

This is our last sermon on discipline young men. This evening we will look at the last 2 dangers to young men: 1) sexual immorality, & 2) the fear of man

The other dangers that especially face young men we looked at in parts 1 through 3 of this part of our series were: 1) pride, 2) love of pleasure and thoughtlessness, 3) contempt of Christianity

1) Sexual immorality

Purity Pleasing to God – 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Introduction: Our culture is sex-crazed. The internet is littered with pornography. Television and especially cable is on a fast-track to utter degradation. Hotel and motels make a hefty chunk of money selling pornographic movies to travelers. And even walking through malls and noticing billboards larger than life while driving brings highly sexual images to us on a regular basis. Little has changed since Paul wrote all his letters. Men and women both have been spiritually crippled by sexual sin ever since the fall.

One could expect I guess to find people enslaved and destroyed by sexual immorality like:

- the unbelieving Sodomites,
- Herod (who was controlled by his lustful desires for his brother's daughter),
- the men of Israel who committed sexual immorality with Moabite women in Numbers 25, and
- Eli's worthless sons Hophni and Phineas who committed sexual immorality at the door of the tabernacle of meeting with the women who assembled there.

But it also needs to be noticed that sexual sin has brought ruin to a very impressive list of people throughout Biblical history.

- David – whose lust for Bathsheba was so out of control that he had her husband killed and married her after attempting to cover it up through deception.
- Solomon – a man who was certainly on track when he prayed one of the most remarkable prayers in all Scripture in 1 Kings 8... Shortly after this in 1 Kings 11:1 we read: "But King Solomon loved many foreign women..."
- Samson – a man whose birth was announced by the "angel of YHWH" to his parents, THE VERY first words from him recorded in Scripture are in Judges 14:2, "I have seen a woman...get her for me as a wife... for she pleases me well."

J.C. Ryle wrote on this issue:

And here I will not shrink from warning all young men to remember the seventh commandment; to beware of adultery and fornication, of all impurity of every kind. I fear there is often a want of plain speaking on this part of God's law. But when I see how prophets and Apostles have dealt with this subject,—when I observe the open way in which the Reformers of our own Church denounce it,—when I see the number of young men who walk in the footsteps of Reuben, and Hophni, and Phinehas, and Amnon,—I for one cannot, with a good conscience, hold my peace. I doubt whether the world is any better for the excessive silence which prevails upon this commandment. For my own part, I feel it would be false and unscriptural delicacy, in addressing young men, not to speak of that which is preeminently "the young man's sin."

Single men and married men, take heed and listen to this passage. There is a place for sexual pleasure and satisfaction and it is only within marriage. After discussing the utter foolishness

of sexual immorality, Solomon makes this marvelous statement that all men should memorize and understand - and women should memorize and understand as well.

Proverbs 5:15-19 15 Drink water from your own cistern, And running water from your own well. 16 Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be only your own, And not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, And rejoice with the wife of your youth. 19 As a loving deer and a graceful doe, Let her breasts satisfy you at all times; **And always be enraptured with her love.**"

NAS: "Be exhilarated always with her love"

KJV: "and be thou ravished always with her love."

ESV: "be intoxicated always in her love."

1.) Never Be Satisfied – v1-2

V1 => [1] Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God;

1. Notice right off in his teaching section, *his relationship and love to them is evident in the term: "brethren."* **This is absolutely vital to shepherding, instructing, and teaching others.**
2. Paul did not have to correct or rebuke them for anything. And thus he, in a very warm pastoral way, as a father exhorts his own children, *yet with the very serious qualifier: "In the Lord Jesus* that you should abound more and more
3. **"abound more and more"** – critical to realize that even the apostles knew that sanctification is a life-long process that keeps moving forward. He knew deliverance from sinful habits and tendencies would not be overnight... but "more and more."
 - Even the greatest pianists did not sit down and play Beethoven's Appassionata the first time they sat down at a piano. Architects of skyscrapers probably started out building with Legos.
 - **Teaching point:** People used to living in certain patterns of sin usually don't experience instant & perfect liberation from them when they come to Christ. Paul knew this, and thus he exhorts them.
 - **Application:** It is not the perfection of your life, it's the direction of your life. Don't be discouraged when you are not yet what you know you should be. Remember Paul's words here "you should abound more and more..."
 - **Application 2:** If you are wanting more holiness and more prayer and more depth to your walk with Jesus:
 1. Make sure you are here for the reading & preaching of the Word of God.
 2. Be here for the Lord's Supper.**Note:** Notice that the advice here is not "here are 5 steps you can do to achieve this or that," but rather: *come under the preaching of the word, the sacraments, fellowship, and prayer.* All these things are outside you – and the Word and Sacraments are God's "means of grace."

V2 => [2] for you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus.

1. Paul is pointing out here that what he is going to go through are things he has already instructed them in.
2. The phrase "through the Lord Jesus" means simply: *by His authority.*

2.) God's Will: Your Sanctification – v3-6 (with 3 sub-points)

Remember, Paul already told us that he had been through all this with them already. When missionaries and preachers first encounter people, one of the first sins they call people to repent of is: *sexual sin*. **It is the law of God that brings conviction** – people will not repent and believe until they know clearly what they've done wrong.

[3] For this is the will of God, your sanctification:

God's will is our "set-apart-ness" for Him. We are to be so different in our life-styles, priorities, and actions that we are salt and light in the midst of a rotting and dark world.

- **ABSTAIN: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;**
 1. *Apecho - to hold oneself off, abstain.*
- **GET CONTROL: [4] that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, [5] not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;**
- **DON'T STEAL: [6] that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.**

Key principle for men: God wants a "one-woman man." In one of his books, Ravi Zacharias quote a Spanish proverb I think is wonderful for the biblical truth it captures: "He who loves many women loves none of them, and he who loves one woman has loved them all."

3.) Called to Holiness – v7-8

[7] For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. [8] Therefore he who rejects *this* does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

Application: The indulgence of sexual immorality is a rejection of God himself. And always remember Paul stirring warning about this matter of sexual sin:

1 Corinthians 6:15-20 "15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! 16 Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? For "the two," He says, "shall become one flesh." 17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? 20 For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's."

2) the fear of man

Proverbs 29:25 "25 The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe."

Ryle's comments are masterful:

The fear of man does indeed bring a snare (Prov. 29:25). It is terrible to observe the power which it has over most minds, and especially over the minds of the young. Few seem to have any opinions of their own, or to think for themselves. Like dead fish, they go with the stream and tide: what others think right, they think right; and what others call wrong, they call wrong too. There are not many original thinkers in the world. Most men are like sheep, they follow a leader. If it was the fashion of the day to be Romanists, they would be Romanists,—if to be Mahometans, they would be Mahometans. They dread the idea of going against the current of the times. In a word, the opinion of the day becomes their religion, their creed, their Bible, and their God.

The thought, "What will my friends say or think of me?" nips many a good inclination in the bud. The fear of being observed upon, laughed at, ridiculed, prevents many a good habit being taken up. There are Bibles that would be read this very day, if the owners dared. They know they ought to read them, but they are afraid: "What will people say?" There are knees that would be bent in prayer this very night, but the fear of man forbids it:—What would my wife, my brother, my friend, my companion say, if they saw me praying?" Alas, what wretched slavery this is, and yet how common! "I feared the people," said Saul to Samuel: and so he transgressed the commandment of the Lord (1 Sam, 15:24). "I am afraid of the Jews," said Zedekiah, the graceless king of Judah: and so he disobeyed the advice which Jeremiah gave him (Jer. 38:19). Herod was afraid of what his guests would think of him: so he did that which made him "exceeding sorry,"—he beheaded John the Baptist. Pilate feared offending the Jews: so he did that which he knew in his conscience was unjust, he delivered up Jesus to be crucified. If this be not slavery, what is?

Young men, I want you all to be free from this bondage. I want you each to care nothing for man's opinion, when the path of duty is clear. Believe me, it is a great thing to be able to say "No!" Here was good King Jehoshaphat's weak point,—he was too easy and yielding in his dealings with Ahab, and hence many of his troubles (1 Kings 22:4). Learn to say "No!" Let not the fear of not seeming good-natured make you unable to do it. When sinners entice you, be able to say decidedly, "I will not consent" (Prov. 1:10).

Everyone wants to fit in - especially young men - they want to be witty, funny, popular, etc. But we must teach them not to regard the opinions of men.

Application: Few things are more pathetic than a young man who is willing to compromise principle just to please the crowd, to be regarded as cool, or just to "fit in."

Application 2: Young men, God is calling you to a higher standard - do not be like what Ryle described - the dead fish carried down the stream.

Final Illustration: When I was a teenager, my dad gave me a t-shirt with big huge colorful fish all swimming in one direction on the front - all with huge, sharp teeth, and ferocious-looking.

And swimming all itself in the opposite direction is one tiny, little fish. Under it was this caption:

Romans 12:1-2 "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 **And do not be conformed to this world**, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

5 Great Dangers Young Men face especially: 1) pride, 2) love of pleasure and thoughtlessness, 3) contempt of Christianity, 4) sexual immorality, & 5) the fear of man

One final Ryle quote in closing:

Young men, be of good courage.—Care not for what the world says or thinks: you will not be with the world always. Can man save your soul?—No. Will man be your judge in the great and dreadful day of account?—No. Can man give you a good conscience in life, a good hope in death, a good answer in the morning of resurrection?—No! no! no! Man can do nothing of the sort. Then "fear not the reproach of men, neither be afraid of their revilings: for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool " (Isa. 51:7,8). Call to mind the saying of good Colonel Gardiner: "I fear God, and therefore I have none else to fear." Go and be like him. Such are the warnings I give you. Lay them to heart. They are worth thinking over. I am much mistaken if they are not greatly needed. The Lord grant they may not have been given you in vain.