complete word study dictionary : New Testament* (electronic ed.) (G1466). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

<sup>3</sup>Vine, W., Unger, M. F., & White, W. (1997, c1996). *Vine’s complete expository dictionary of Old and New Testament words* (electronic ed.). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Our **creed** regarding self-control states, **“I have power, through Christ, to control myself.”** **1 Thessalonians 5:6** exhorts, **“So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be alert and self-controlled.”**

Read through the following quotes and consider what they have to say to the areas of purity and self-control.

### **Slightly Soiled**

Two theological students were walking along a street in the Whitechapel district of London, a section where old and used clothing is sold. “What a fitting illustration all this makes!” said one of the students as he pointed to a suit of clothes hanging on a rack by a window. A sign on it read: “Slightly Soiled—Greatly Reduced in Price.” “That’s it exactly,” he continued. “We get soiled by gazing at a vulgar picture, reading a coarse book, or allowing ourselves a little indulgence in dishonest or lustful thoughts; and so when the time comes for our character to be appraised, we are greatly reduced in value. Our purity, our strength is gone. We are just part and parcel of the general, shopworn stock of the world.” Yes, continual slight deviations from the path of right may greatly reduce our usefulness to God and to our fellowman. In fact, these little secret sins can weaken our character so that when we face a moral crisis, we cannot stand the test. As a result, we go down in spiritual defeat because we have been careless about little sins.

After a violent storm one night, a large tree, which over the years had become a stately giant, was found lying across the pathway in a park. Nothing but a splintered stump was left.

Closer examination showed that it was rotten at the core because thousands of tiny insects had eaten away at its heart. The weakness of that tree was not brought on by the sudden storm; it began the very moment the first insect nested within its bark. With the Holy Spirit’s help, let’s be very careful to guard our purity. —H.G.B.

Our Daily Bread, August 16<sup>4</sup>

### **Marshmallow Experiment**

The essence of emotional self-regulation is the ability to delay impulse in the service of a goal. The importance of this trait to success was shown in an experiment begun in the 1960s by psychologist Walter Mischel at a preschool on the Stanford University campus. Children were told that they could have a single treat, such as a marshmallow, right now. However, if they would wait while the experimenter ran an errand, they could have two marshmallows. Some preschoolers grabbed the marshmallow immediately, but others were able to wait what, for them, must have seemed an endless 20 minutes. To sustain themselves in their struggle, they covered their eyes so they wouldn’t see the temptation, rested their heads on their arms, talked to themselves, sang, even tried to sleep. These plucky kids got the two-marshmallow reward. The interesting part of this experiment came in the follow-up. The children who as 4-year-olds had been able to wait for the two marshmallows were, as adolescents, still able to delay gratification in pursuing their goals. They were more socially competent and self-assertive, and better able to cope with life’s frustrations. In contrast, the kids who grabbed the one marshmallow were, as adolescents, more likely to be stubborn, indecisive, and stressed.

Emotional Intelligence, Daniel Goleman, Bantam Books, quoted in Reader’s Digest, January, 1996

### **Passions Forge Their Fetters**

British statesman Edmund Burke argued, “men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put mental chains on their own appetites. Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there is without. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.” *Imprimis*, Vol. 20, #9<sup>5</sup>

Meditate on all the truths that God has revealed to you through His Word this week. As you consider the personal application of those truths, why not use **Romans 12:1-2** as a model to help you come to your Holy Father in prayer, laying yourself at His feet and seeking His wisdom and power to be all that He has instructed and exhorted.

***Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.***

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<sup>4</sup>Galaxie Software. (2002; 2002). *10,000 Sermon Illustrations*. Biblical Studies Press.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

**1 Corinthians 6:18**

**Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.**

- The Greek word for “flee” has a very straightforward meaning. It means “flee.” Paul might have had Joseph’s reaction to Potiphar’s wife (Gen 39:7-10).
- “Sexual immorality” is the Greek word **porneia**. It is defined as “fornication, sexual immorality, sexual sin of adj. general kind, that includes many different behaviors (Mt 5:32; 15:19; 19:9; Mk 7:21; Jn 8:41; Acts 15:20; 1Cor 6:18; 7:2; 2Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 5:3; 1Thess 4:3).”<sup>6</sup>

**1 Corinthians 7:5**

**Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.**

- The beginning of this phrase is quite forceful, perhaps, “Stop depriving!”
- “Time” is the word **kairos**. There are two words for time that Paul could have used. This one brings across the idea of a season. Apparently there are seasons when it is beneficial for a couple to mutually agree on abstinence to focus on prayer.
- On this verse, Carson offers wise commentary, “Not to engage in sexual intercourse in marriage is to *deprive* the other person. Paul forbids such abstinence except by mutual consent and then only for a season of prayer, perhaps connected with ‘the present crisis’. He warns that Satan is a voyeur who can sexually tempt a partner and for this reason they must *come together* (another verb for sexual intercourse) again because of the temptation to infidelity. This one exception shows the biblical stress on the importance of sexual intercourse as part and parcel of the fabric of marriage. It was not given simply for the purpose of procreation, nor is it dishonorable (cf. Heb. 13:4).”<sup>7</sup>

**Proverbs 5:1-23** <sup>1</sup> My son, pay attention to my wisdom, listen well to my words of insight, <sup>2</sup> that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. <sup>3</sup> For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; <sup>4</sup> but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. <sup>5</sup> Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. <sup>6</sup> She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths are crooked, but she knows it not. <sup>7</sup> Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. <sup>8</sup> Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, <sup>9</sup> lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth your toil enrich another man's house. <sup>11</sup> At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent. <sup>12</sup> You will say, “How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! <sup>13</sup> I would not obey my teachers or listen to my instructors. I have come to the brink of utter ruin in the midst of the whole assembly.”

- The adulteress is a prostitute who would sit outside her house enticing men to come in with her.
- In verse 3, the use of “lips” is a pun, as it is one letter off from the word for “bosom.”

<sup>15</sup> **Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. <sup>16</sup> Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. <sup>18</sup> May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. <sup>19</sup> A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.**

- This proverb keeps with the theme you find throughout scripture. The godly are not told merely what not to do, but told what to rejoice in. Here, the answer to avoiding sexual immorality is not merely to stay away from the prostitute, but to embrace one’s own wife.
- “Cisterns provided a repository for a runoff of rainwater, although the water was stagnant in comparison to the freshness of well water, or a spring. The same fresh water sources (vv 15b, 16a) are symbols in the Song of Songs (Cant 4:15) for the woman who provides sexual delight and satisfaction to her partner. Hence the command in vs. 15 to drink of one’s own source.”<sup>8</sup>

<sup>20</sup> **Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife? <sup>21</sup> For a man's ways are in full view of the LORD, and he examines all his paths. <sup>22</sup> The evil deeds of a wicked man ensnare him; the cords of his sin hold him fast. <sup>23</sup> He will die for lack of discipline, led astray by his own great folly.**

- (21) The proverb ends with a common refrain of wisdom, that God is the one who judges.
- (23) While God is the one who judges, sin and lack of wisdom often have temporal consequences that play out.

<sup>6</sup>Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Greek (New Testament)* (electronic ed.) (GGK4518). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>7</sup>Carson, D. A. (1994). *New Bible commentary : 21st century edition*. Rev. ed. of: The new Bible commentary. 3rd ed. / edited by D. Guthrie, J.A. Motyer. 1970. (4th ed.) (1 Co 7:6). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., USA: Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>8</sup>Murphy, R. E. (2002). *Vol. 22: Word Biblical Commentary : Proverbs*. Word Biblical Commentary (Page 32). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

What is helpful?  
What could be better?  
What is missing?  
Is it helping you be more prepared for Sunday?

Send your feedback to  
[engage@gccaz.org](mailto:engage@gccaz.org)