



MESSAGE THEME

“Thankfulness overcomes sin’s power”

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SERIES THEME – *Infinitely More Than . . .*

Ephesians 3:20 (NLT) *Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.*

REVIEW: *Our lives are to model Jesus Christ and His Kingdom values.*

- **In Ephesians 4:17 Paul told us** that this means we do not live like the world.
 1. *Put off the practices of the old self,*
 2. *Be renewed in the spirit of our minds,*
 3. *Put on practices of the new self.*

MESSAGE THEME: *Thankfulness overcomes sin’s power.*

INTRODUCTION

- Our culture is preoccupied with sex, and it characterizes our politics, media, educational system, technology, worldviews, and ideologies.
- Recently sex has become a political issue. From local to national elections, we see that a candidate’s attitudes toward sex, and what government should do, may determine the outcome of an election.
- Erwin Lutzer states, *“Gay rights” and “women’s health” became the defining causes of liberal political activists. At first, conservatives—religious or political—opposed the “culture war” measures. But many conservatives, in large part, eventually came around, supporting same-sex marriage and sometimes even abortion. Christian activists, however, dissented. And although they remain somewhat politically influential, their rejection of homosexuality and abortion has made Christian political conservatives increasingly vilified and culturally marginalized.”*
- In 2004, voters in California approved Proposition 8, maintaining that marriage is between one man and one woman. Now same sex marriage is a constitutional right.
- Now, the restraints on sex have been shattered.
- Historically, it seems that wherever pagan values reign, as in Greco-Roman culture, there one finds widespread homosexuality, as noted among American Indian tribes.
- In Ephesus sexual issues were huge, the Temple of Artemis, represented a massive regional religion whose worship was sexual in nature, through Temple prostitution.



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- All imaginable sexual perversion influenced everyday culture.
- Paul is writing to people who live in a highly sexualized culture, similar to ours.
- Next week, we will address sexuality with its influence in our culture.
- Today, we will address a spiritual strategy in addressing sin and strongholds.

IMPERATIVES REGARDING SEX

Your Conduct vs. 3

Ephesians 5:3 (NASB 2020) But sexual immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints;

- There is a shift from selfless Christlike living in 5:2 to the self-indulgent, sexually sinful life of 5:3.
- Don't let 3 things even be named among you as being proper among Christians.
 1. *Immorality* = Gk. porneia; primarily refers to all illicit sexual acts conducted outside of a heterosexual marital relationship.
 - Porneia is a broad word covering any sexual sin. It is used of
 - incest (1 Cor. 5:1),
 - promiscuity (1 Thess. 4:3),
 - sexual relations with a prostitute (1 Cor. 6:13),
 - or any illicit sexual relations (John 8:41).

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NASB 2020) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality;

1 Corinthians 6:18 (NASB 2020) Flee sexual immorality. Every other sin that a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

2. *Impurity* = Gk. akatharsia can mean uncleanness in general but is used by Paul in reference to sexual impurity such as in Romans 1.24 where uncleanness is in reference to homosexuality.

Romans 1:24 (NASB 2020) Therefore God gave them up to vile impurity in the lusts of their hearts, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.

3. *Covetousness* = Gk. pleonexia means to take advantage of, to overreach another, grasp after. Paul is speaking to grasping after material things and possibly in this context overreaching in the sexual sphere motivated by selfishness.
 - Behind this identification is a Jewish understanding of idolatry as the root of all sin and of greed as the sin encompassing all sins.



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4. Not to be *Mentioned* = Gk. onomazo means named, identified as, known by, assigned as.
 - Paul is saying that such activity is totally contrary to what it means to be a child of God. God's children are not to be identified with such sinful behavior.
 - **One of the most obvious distinctions of those in Christ and those who are not are attitudes and actions toward sex and sexuality.**

Your Tongue vs. 4 Unfitting Speech

Ephesians 5:4 (NASB 2020) and there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or vulgar joking which are not fitting, . . .

- Three types of unfitting speech for a Christian.
 1. filthiness = obscene, indecent, dishonorable,
 2. foolish talk = *morologia* moron speech, dull, stupid, foolish
 3. vulgar joking = base humor, it refers to something easily turned, innuendo, innocuous, but can be turned to have indecent intent.

Giving Thanks

Ephesians 5:4 (NASB 2020) . . . but rather giving of thanks.

- Put on—*giving of thanks*. To live with grace, gratitude, and attitude of gratefulness.

APPLICATION

The Power of Thankfulness

- Paul is instructing Christ followers, God's *ekklesia*, to not participate in sinful, sexual activity.
- After his instruction, he then inserts an interesting phrase in admonishing the readers.
- Is this incongruent? What does thankfulness have to do with instructing abstinence from sexual perversion?
- Can it be a weapon of spiritual warfare in fighting against sinful sexual behavior, and inappropriate sexual thoughts and speech.
- Look at how the Scriptures point to thankfulness.

Ephesians 5:20 (NASB 2020) always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to our God and Father;



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Colossians 3:16 (NASB 2020) Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 (NASB 2020) in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 4:2 (NASB 2020) Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

Philippians 4:6–7 (NASB 2020) Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and pleading with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

O.T. Illustration

- Pastor Jon bloom references an O.T. account to highlight the power of gratitude against sexual temptation. It is the account of Joseph and Potiphar's wife.

Genesis 39:8–9 (NASB 2020) But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put me in charge of all that he owns. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil, and sin against God?"

- Joseph understood Potiphar's favor on him as a gift from God.
 - Gratitude filled Joseph's heart, there was no room for ingratitude.
 - Ingratitude results in selfish attitudes and behavior.
 - Covetousness results from ingratitude and is an expression of selfishness.
 - Sexual sin and sexually addictive behaviors express selfishness.
- Thankfulness is the opposite. Gratitude is a selfless reflection of the good provided by another.
- Thankfulness cannot cohabit at the same time and space with lust, covetousness, or sin.

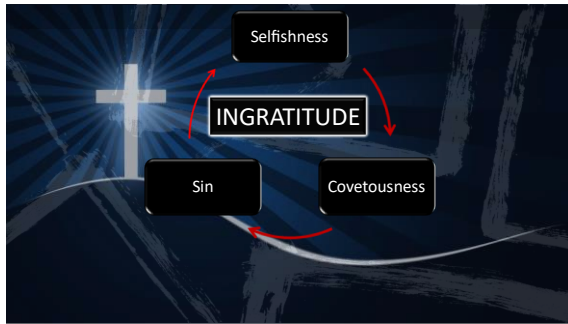
Romans 1:21 (NASB 2020) For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.

- Became foolishness vs. 22
- Idolatrous vs. 23
- Sexual impurity vs. 24
- Homosexuality vs. 26-27



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- Depraved living vs. 28-32



- The more thankfulness is present in us, the less vulnerable we are to sin.

Summary

- Thankfulness is not merely a Christian virtue; it is a spiritual weapon!
- Train your eyes, ears, and heart to identify objects and reasons for thankfulness.
- **“The practice of gratitude can have dramatic and lasting effects in a person’s life,” said Robert A. Emmons, professor of psychology at UC Davis and a leading scientific expert on the science of gratitude.**
- **“It can lower blood pressure, improve immune function and facilitate more efficient sleep. Gratitude reduces lifetime risk for depression, anxiety and substance abuse disorders, and is a key resiliency factor in the prevention of suicide,” he said.**
- **Gratitude is associated with higher levels of good cholesterol (HDL), lower levels of bad cholesterol (LDL), and lower systolic and diastolic blood pressure, both at rest and in the face of stress.**
- **“Gratitude blocks toxic emotions, such as envy, resentment, regret and depression, which can destroy our happiness,” Emmons said. “It’s impossible to feel envious and grateful at the same time.”**
- The more it grows in you, the more spiritual health you will experience, and the less power sin will wield over you.

Transaction

1. Repent: Identify a besetting sinful attitude or action, confess it as sin with a repentant attitude.
2. Rebuke: The seducing spirit(s) of deception
3. Replace: Identify people, events, circumstances for which you can be thankful and express your thankfulness to God.
4. Receive: Holy Spirit filling to live with thankfulness in righteousness.