

Shepherds & Servants 18

Walk In Purity

1 Timothy 5:19-25, 6:3-5, 20-21

Memory Verses: 1 Timothy 5:25

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

Today is our final Sunday in our series in the book of 1 Timothy! Hopefully you have enjoyed the 18 weeks we took to go through this letter from Paul to Timothy and the church of Ephesus. Let us look again at our main verse for this book which summarizes the themes we've been looking at; **1 Timothy 4:6**. The main purpose of this letter is for Timothy to find and train Spiritual Shepherds called Elders and Sacrificial Servants called Deacons to lead the local church there in Ephesus. He is to put these men before the brothers and sisters who make up the local church, to be a good servant as an Elder and Deacon, and to keep the focus on the word of God at the forefront of everything they do!

Shepherds and Servants protect the gospel, praise God for his mercy, hold to the faith, pray for the people, know God and obey his call, partner with women in ministry, lead the church, be qualified, don't fall victim to legalism, don't look down on the young, train for godliness, persist in preaching, disciple relationally, take care of widows, do not desire to be rich, pursue righteousness, and as we will see today, they are to walk in purity! And of course as we've said this entire series, this isn't just for Elders and Deacons. Yes, they are the primary targets of this teaching, but every single believer, and every single covenant partner in the local church should strive for these same qualities!

So let's look at today's topic. A very fitting one as we finish this series. Walk in Purity! Just as every believer must pursue righteousness, every believer must walk in purity! Righteousness and purity are very similar. Where as last week we looked at how to be righteous both positionally and practically, this week we will look at how to avoid impurity! Last week was what should we do. This week is what you shouldn't do! So let's look at **1 Timothy 5:19-25**.

Elders and Deacons are to be blameless, without reproach. They are to be pure in their walk. In everything they do they must set an example to the believers. The believers likewise must walk in purity as they will set an example to each other and the world. If there is sin amongst the Elders and Deacons it must be exposed. If there is sin amongst the body it must also be exposed so that the body can be restored! Purity, like impurity, is easily recognized and must be addressed. Purity for encouragement and impurity for restoration! The main point is simple; **A pure walk is evident and an impure walk can't**

be ignored. Whether in the leadership or within the church body!

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to see this morning is that... **Those Who Walk In Impurity Must Be Gently Restored**. As Christians we must walk in purity. Like righteousness, purity is what defines us. It's what shows the world that we are Christians. Therefore, Paul encourages Timothy in **vs.22** to not take part in the sins of others; and to keep himself pure. We, like Timothy, can keep ourselves pure by ignoring the peer pressure of this world. Everyday the world is trying to bring you down to it's level. Don't let it. You must rise above it.

One of the primary ways the world is trying to get you to defile yourselves and live as pagans is through alcohol. Of course we've talked about this subject many times, but here again, we see the dangers of it. Timothy seems to have made a personal commitment to refrain from alcohol. He keeps himself pure by handling alcohol carefully. But in **vs.23** Paul reminds him that alcohol doesn't make you impure. In fact its good for medicinal use as a pain killer. Just use it in moderation. I think one of the principals when it comes to purity is this... **being pure often means using common sense and moderation**.

You see, most sins are conspicuous. Look at **vs.24**. They are obvious. If you are impure in the way you use alcohol it will be obvious. According to **vs.25** impure living, ie; sin, can't be hidden. Just look at **Galatians 5:19-21**. These sins are evident. And, let's be honest, the world is going to sin, sinful people sin. We can't not see it. It's everywhere. But we aren't called to judge the world. All we can do is show them Christ.

However, we are called to judge the church. When the world creeps into the church we must take action. If there is obvious impurity within the church it must be addressed. Why? Because the testimony of Christ is on the line. Look at **vs.21**. The motivation for purity is Christ, the motivation for a pure church is the testimony of Christ. Think about last weeks message. Our testimony reflects how the world sees the church and Christ. Therefore we must uproot impurity when it rises to the surface.

And how are we to address it? We have talked about this many times before but as way of recap, we use discipline amongst the church body in accordance with **Matthew 18:15-17**. And of course this applies to leaders too, but for leadership one thing is added. Look at **vs.19-20**. Where as those in the church body need only one witness to initiate the process, for leaders there needs to be two or three witnesses. We don't easily accuse leaders of impurity, but in the same standard they must be held accountable too. Regardless of if it is for the body or the leaders, church discipline seeks to dissuade impurity and bring restoration. Look at **James 5:19-20**.

Still, ultimately, those who are impure won't have to answer to us.

According to vs.24 they will have to answer to God. **A pure walk is evident and an impure walk can't be ignored.**

The second thing we need to see here is that... **Those Who Walk In Purity Must Be Carefully Reassured.** Verse 25 says that good works are also conspicuous. Purity is obvious in those who love Christ. They want to honor him, and as vs.21 says, they recognize that they are in his presence all the time. So they live lives of purity that reflects their Lord. What does purity look like? Well it looks a lot like righteousness and we've already spoke about righteousness last week so we don't want to belabor the issue again here today. The point is simple. We know what good works are; the fruit of the spirit, helping the poor and needy, loving people with care and unselfishness.

But one thing to recognize that we don't often see is mentioned in vs.24; the sins of others can appear later. Meaning, people can fool you. One of the indicators of someone who lives in sin is that they like to try to hide their sin under a thin veneer of virtue signaling. Impure people have a knack of pretending to be pure when they aren't. For a time they can keep up the charade, but eventually their true colors will be evident. Notice what Paul warns Timothy with in vs.22. Don't be hasty when ordaining men into leadership. Why? Cause they might be fooling you. Be patient and observe, then after carefully watching their lives, then you can reassure them. **Just as we don't too quickly judge those who may be in sin we don't too quickly proclaim someone's virtue.** Virtue is proven over time, not after a few instances of good works. We reassure those who are pure after carefully observing their lives. If they are really pure it will be evident. **A pure walk is evident and an impure walk can't be ignored.**

The last thing we need to see here is that... **Those Who Defile The Pure Word of God Must Be Guarded Against.** Paul ends his letter to Timothy by speaking about a topic that he has brought up at least 3 separate times in these 6 chapters. False doctrine, heretical teaching, a defiling of scripture is one of the most dangerous things the church could face. Those who are pure do not defile the word of God. Look at **1 Timothy 6:20-21.** Men will always walk away from purity when the word of God is defiled. Paul gives even more detail a couple verses earlier in **1 Timothy 6:3-5.** Those who defile the word become puffed up with conceit they become unwise, understanding nothing, deprived of the truth. They become embroiled in controversy, quarreling, and constant friction. They stir up envy, dissension, and slander. They become suspicious of evil, depraved in their minds, godless.

So Paul tells Timothy to guard his faith against such people! Meaning, we don't associate with those who follow bad doctrine or

heretical teachings. We stay to the true untainted word of God and with those who likewise stay true to it! The best way to remain pure is to be in the company of those who follow the true word and to allow the true word to guide your life! **A pure walk is evident and an impure walk can't be ignored.**

Application

The application this morning is simple. Impurity can't be ignored. Especially in the body of Christ. It must be addressed, it must be restored, or it must be guarded against! Purity on the other hand must be encouraged and reassured, but if we are too quick we could be fooled by hypocrites. Regardless, our walk is important. Remain in the word, remain pure and you will honor Christ.

Conclusion

I want to conclude this morning by addressing those who already serve as Deacons or Elders and those who may one day serve in one of those offices. It is a huge responsibility to be a leader in the local church. Don't take it lightly. If God needs you to step up and lead, heed the call. But make sure you walk in purity or you will lead the church to impurity and you will defame the name of Christ. Elders, spiritually shepherd the church in righteousness and purity. Deacons, sacrificially serve the church in righteousness and purity!