

LIVING HOLY

Life Application: Establishing boundaries in order to protect and preserve moral purity.

Key Verse for Meditation: But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof. – Romans 13:14

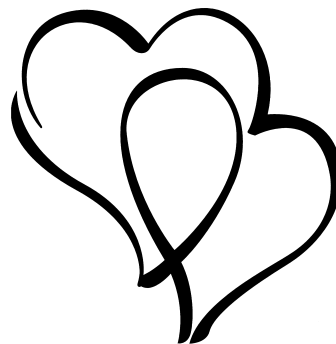
Focus Scriptures: Genesis 39:1-12; Romans 6:12-13; 1 Corinthians 3:17; 6:12-20; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-7; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 1:13-16

Guidelines for Sexual Purity

Sex is good. God created it, and it existed before there was any sin in the world. Sex was not created by Satan, Playboy, Hollywood, HBO, rock musicians, or the internet. Sex was created by the holy God of Heaven, where purity reigns. God made sex physically desirable by creating us with sex drives, without which sex would not exist and neither would people. When it takes place in its proper context, God is definitely pro-sex.

Like all good gifts from God, sex can be misused and perverted. Water is a gift of God, without which we couldn't survive. But floods and tidal waves are water out of control, and the effects are devastating. Likewise, God designed sex to exist within

certain boundaries. When exercised in line with God's intended purpose, it is beautiful and constructive. When out of control, violating God's intended purpose, it becomes ugly and destructive.



The boundaries of sex are the boundaries of marriage. Sexual union is intended as an expression of a lifelong commitment, a symbol of the spiritual union that exists only within the unconditional commitment of marriage. Apart from marriage, the lasting commitment is absent and the sex act becomes a false expression, a lie. Sex is a privilege inseparable from the responsibilities of the sacred marriage covenant. To exercise the privilege apart from the responsibility perverts God's intention for sex.



Lesson Key: God's intention for His children is that they walk in sexual purity and victory. As holy people who have dedicated ourselves completely to God, we follow the directives of Scripture to flee temptation. We ask the Spirit of God to help us establish appropriate boundaries and guidelines for behavior, knowing that in Christ and through Christ, we have all we need to maintain moral purity.

Your sexual purity is essential to your walk with God. Sexual purity is not an option for an obedient Christian, it is a requirement. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication [sexual immorality]" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). There is no sense seeking God's will in other areas when you are choosing to live in sexual impurity in your mind or body. If you are not living in sexual purity, God will not hear your other prayers until you offer the prayer of confession and repentance and commit yourself to a life of holiness (1 John 1:9).

Your body belongs to God, not you. When you came to Christ, you surrendered your entire self, including your body, to God. The title to your life was transferred from you to God. Christ owns you and your body. "Your body" is really His body. He paid the ultimate price for it. God has every right to tell you what to do with your mind and body.

Sexual purity begins in the mind, not the body. You will inevitably adopt the morality of the programs, movies,

books, magazines, music, Internet sites and conversations you participate in. Your future can be accurately predicted by what you allow your mind to dwell on. Sinful actions don't come out of nowhere—they are the cumulative product of little moral compromises made over time, which ultimately culminate in ungodly behavior. Therefore we should take extreme care about what we feed our minds.

God has your best interests in mind when he tells you not to have premarital sex. What's right is always smart, and always for your good. Sex is linked to the welfare of your whole person. Having sex outside of marriage is self-destructive in every sense.

Sexual purity is always for the best—not only for God and others, but for you. The lifelong consequences of sexual impurity are worse than we can imagine. The lifelong rewards of sexual purity are greater than we can imagine.

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"The question we must ask in a serious pursuit of holiness is this: 'Am I willing to develop convictions from the Scriptures, and to live by these convictions?' This is often where the rub comes. We hesitate to face up to God's standard of holiness in a specific area of life. We know that to do so will require obedience that we are unwilling to give.

– Andrew Murray, noted missionary leader and Christian author



Word Search

In 1 Corinthians 6:18, we are told to "flee [run from, or shun] fornication [sexual union outside of marriage]." This directive is not hard to understand.

It literally means to get away from it as fast as we can. Avoiding the very appearance of evil is the basic principle, but if it appears, to run from it becomes the next step. The only sure way to guarantee refraining from immorality is to immediately and decisively remove ourselves from the possibility of it.

A boundary can be as simple as avoiding certain sections of the magazine rack, or blocking certain channels on the TV. Boundaries are designed to keep us from getting near temptation. If, on a scale of one to ten, fornication or adultery is a ten, then we should determine what are the one's, two's, and three's that would take us in that direction. Putting a boundary in place will be a protection.

Specific boundaries will differ from person to person, from culture to culture, and from age to age. But the principle of avoiding temptation is ageless. If we avoid stepping onto a slippery slope, we avoid an accelerating downward slide!



For Personal Study

1. In the light of contemporary society's sexual permissiveness, what are some steps we can take to maintain moral purity? 1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Peter 1:13-16; 2 Timothy 2:22

2. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13), indicating that temptation will come our way. Why is it important to set boundaries or establish guidelines for our behavior before we find ourselves in a tempting situation?

3. What are some specific ways we can follow the admonition in our key verse, Romans 13:14?

Keeping Your Marriage in Order

In a society where divorce rates are climbing, what can we do to preserve and safeguard our marriages? The first step is to clearly understand that God intended marriage to be for life. Only one thing dissolves a marriage in the sight of God, and that is death. The marriage vow is not, "I will live with this companion until we are no longer compatible, or have outgrown this relationship." The Bible says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother; and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder" (Mark 10:7-9).

Next, we must recognize that the health of our marriage is very closely tied to our personal spiritual well-being. As both parties in the marriage draw close to God, submitting to Him and striving to live holy lives, they will inevitably be drawn closer to each other.

The formula for a successful marriage is found in Biblical words of instruction to both wives and husbands. We read, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Christ's example was the ultimate expression of love: He gave His life for the Church. Husbands are to love their wives with the same passion and devotion as Christ has for His Church—those who have committed their lives to Him. What woman would not appreciate being cherished in this manner?

The second part of the formula is, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). A marriage is successful when the wife helps her husband be the leader in the home, and both of them follow the Lord together. God designed for woman to be a companion and helpmeet to man (see Genesis 2:18). This is not a demeaning position; rather, it is a position of honor and blessing.

Saying "I do" does not make a successful marriage an accomplished fact, no matter how fervently we say it. Those words are merely the beginning of a new phase of life—and the start of a committed union that must be honored, safeguarded, and nurtured if it is to grow and develop through the years.





Honor the Boundaries!

When we think of setting limits, we are establishing something called “boundaries.” Basically, a boundary is a property line. It defines where one person’s property ends and another person’s begins. If you own the property, then you are the one

who has control over it. You are the one who will be held responsible for what takes place on your side of the line.

Your neighbor cannot look over the fence and tell you that he does not like where you planted your tulips, and instruct you to replant them in a different spot. He can give an opinion, but the decision about tulip location is yours. However, just as you have control over your own property, you also have responsibility for it. Mowing the lawn and keeping weeds out of the flowerbeds is your job, not your neighbor’s. Responsibility, ownership, and control go together.

Many people say they have a right to do whatever they want with their own bodies. However, we read in 1 Corinthians 6:19 that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost and we are not our own. Not only did God create us, but we have been bought with a price. Christ’s death freed us from sin, but it also transfers the responsibility and control that goes with ownership to Him. Because our bodies belong to God, we must honor the boundaries He has established, and not violate His moral standards.

Two theological students were walking in a district of London 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 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 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.”

In fact, these little secret indiscretions 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” things. – *Author Unknown*

4. In Proverbs 6:27-28, we find the questions “Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?” What point is made by these verses with regard to purity?

5. God told the children of Israel to put a blue ribbon in the hems of their clothes to remind them of His commandments and to help them obey those commandments (Numbers 15:37-40). What can we do today to remind us to be holy when we make decisions about boundaries in our relationships?

6. What impact will our moral boundaries have upon our Christian testimony? Philippians 2:15
