

Our Walk with God Regarding Sexual Purity

By Gordon Kirk

Announcer:

Good morning. We're so glad that you've joined us this morning. We have a number of announcements and items on our program this morning so I'm going to move right directly to these. First of all, if you're interested in being a better leader, we're hoping that you won't forget this wonderful opportunity here at Biola University called Worship L.A., which takes place Friday and Saturday, February 26th and 27th here on the Biola campus. This is a Christian worship conference, exploring music, theology, drama, technology, for pastors, musicians, drama teams and technicians. We strongly recommend that pastors and worship leaders attend this conference together. It features many of our own, Dr. JP Moreland, Dr. Clint Arnold, several of our music department faculty Dr.'s Jack Swartz, Bill Locke and Barry Liesch and Dr. Todd Lewis of our communications department and many, many more. I'm going to leave this desk copy of the brochure at the receptionist's desk at Talbot so that you can take a look at it at your leisure.

International students:

our first monthly international student luncheon of the semester is today at noon on the patio outside the student lounge in Meyers Hall. Pizza will be served and we'd like to extend a special invitation to our international students who are just beginning this semester. And then next Tuesday at noon out here under the sycamore trees, weather permitting, we'll have our first social gathering of the semester. It's called Our Professors Picnic. We invite you to bring your own

Kirk: Our Walk with God Regarding Sexual Purity

brown bag lunch and join us. The Talbot AS will be providing drinks, cookies and an opportunity to play volleyball. So that's next Tuesday at noon.

We have a special guest today. He is Reverend Walt Jacoby, the director of Village Missions, the district representative actually for the southwest area. He is also here with another representative from village missions, Dick Bauer. Many of our Talbot students have found wonderful opportunities for ministry through being placed in village missions, churches all across the United States. So Walt and Dick will be in the Talbot student lounge today and they would love to speak with you about opportunities for ministry with village missions. I'm going to ask them to stand at this time so we can recognize them. Here they are right over here. (applause)

Next Tuesday, we have one of our most exciting chapels of the semester from a musical and a dramatic perspective. We have the unforgettable Jews for Jesus singers joining us so we want to encourage you strongly to be with us next Tuesday. At this very moment, probably, Dr. Alan and- Dr. Alan Hultberg and his wife, Darcy, are at the hospital, where she is in the process of delivering their baby so we'll want to remember Dr. Hultberg and Darcy in our prayers this morning.

Each year for the past 31 years, a Talbot student has benefited from a very generous scholarship, from a very generous organization, The Heaven and Home Hour has provided that scholarship. And this morning, the president and the radio speaker for the Heaven and Home Hour, Dr. James Christensen, is here to tell us a little bit about that scholarship and to make a presentation. Let's welcome him, Dr. Christiansen. (applause)

James Christensen:

I began coming here before some of you were born, I think. And when those like Dr. Saucy and I were much younger men in those days, I was lecturing on election in a school a number of years ago, and I remember one of the kids said, well, if God has chosen us before the foundation of the world, that makes us older than dirt. So we're in- some of us are in that category, I think, I hope all of us are this morning here.

It's a delight to be here again. The Heaven and Home Hour is a broadcast that's been on over sixty-five years, seven days a week; began as a humble outreach of a church in Chicago, Illinois, back in 1933. And we have found that has been a real blessing and a delight to us to be able to award a scholarship here every year. And I want to encourage you again, if you have ever applied or have never applied, to please do so. I'll be back here again, the Lord willing, in another 11 or 12 months to be able to bring another one.

Now, by the way, these scholarships are not just something that we give out as a ministry. They are a part of the support moneys that come in from our constituents, our supporters all over the country. So whoever receives these can be grateful not only to the Lord, but to many people across America. We have deemed that Talbot is one of the finest schools in America and we are pleased to be able to give that scholarship here today.

It's always a tough decision. And I come out here to interview students. I was here last week and that part is the fun part and so is this morning. But the difficulty for me and our committee is

Kirk: Our Walk with God Regarding Sexual Purity

when I go back and try to share with them and tell them about the very, very insightful and very exciting people that I get to interview here. And so it's a tough decision. We spend a lot of time in prayer and hopefully every year we are within the center of God's will as we give out this scholarship.

This morning, if he is here, and this is always a little bit tentative for me because I never tell the student ahead of time who is going to receive it. I just tell them that I'll be here on a certain date or present it so I'm going to cross my fingers and hope that Kevin Ford is here this morning.

Kevin, are you? I know when he stands up, you won't be able to miss him if he is here. All right. There we go. Pardon me. (announcer: Who's the next one?) (audience laughing) Well, if he's bashful, which I know he isn't because I talked to him a great length the other day. Does anyone here know who he is? He he did get in legally? (laughter) All right, good. OK. Well, Kevin, wherever you are this morning, you are the recipient this year and in absentia, maybe we can congratulate him. (applause)

Announcer:

Thank you, Dr. Christensen. It's a real thrill for us to have Gordon Kirk with us this morning. We consider him to be one of our own. He is presently the pastor of Lake Avenue Congregational Church in Pasadena. He's a popular conference speaker and senior pastor of the largest church in the Conservative Congregational Christian Conference. He has served as a board member for NorthPark College and Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois, and is currently serving as a member of the Board of Trustees of Azusa Pacific University. Please hold your applause

Kirk: Our Walk with God Regarding Sexual Purity

(audience laughing), and as an adjunct professor at Biola University and the Talbot School of Theology.

Dr. Kirk was born in Santa Rosa, California, here in the Bachelor of Arts degree with an emphasis in Christian education from Biola in 1970. In 1973, he earned the master of divinity degree from Talbot Seminary. He also, in 1974, graduated magna cum laude from Talbot with the master of theology degree. Dr. Kirk is also a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary with a doctor of theology degree in systematic theology. Prior to his present position, Dr. Kirk served for almost nine years as senior pastor of another well-known church in our area, Rolling Hills Covenant Church in Rolling Hills Estates, California. And during that time, he regularly ministered in pulpit ministry and conference ministry in the California area. Dr. Kirk and his wife, Patricia, have a daughter, Christina, and a son, Jonathan.

Prior to the time he was pastor of Rolling Hills Covenant Church, he was a professor of systematic theology here at Biola for 10 years. Dr. Kirk is committed to a biblical expository ministry which is oriented to life's critical issues. So when he comes in just a few moments, we want to hear what the Lord has brought to his heart this morning. We have a very special treat right now. Betty Anne White, who is a graphic designer in our marketing communication department, is going to come and sing for us. She'll be accompanied by Billy Bostrom, who works in our human resources office. And then Dr. Moyer Hubbard will lead us in prayer.

[Hymnal Singing]

Kirk: Our Walk with God Regarding Sexual Purity

Moyer Hubbard:

Pray with me. Father, we do pray that you would open our eyes and our hearts and our minds, that we could walk in the ways of your commandments. I pray, Lord, that this would be a prayer that all of us would take seriously and earnestly, even today, even this week. Thank you, Lord, for the many ways that you challenge us and pull us toward that noble goal. Thank you, Lord, that you don't leave us to ourselves. But you're curious. Curious. We thank you, Lord, for the new life that you've given us. And we also pray, Lord, for Alan and Darcy, who are in hospital right now, that this new life that you've given them would be a joy and would come through safely. Bless Dr. Kirk as he ministers. Help our hearts to hear. In your Son's name. Amen.

Gordon Kirk:

I thank you for the great invitation to be with you for a few moments. Biola campus and Biola family is a great part of my life. As was mentioned so clearly, I spent 16 years of my life here on this campus as a student and then a part of the faculty. And those of you who are students, I really hope that during your college, your undergrad, as well as your seminar, your grad programs, you capture the unique opportunity of being mentored by men and women who are pouring the word of God and their lives into you. I want to say to you, as faculty and administration who are here, thank you for just the sacrifice of your life to- to mentor and disciple us.

You know, so often we think of discipling in a very narrow focus or mentoring in a sort of a- a one on one, and it needs to be dark in the morning, haha. if you're going to gather together, really be mentored before the sun gets up or some odd hour. But I want you to realize, in addition to

that type of one on one mentoring that maybe before the day starts or during the day or as you close the day, there is that classroom mentoring and an opportunity where people's lives are poured into your lives, students. And my life was dramatically changed while I was here as a student. And I think many of the profs who are still teaching a part of the ministry, many of the administrators who were here, and- I just thank you for this time to be with you for a few moments.

You know, my mind has been reflecting on the crisis that we've been going through as a country. And one of the questions that I have been asking several times in different dinner parties and out to dinner to eat and different situations with friendships is what will be the residual results of what we've gone through with President Clinton? What will be some of the impact that the Senate and the House and all the issues that we've gone through will have upon us as individuals and a country? I believe for us, as followers of Jesus Christ, especially as church leaders, we have a very unique opportunity to raise the level of understanding of what God, our creator, would truly say about sexuality, about truth telling, about how we begin to wordsmith different phrases and what it means by way of a God-given focused integrity.

Friends, we have a chance right now. We have a window which doesn't attack individuals and persons, but brings back into perspective our Creator's passions about true life. Friends, God wants our best. He wants us to come into relationship with him through Jesus Christ. He wants us to be in relationship with each other as the family of God. But he wants to make, he wants to make connections and relationship to those that live around us who don't know Jesus Christ. And I believe one of the areas that we need to rethink and put back up in the high level, from God's

perspective, is the issue of our sexuality. I believe one of the most subtle, I believe one of the most undermining phrases that we have heard over these last months is, well you know, it's only about sex. It only boils down to sexual issues. And friends that "only about, only gets down to" begins to move God's high view of sexuality into a very low view that goes in direct antithesis to the word of God.

And so for a few moments this morning, would you turn with me to 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 4? Because in just the first eight verses of 1 Thessalonians Chapter 4, God gives us, through the inspired writings of Paul, a very dramatic picture of the high view of sexuality, and a sense of warnings in our own lives because we know whether it's the political realm or it's the pastor realm. No one is exempt from sexual temptation. No one is exempt from issues of all of a sudden sexual enticement. We can go through various denominations. We can go through various (inaudible) church organizations, local church situation, our own Biola and Talbot family. And one of those- there are those every year who move past the temptation to a compromise and moral failure.

Friends, it's not just a sex situation. It's an issue of our relationship to God and a passion of saying, am I really authentic about my walk with God? Look with me in the first three verses of 1 Thessalonians chapter 4. He writes, "Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact, you are living." You capture his encouragement? He says they were a group of believers who really want to please God and their heart was to serve God. He starts in a very positive realm. Now look on as he says, "Now we ask you and urge you," I love it when we have that kind of repetition. I mean, the spirit of God led Paul and the spirit of God doesn't

stutter, OK? He doesn't just repeat things because he's not sure what to say or somehow nervous about something. Those kinds of affirmations where he gives us a duplicate dimension here adds to the intensity.

He's saying, I'm begging you. I'm asking you. I want your attention about that. This is really important. Sort of like Jesus often said, you know, hear this hear this, truly, truly, I say unto you, it's sort of the catch us in that sense of a very important dimension. Look what he says, "We ask you and we urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more." In other words, may our walk with God grow. May there be a depth and a sense of authenticity and a sense in which there's a purity about our walk with God. And then he says, "For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus." Now, do you sense that? I ask you this in the name of Jesus. I've given you this in the authority of Jesus.

Friends, we have a message from the word of God. We have revelation from the God who created us, who's saying to us this revelation is designed for the fullness of our lives, designed to allow life to be in the- in the fullest sense that it possibly can be. It's designed for our well-being. May I say it even more boldly? What we see here in Scripture is super natural revelation. I mean, the very fact that we hold this Bible and say "this is from God" do you realize the awesomeness of that? We're saying we have the very revelation from the God who created us, and Paul weaves all that together in those first three verses.

Now look with me at verse 4, excuse me, verse 3. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified." Now pause there for a moment. Richard Cross, who's professor emeritus of Rutgers University

School of Medicine, wrote this. Would you listen? "We are a culture adrift without any guidelines for sexual behavior or morals. We've thrown out the old values and we can't agree on the new ones." That's our culture. And as Paul begins, he says in verse 3, "this is God's will." See, that pulls us back to a creator's value, that pulls us back to a commonality of what he wants us to be able to build our value system and the very sense of our ethics on those particular premises.

A clip out a TV guide not long ago, a fascinating little article where it says this, would you listen? Our teenagers live in a world in which only slightly more than a decade ago, the average supermarket carried nine thousand items. Today, the average supermarket carries over thirty six thousand items. We live in a world in which Revlon now makes one hundred and fifty eight shades of lipstick, in which there are thirty six sizes and flavors of just Crest toothpaste alone, and in which about half of all American homes, there are more than 40 TV channels to choose from in a given evening.

Rabbi Neil Cushion says this, "It's harder for young people to define their sense of right and wrong because there are so many sources. It's especially hard because so many of them don't hold firm on any values. Schools are afraid to impose values. Parents too busy and confused themselves and organized religion plays a smaller part in many people's lives. There's been an erosion among the traditional suppliers of values. There's a vacuum. And so for many young people, television and their peers is playing a greater and greater role in defining values."

Now friends, in 1 Thes. 4 and verse 3, would you look at it? It is God's will. There may be choices all around us. And I'm a big fan of options and many type of second and third opportunities that we may have. But there are some core issues and with the deep things that we need to come to grips with, is there absolute truth? My answer is yes. Is there a sense in which there is right and wrong based upon how God, our creator, designed us? My answer is yes. And Paul says this is God's will.

Now look at the next phrase, "that you be sanctified." My friends, we could take a whole week just talking about sanctification and what takes place as God's spirit comes into our lives the moment we believe in Jesus Christ. And that process of sancti- sanctification. And yet that that position that we have that we're sanctified already because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. But I think he's talking about the process here. He's talking about a sense of sanctification, which means that we're distinct. There's a sense in which we're willing to be set apart. We march by the the original drummer, not just the drummer of the culture.

And friends, that's a constant question we have to ask ourselves. What is the basis of our values, creator God, or the culture in which we live? That's the bottom line that we need to keep looking at as a people. And we have as church leaders, from seminary profs to administration to those of us in church ministry, whether it's kids or students or adults, whatever it may be, we have an incredible opportunity right now, and the questions of our kids and the confusion in our congregation and the options that are out there in moral values to say what is God's will? and lift it to a whole new benchmark that will allow us to please God even more, and deepen our relationship to what God wants for us as people.

Now, look at what he says in verse 3. This is God's will that you should be sanctified. Now he puts three "that" the purpose clauses after this, if you don't want- un- underlining in your Bible in verse three, he says, first, how should we be distinct? How should we be set apart? How should we be sanctified? First, that you should avoid sexual immorality. Look at verse 4, second, "that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust, like the heathen who don't know God."

And then here's the- here's the third purpose clause in verse 6. "And that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish people for all such sins, as we've already told you and warned you. For God didn't call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction." Look at this, "doesn't re- reject human instruction but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit." Friends, do you sense the high mark that he's leading here? This is God's will. This is in the name of Jesus Christ. I beg you, under the authority of Jesus Christ. This is really important to Paul. Really important in God's perspective as God gave him this information. This very important paragraph for us to understand.

And so go back with me out of verse three. He says, this is God's will, that you should be sanctified. Now, look at the first way which we demonstrate our sanctification in which he wants to help us by the power of the spirit, be distinct from the culture first, that you should avoid sexual immorality. Friends, don't misunderstand this. He does not say avoid your sexual identity. God is the one who made us male and female. God is the one who brought Adam and Eve together. He's not saying avoid sexual intimacy, but he wants it to be within the proper

boundaries that he has given, which is a heterosexual husband and wife relationship. That's the way God has designed it. That's the picture we have from Adam and Eve all throughout Scripture of God's dimension. And so he's saying to us, avoid sexual immorality.

My friends, I want us to realize, though, for a moment, in a very deep part of our lives, the reason we're to avoid sexual immorality is because God has asked us to avoid sexual immorality. Our culture says, Yeah, it's probably good to avoid it because there's a lot of sexually transmitted diseases around. Now that's a very good reason to avoid sexual immorality. But our reason goes beyond the cultural reason of STD's. It goes to God saying don't do this. Others in our culture would say, well, avoid sexual immorality because you might get arrested. There are certain laws against prostitution and other kinds of sodomy. Different situations in different areas of our land. And so some would say I'm gonna avoid it because I don't want to get arrested. And that may be a very good reason for some in the culture. But God goes beyond just STD's. He goes beyond just the fact that you might get arrested. He's saying because it violates our creators design.

If you jot down for a moment just, if you've got a piece of paper or something, or there in the margin, would you jot down Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 32? We won't turn to it because the time. But in Proverbs 6 and verse 32 it says this, "the one who commits adultery is an utter fool because he destroys his own soul." You read Proverbs 6:32 and most translates talk about destroys his life. It's the Hebrew word for soul. Friends, I have the strongest conviction as I stand before you, that a person who is involved with sexual immorality, something happens inside of that person. Something happens with the very soul, the very immaterial of an individual.

And friends, I believe it's important for us to- to to to to define sexual immorality. And we- we can haggle over words with the different ideas of adultery or fornication or promiscuity. But I believe in the context here. He's using a wonderful generic idea, sort of an umbrella issue of sexual morality. And I think what he's talking about would be any kind of sexual intimacy with someone who is not your heterosexual married partner.

And all of a sudden, in our culture, we're defining, well, how does oral sex fit in or how does touching fit in, uh we we didn't go all the way. And I can't tell you how nauseated that makes me, as I stand before you. I've been involved in church situations where a pastor has been involved with someone and they've excused this saying, well, you know, they really didn't have intercourse. It was just sort of an emotional thing, a lot of touching went on, to somehow they dismissed sexual immorality.

Do you remember the words of Jesus? Do remember as he confronted the hypocrites, the Pharisees and Sadducees? First of all, he said, oh, yes, you said you haven't murdered, never killed anybody, never shot a gun, but if you've hated someone, you're responsible. And then he said to them, oh you say you've never committed adultery, you know, never went all the way, never had intercourse with them. I say to you, if you've lusted after someone, you've committed adultery.

Friends, it's a whole different standard, if we really want to please God. There's a whole different dimension, if we're gonna be people who are under the lordship of Jesus Christ. And he says, "this is God's will." Different than STD's, different than getting caught by the law. It's God's will,

that you should be sanctified. In what way? That you should avoid sexual immorality. Remember 1 Corinthians chapter 6? Paul says flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body. You got it? ALL other sins. But the one who sins sexually sins against his own body.

I love reading the new paraphrase, The Message, Eugene Peterson has put together. It's a wonderful paraphrase. Listen to how he puts it. There is more to sex-, this is from 1 Corinthians 6. There is more to sex than mere skin on skin. Sex is as much a spiritual mystery as a physical fact. As written in Scripture, the two become one. It says, we want to become spiritually one with the Master, we must not pursue the kind of sex that avoids commitment and intimacy, leaving us more lonely than ever. The kind of sex that never become one.

There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies. These bodies were made for God given and God model love for becoming one with one another. Or didn't you realize your body is a sacred place, the place where the Holy Spirit lives? Don't you see that you can't live however you please? Squandering what God has paid such a high price for, your very soul? The physical part of you is not some piece of property belonging to the spiritual part of you. God owns the whole works. So let people see God in and through your body. Wow.

If I was to summarize those few moments of what I've just said, I believe the first way that we demonstrate that God's spirit is sanctifying, is setting us apart, is maturing us, is allowing us to be distinct, is that we need to be people who abstain from sexual immorality. That's what he

says. Abstinence from sexual immorality. If you're married, that means fidelity. No one else. If you're single, that means celibacy and sexual purity. Abstain from sexual immorality.

But look at the second "that" with me. It is God's will that you should be sanctified; first, that you should avoid sexual immorality. Second, verse 4, that each of you should learn to control his, may I say her, own body, in a way that is wholly and honorable, not in passionate lust, like the heathen who don't know God. See, friends, this wasn't something new. The Clinton issues and the stuff we've gone through, this isn't new. It's been going on. And if I understand history correctly, when Paul wrote this to those believers in Thessalonica, the other religions did not have sexual purity as a major part of their particular faith walk.

There were temple prostitutes, both heterosexual or homosexual. There are incredible sexual acts of deviation going on in the different temples. You go back and look at the archaeology, you read the books and you'll find within the other religions of that day, there was not the sexual purity. And so, by way of the culture, all of a sudden for these people coming to Christ, Paul need to help them realize there's a whole other dimension you've not learned about in your culture or you have not been able to understand from your particular religion. But it's about the God who made you and the God who made you in the image of God.

And in that image, there's something about your sexual purity that either develops your spirituality or sanctification or somehow erodes and poisons what's happening. And so he says of that next part, if you'll notice, we need to learn to control our own body. Now, friend, there's no question but apart from the grace of God and the power of God, we can't do it by ourselves. But

this particular verb, learn to control your own body, is a present middle voice. And if you spend a little bit of time in Greek, you know, the middle voice means you yourself. And so that means I have a responsibility in how I begin to understand my weaknesses, areas where I'm tempted, where at times I'm enticed.

Now would you be honest with yourself for a moment? Just you, don't look around. I'm not talking about anybody else but just you for a moment. What is it that becomes very tempting and alluring and enticing to you about sexual issues that you know are outside the boundaries of God's design? Maybe it's a touch from somebody else. A little flirtation going on, a little note, and all of a sudden the heart's racing and you're thinking about him. You're thinking about her. All of a sudden, it moves into a lustful dimension and you've sinned because of lu-. Now friends, temptation in of itself isn't sin, hey, Jesus was tempted in all points. I can't draw the line for you. You can't draw the line for me.

Billy Graham in his book, *World Aflame*, writes that idea saying, you know, the moment you see that person walk by you and you find them attractive, that first glance, that first walk, that's temptation. That's enticement. That in it of itself isn't sin, just like Jesus heard from Satan "turn those stones into bread." He heard that just like you might see something, you might hear something, you might think something. But the moment you turn around and you watch that person, you undress them in your mind, you go through some kind of sexual involvement with that or some kind of sexual intimacy- on the billboard to the Internet to the magazine to someone on campus, to someone of the church, to someone you're working with, the moment you move through that, you move from temptation to lust and to sin.

But what is it that triggers you? What is it within your life women, men, that's gotten somewhat out of control? Internet, major issue. I mean, years ago, there were the X rated movies, and be afraid to go cause somebody might see you. All of a sudden, forget God's always with you and God's seeing you. And it became the video stores and you could kind of sneak around when nobody's around, you know, check one out and nobody knew you did it. God knows. But it's that horizontal stuff. Why are we so much more afraid of people around us than the very God loves us and created us and who we grieve when we move into issues of sexual immorality.

And now all of a sudden, it's the Internet and really nobody knows. The studies I have read of even people watching porn during their work hours because just one toggle to switch and the screen immediately changes as he heard the door open. I don't know what it is that entices you. Seeing a touch, a glance, an embrace, the flirtation, Media, Cable, magazines, soaps. Are you a different person when you travel? I've heard stories from marriage counselors about individuals who, as they leave town, they take their wedding ring off because nobody knows them in that town where they're going for that sales meeting. Nobody knows they're a part of Biola and Talbot. Suddenly, that anonymity, there's a perversity. And Paul says it is God's will. I say this in the name of Jesus Christ. Avoid sexual immorality. Learn to control your own body.

I have a dear friend and I praise God for his candor. He was caught up in pornography for years, onto the Internet all the pressures. And he had the courage to come out and finally told his family. And now they have the password, but she doesn't know when he gets in the computer and he has to ask them and one of them sits there with him and does their homework, whatever,

while he does the Internet stuff he has to do because he knows if I'm alone with my own password, the propensity is so strong. I move right back into immorality through the Internet.

Friends, I'm asking you today to go deep in your hearts. Don't do what I've said this morning to please me, to please your profs, to please the people around you, to not get caught. But do it as pleasing God. How are we to be distinct? How are we to be sanctified? Abstain from sexual immorality. Secondly, self-control in what pushes our buttons. And each one of us has different buttons. And something that attracts you doesn't attract somebody else. So that all of a sudden moves you into an area of temptation, doesn't with somebody else. What are your hot buttons?

Friends, I want to say to you on the authority of the word of God, I believe that sexual immorality becomes addictive. It becomes progressive. And it's degenerative. It's nonstop. Well, lastly and thirdly, would you look at what he says in verse 6? It is God's will you should- you should be sanctified. One, avoid sexual immorality. Second, learn to control your own body, and look at verse 6. And third, in this matter, no one should wrong his brother, may I say a sister, or take advantage of him. Third dimension, he's saying to us, may I put it in a broad context? He's talking about the sanctity of life.

Friends, we need to see sanctity of life in a much broader perspective than just the issue of the important unborn. Oh, they're a part of that. But elder abuse falls under sanctity of life because every senior is in the image of God. Pornography relates to sanctity of life, and all of a sudden, a person's body is degraded to just being an object, something you buy and you sell. You see,

sanctity of life relates to how we respect each other and treat each other and view each other as people in the image of God.

James says it about our speech, from the mouth out pours the poison and then all of a sudden, it's freshwater, this is- this isn't the way it is. You don't go to a drinking fountain and you get saltwater, and in a moment, you're getting fresh water. You don't go to a tree, except it's been, you know, somehow transplant, but you normally pull up different kinds of fruit, doesn't happen. And therefore, what really comes out truly comes from the heart. And he's passionate about us being authentic. He's passionate about our purity and our deep concern in those areas.

Friends, promiscuous sex defrauds people. Illicit sex degrades relationships. Sexual abuse dehumanizes individuals. And our churches are filled with sexual predators. We have a chance to lift the bar to talk about sexuality. Remember listening to a little break point from Chuck Colson a few months ago. He says, you know, we blame the media. We blame politics. We blame the business world for all the mess we're in. Colson says, you know who I blame? The church. He says, When I grew up, and I say the same thing for myself, I'm 51 years old, when I grew up, most of the pulpit I heard "man, don't go into politics. Man, that is dirty and ugly. Man, you don't want to go to Hollywood and get into pictures. You know, you don't get in that kind of stuff, do you?"

We've given it over. We're those writing screenplays and those in politics and those involving economics who carry with them the king (inaudible) do it. We need to talk about these issues and be honest with each other. And not somehow think just when the family, they'll talk about sex,

and not from the pulpit, or some of the sex ed class in the seventh grade, we'll talk about it much in other areas. And part of the reason we're in the mess we're in, the church isn't talking enough about the sanctity of life, the mystery of the incredible dimension of marriage and sexuality, and how God designed us male and female. And God values singleness, and he values marriage and neither are better or in any way inferior to one of the other.

Sexual morality is a decision of value and relates to our- to our personhood. But then he says as he closes in verse 7, would you look? "For God didn't call us to be impure, but to live a holy life." That's his passion. Why? Because holiness brings wholeness to life. See, friends, the- the commandments, the principles, the values, the precepts from God are designed for our best interests. We don't have some killjoy in the sky saying "don't do this, and don't do that. Are you happy? Okay, I'll give another Don't. I don't want you happy." It's not the God that we worship.

Do you know why he says don't do this? Do you know why he says don't lie because he wants you to be able to put your head on the pillow at night and sleep. Look each other eyeball to eyeball, and not be afraid of each other. Something about truth telling that brings people together. There's something about promise keeping that enriches the relationship. Once you believe your boyfriend, your husband, your wife, your teacher, a friend has lied to you, there's a distance that begins to come. There's a lack of trust that has to then be rebuilt at a point. God's principles are for our own best interests. That's his passion for us.

And he says I want this for you, because this is God's will for a holy life. Then verse 8, he becomes even more strong. "Therefore, the person who rejects this instruction." What's that?

Avoid sexual immorality. Learn to control your own body, and don't defraud a brother or sister.

The one who rejects this instruction, would you look at it, please? Doesn't reject human instruction, may I say it that way? But God, who gave you his Holy Spirit. Would you bow with me, please?

Friends, if you've named the name of Jesus Christ, God's Spirit's come into your life. And I believe that the word of God teaches that the Holy Spirit will never leave you. He's the down payment until that final day of ultimate sanctification or redemption. And so, therefore, if there's sin in your life, he doesn't leave you. But it's possible to grieve the spirit. It's possible to quench the spirit. It's possible to impede because of sin. Sin clogs the freedom of the spirit to have complete control. And I want to ask you this morning, first of all and foremost, just you as an individual and to me, is there any area of sexual immorality, that means sexual intimacy, touching, looking, embracing; sexual intimacy with someone who's not your heterosexual married partner?

If that's the case, would you confess that? Because as we confess, he's faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us. If you know you're hooked, Internet, magazines, videos, you leave town, you always watch stuff in hotel or things you'd never watch in front of others; if you know you're hooked, would you ask God to so fill you with power that you can get help from a counselor, maybe get in a recovery group. We need to step up to the plate. Because sexual sin will destroy your soul. And then would you ask God to help you to look at each man and woman as in the image of God? Those a part of the church as kingdom people. Those not a part of the church. Those that God wants you to reach and not defraud.

Lord God, I ask that each of us here, as leaders in the church, people wanting to proclaim your word, that Lord, we would raise to a new level, the importance of sexual purity. The health you want to bring. Lord, we wouldn't have one sexually transmitted disease; There'd be no AIDS today, no gonorrhea, no syphilis, if everybody obeyed your design for sexuality. Lord, wake us up as a church to help our young people especially, to help us to control issues and learn what it means to defraud others.

And I thank you that anyone here, Lord, who confessed, there's a sense in which you purify. And you said, though our sins be a scarlet, we'd be white as snow. And I thank you that through Jesus Christ, that happens. So, Lord, give us the courage to speak your truth even when it's not popular, but also give us the courage to allow a clear voice to be heard from the church about the value of fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness. And we do this as Paul said, for Jesus, because we love you and because you love us. This is your will, Amen.