



WEEK 10 - Purity

Praise to God for today:

Lamentations 2:17

The Lord has done what he purposed;
he has carried out his word,
which he commanded long ago;
he has thrown down without pity;
he has made the enemy rejoice over you
and exalted the might of your foes.

Prayer for the service:

Psalms 33:22

Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you.

Isaiah 64:1-2

Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,

that the mountains might quake at your presence—

2 as when fire kindles brushwood

and the fire causes water to boil—

to make your name known to your adversaries,

and that the nations might tremble at your presence!

Prayer for the persecuted church:

Wonju lives in a prison camp in North Korea. He is currently serving a life sentence because his parents were caught holding a Bible study meeting in their home. The whole family was sent to prison. Wonju isn't married and lives in a barrack with 15 other men. He wakes up at sunrise and is given some cabbage for breakfast. Guards then take him out to the fields to work. May he be strengthened with all power, according to your glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified him to share in the inheritance of the saints in light.

Prayer for a local church:

Erick Cobb and Grace Covenant Church - Ephesians 3:17-19

May Christ dwell in their hearts through faith—that they, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that they may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Closing:

Acts 4:29-30

And now, Lord, look upon the things that threaten our faith and grant to your servants to continue to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand and confirm your presence among us by changing lives and healing hearts and minds and wills to heal, through the name of your holy servant Jesus.

- **Video**

If that wasn't uncomfortable enough, here are some uncomfortable statistics:

- **Slide**

We're going to go to Corinth now, where the Apostle Paul is dealing with some professing

Christians who have the motto: live and let live.

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

12 “All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be dominated by anything.

At first glance, this text seems to be saying that all things are lawful for us. But is that what the Apostle Paul meant, even for himself? All things are lawful for him? Really? All things?

Was it lawful for Paul to be angry and selfish and envious? Was it okay for Paul to gossip? Did Paul have the right to sin?

Well, since the obvious answer to all those questions is no, then he can't mean that all things are lawful for him or me or you.

This is why a second glance is in order.

Notice the ESV has “All things are lawful for me” in quotations. This means the translators believed Paul was quoting something the Corinthians had said. I like how the NIV translates it better. They add, “You say, ‘All things are lawful for me.’”

Paul is quoting some Corinthian believers who have either misunderstood the grace found in the gospel or they have misapplied the grace found in the gospel. They have made grace a license to sin.

Now, to understand what it means to make grace a license to sin you must first understand what the Bible means by grace.

Grace means you get what you do not deserve. The wages of sin is death. That's what you deserve for your sin against God — physical and spiritual death. But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. So, instead of getting death (what you deserve) you are given eternal life (what you do not deserve) on the basis of what Christ has done in His life, death and resurrection.

I'll give you one example of the grace provided in the gospel.

Have you ever noticed that we human beings do not naturally furnish our own clothing? Every stitch of clothing we wear speaks in one way or another of death. An animal had to die before we could be provided with

shoes. (Someone had to kill a sad-eyed cow so you could wear those nice leather loafers.) Wool had to be cut from the sheep's back, the place from which it drew life to make a good winter coat for someone in Nebraska. Even the cotton had to be pulled from its place of life so it could become that nice polo you're wearing.

In contrast, animals and the birds furnish their own clothing, but man is dependent upon others for his. All animal clothing was put on from within, but man's from without.

The point of that observation is that sin left us naked before God and we must be clothed by another, specifically we must be clothed in the righteousness of Christ if we are to be fit to appear in the presence of God. It is God who provides the covering for us, otherwise we stand naked before Him.

God has gifted us the righteousness of Christ. That's just one of the many benefits of the gospel. He died the death you deserve forgiving all your sins from the beginning of your life to the end of your life. That's how complete the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross was for us.

The forgiveness found in the gospel is so complete it almost makes you feel like you can go on sinning with a clear conscience.

- The young man in Florida who misunderstood the gospel and then misapplied the grace of the gospel by having an affair

In his book, *What Is the Meaning of Sex?* (Crossway, 2013), Denny Burk explains why it is contrary to Paul's intended meaning for us to cite "all things are lawful" (1 Cor. 6:12) as if it is something he approves. In fact, the context makes clear that this is actually something he is refuting:

Almost every modern translation and a near consensus of commentators treat "all things are lawful" not as Paul's words but as a slogan that Corinthian men used to justify their visits to prostitutes (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15).

The Corinthians had twisted Paul's law-free gospel into a justification for bad behavior. Thus the phrase "all things are lawful" is not an expression of Christian freedom from the apostle Paul but rather an expression of antinomianism from fornicators!

Paul's goal here in **1 Corinthians 6:12-20** is to correct the Corinthians' misunderstanding. One of the reasons the Corinthians had this viewpoint is because they viewed the physical body as inconsequential (it didn't matter) in God's moral economy (see **1 Cor. 6:13b**). And since the body didn't matter you could do whatever you wanted to with the body. In other words, they separated the spiritual from the physical.

But Paul corrects their thinking with respect to their bodies: "You have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body" (**1 Cor. 6:20**).

Paul's question is not "Is it lawful?" but "Does it glorify God with my body?"

13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.

He is correcting their viewpoint that separated the spiritual from the physical.

Paul also has a higher view of sexuality than the Corinthians who equated fulfilling sexual

desire with having a sandwich to fulfill their hunger.

- "I'm just human."

Paul is placing this freedom they expressed in the context of what God revealed. God created all things and He created them to be enjoyed in the manner for which He created them. He created food and the stomach and tastebuds and we know how they all work together in the manner that God intends.

Even though we enjoy food and sex with our bodies, our bodies were not created for food or for sports or for sex, but for the Lord.

But we can enjoy all these things when we enjoy them in the manner God intended. God created marriage and within that context sex is to be enjoyed. But He didn't create us for marriage. He created us for Him.

Proverbs 5:18-19

18 Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,
19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe.
Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love.

God gives us marriage to enjoy. God gives us all things to enjoy. (1 Timothy 6:17) Our bodies were created for the Lord. That's why Paul expresses the physical nature of our salvation in Christ next.

14 And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ?

Don't you understand that you are not just spiritually connected to Christ, but that your physical body is a member of Christ? Your body is connected to Christ because you have been given the Holy Spirit. This spiritual connection you have with the risen Christ creates a physical connection with Him who was raised from the dead never to die again.

Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, "The two will become one flesh."

The Word of God supports the science here, let's say it that way.

Both the brains of men and women release different neurochemicals in response to sexual intimacy. "Oxytocin helps females become attached to men, have children,

and bond with those children, thus giving them the greatest chance for a healthy future. In like manner, vasopressin helps men become attached to women and to their children."

Notice the emphasis on attachment. Your body is wired for monogamy. When we have multiple sexual partners we begin to rewire our brains, setting a new pattern for our minds that is now against bonding with one person. As a matter of fact, it is now against bonding with anyone. "The pattern of changing sexual partners therefore seems to damage their ability to bond in a committed relationship."

But this also applies to other sexual practices like viewing pornographic images on a screen. Even in that, "the brain's powerful machinery kicks into gear bonding us in different ways to the images on the screen." This is how porn mirrors other addictions.

People involved in casual sexual relationships "believe they can disconnect their sexual involvement from the rest of who they are. We have shown this is impossible."

The Bible says it more succinctly: Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her?

17 But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him.

Paul sets sexual sin apart from other sin. He doesn't say it's more sinful than other sins, but he does say it has consequences different from other sins.

18 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.

Every other sin is outside the body. How is stealing outside the body? What you steal is not part of you. If you steal jewels, they are outside of you. If you steal an idea, it was someone else's idea and therefore outside of you.

But in sexual sin he says, "You sin against your own body." How is sexual sin against your own body?

- **Sexually transmitted diseases comes to mind.**

- **In abortion, which is so often used as simply a birth control device, a woman destroys a life that is attached to her at the time.**
- **In adultery or fornication, you have joined yourself to another person and then moved on like the sexual act is nothing more than shaking hands. Whereas in reality it is something much more profound.**

Here are some other ways you sin against your own body with sexual immorality, specifically porn.

In viewing pornography you rewire your brain. Your sexual inclinations can change dramatically as you rewire your brain by viewing these images. Like the body's reaction to a drug, it then craves more potent forms. The same is true with porn. You will require more dramatic images for satisfaction. And human physical contact will become problematic, because you're rewired your brain to prefer images over a physical person. You have rerouted your brain pathways.

Now, the good news of both the gospel and science is that brain pathways can be redirected. That's what the Bible simply calls repentance, which literally means to change one's mind.

Studies show that porn users become insensitive lovers. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out why. By using any porn, from soft core to hard core, you are objectifying another human being, meaning treating them as an object for your own pleasure. The more you see people as objects for your own personal pleasure, the less sensitive you will be about their needs, either as lovers or as human beings.

Fight the New Drug: Engaging in porn is like a scientifically proven guide to becoming a bad lover.

- Porn increases marital infidelity by 300%.
- 56% of divorces involved one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites.
- 70% of wives of sex addicts could be diagnosed with PTSD (Post traumatic stress disorder).

And now for something really uncomfortable: the topic of masturbation.

From a blog on the XXX Church website: "When you masturbate, you take your spouse (or future spouse) out of the equation. How you live your life now, is setting a pattern for your future sex life. It was not for lack of love, affection or effort that our intimacy struggled on the honeymoon. It was our bodies listening to what we'd taught them. We had both set ourselves up for specific stimulation, in a specific time frame. It was all about 'my pleasure' in 'my time'. By virtue, I could never please him like he'd learned for ten years. And likewise. Sex is different when there's two of you. Our hands and bodies felt different, they worked differently, moved differently. We had access to body parts foreign to us until we said our vows. It was entirely different to self-stimulation. And in many cases, not as good. Whatever we were doing to each other, it just didn't feel right."

It's the same thing with premarital sex. You learn to treat someone as an object. The object of premarital sex is not loving connection or intimacy, but your personal pleasure. You just need someone that you

can use. And I speak of both men and women. Thus, you are training your body and your mind, not for sexual intimacy, but for sexual objectification.

19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20** for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.