

# The Most Excellent Way

by Erlo Stegen

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*The biblical standard is the most excellent way, which means being pure in both body and spirit, and waiting for marriage and being committed to your partner.*

**Duration:** 1:05:23

**Scripture:** Matthew 1:18, Matthew 24:36, John 14:2, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Corinthians 13:13, Ephesians 5:3, 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

**Topics:** "Love"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of avoiding impure behavior and sinning before God. He shares a personal experience of observing children playing and how their naughty behavior stopped when they became aware of his presence. The preacher compares this to how God's eye is always upon us, and how we should be mindful of our actions. He warns against engaging in impure relationships and highlights the deceitfulness of those who woo others with false promises. The sermon emphasizes the need for parents to take action and discipline their children to prevent rebellious behavior. Overall, the message encourages believers to remember that God sees everything and to live in a way that pleases Him.

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## Transcript

Let's pray. Thank you for this opportunity, Lord, that we can be here today, having been protected by you. We ask you to be present among us in a special way, and let your name be glorified.

We might witness you and see you, for we know, Lord, that you are going to return for the great wedding in heaven. Grant, Lord, that that bride, for that special day, would be busy preparing for it. So work, Lord, in our hearts that we might be prepared for that day to meet our heavenly bridegroom.

Amen. We read, according to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter one, verse 18, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. After his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with the child of the Holy Spirit.

I'd like to speak about that part where it says, not having come together. Now, in the Greek, it does not imply that they had intercourse, before saying that they didn't have intercourse. That's not the reference.

It's not even referring to the fact that it's not even referring to a sexual coming together, which we see so often in our world, where it's become rotten to the core. Because some might say, well, I'm a true virgin.

Meantime, they're having affairs, and they are busy with heavy petting late at night.

And it's become almost the culture that if the girl falls pregnant, wherever she is, in the city, maybe she's working there, she has the baby to send back home for the grandmother to look after. That is just not acceptable to God. That type of coming together is anyway so wicked.

You are a pagan before God, even if you're wearing Western clothing. It doesn't Christianize you. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11, I burn with the burning of a jealous husband, or burn with the jealousy of God in my desire to see you presented as a virgin to the bridegroom.

I want to bring you before Christ as a pure virgin. So, if it refers to not having come together, it means that the girl is absolutely pure in the way she is truly a virgin. The same with the young man that has never been busy with the opposite sex.

Here it is spoken of Joseph and Mary that she was pregnant or was with child before they came together. And this particular phrase, to come together, is found in quite a few places in the Bible. When it refers in the Corinthian letter of coming together as a church to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in no way is that coming together explained by a sexual, or has any hint of sexuality.

And then we also find in the Corinthian letter where it says, if you come together, in other words, it's a meeting. And, of course, that has no sexual implications. So Joseph and Mary were not visiting each other.

Neither was No boyfriend. Neither was Mary the pal of Joseph, or Joseph the pal of Mary. They didn't have that girlfriend-boyfriend relationship, which is a Western idea.

Neither did they come together with a, well, we pals and we have our secret intimate talk together. There was no communication on that level at all. Not this, like, do you find cell phone, SMSing to each other.

They kept themselves pure. Till the day of marriage. For the bride wears a pure or snow white garment.

And a veil. So as it is now done in marriage, that snow white gown and the veil of purity means that she has not been touched by a man. The veil meaning purity.

Meaning absolute purity. Virginitly in the truest sense of the word. In Zulu culture, it used to be the practice that a girl remained a virgin right till the day of marriage.

Today it has changed. It is hidden by Western clothing and it's like a grave that looks attractive on the outside, but inside are just bones and rotteness. And in Christianity the standard is higher.

We mustn't attach ourselves to a cultural value, but in Christianity it means virginitly in the truest sense of the word of no touching and no relationship in that way. Now, virginitly we mean before God and not just before mankind or humankind. Remember that in Christianity to God even a thought is a deed.

You are what you think. What comes from the deepest part of you. Now the Jews had their particular tradition.

And their culture. A certain rabbi wrote to his son or explained to his son how the Jewish tradition of engagement or betrothal was. If a boy was going to get married to a girl, the man and his family would come and come to the future bride's place and the family of the girl, they would be there and it would be a

very big occasion.

And in their coming together there was a particular cup and there was something which they poured into it. They didn't practice the culture of rings, giving each other rings. So from this dish, which was a cup, the bridegroom, the one who was going to get married would drink from it and so too would the future bride and then it was considered as a public betrothal.

After that, the young man, around which this occasion was, he would go with his family back to their home. He was apart from the girl. He was not in contact in any way.

And so there wasn't any form of communication. Now, I use cell phone to put it in a modern day allegory, but it means that they had no contact with each other whatsoever. And they did it before almighty God, that before God, Jehovah, they were being watched and God was their witness in their purity.

And that is, I was watchful over all of the earth. His eye, which sees not only the outward person, but sees right into the very being, into the thoughts and the heart of a person. And there was that parting after the betrothal.

There was not visitation between them. And that which they did, they did before God's all-seeing eye, which sees even the thoughts. And it was a healthy practice, because if a couple come together and chat with each other, touching each other, holding hands, they are only asking for trouble, rousing what is impure and they sin before God.

One day, I was in a certain place and there were little children playing. Now, you know how children are apt to fight with each other and scratch at each other? Now, I was in a house and then I looked through the window, I opened the window and all I did was to look and stare at them. One of these boys was the ringleader, so to say, and he was the one who was pushy and bullying.

They were not aware of my watching them, but my eye was upon them. And then, this particular ringleader, this one who had the most cheek, his eye met mine. And as he looked at me, he got a fright.

His cheekiness disappeared. His bullying stopped immediately. It was like he was instantly stopped and bound and stopped bullying around.

And then, what he did was, he continued to every now and then take a glance at me and I just continued to watch them. And so, what he would do is, he would just continue playing, but every now and then he would glance at me to see whether I was still checking on them. And that sort of boundless behavior, I just stood watching.

Their naughtiness and their pinching each other and scratching each other stopped completely, for they were just aware that there was an eye upon them. For that child knew that I wouldn't stay silent about it. I would go, that I would use punishment on him.

And the boy knew that if I didn't give punishment, that I would report him to his parents and say, your child, your son has been naughty. And if I reported a child to the parents, I would expect parents to take action. I would expect them to do something which will stop that type of behavior, otherwise their child will grow up and be a rebel.

So let us remember that the eye of God is upon us. The Lord sees us. If we keep that in mind, we will behave properly.

I remember visiting a certain lady very far away. She had got saved, the husband not. So the father kept himself distant from the Lord and so he would just isolate himself.

And the woman, the wife in counseling, she would say, please pray for my husband, he needs to accept the gospel, he is making life difficult for me. And then he didn't want to know anything about the gospel and I wouldn't be welcome to visit them. But one day, I just felt that I should visit.

And I asked the Lord, please Lord be with me, I don't know what to expect, whether I will be spat upon or he will set the dogs loose on me, or what will happen, but Lord be with me. As I stood outside and I knocked, the man opened the door and I was expecting anything to take place. And I was astonished, I was taken aback at the kindness and the warmth of the friendliness of this man.

And he asked me to come in, he was so courteous. And he took me into their lounge and quite a bit away from the lounge was the kitchen. The wife was busy and she was kneading the flour for bread.

We were sitting together there and then he called his wife and said, come and see who is here, because he knew that it would be a joyful surprise for her that I her minister had come. But she didn't come. He called again inviting her saying, please come, come in a hurry.

And she shouted from the kitchen, shut up you man, I am busy here. And then again he called and said, come, come quickly wife. And again she called out, what a disturbance, what a nuisance you are.

But then she came along and she suddenly saw who was there. Then she was instantly sweetened. Her behavior changed in a moment and she showed sudden kindness.

So we chatted, drank tea and when he went out for a moment I said to her, what you've been telling me that he's the problem. I know now that you yourself, you are the problem as the Christian. And so I said to her, look, you've been telling me to pray, asking me to pray for her husband so often and I said in the future I will refuse such prayer.

I will only pray for him once you repent. She asked for prayer, she said, please pray for me that I wouldn't ever be such a wife again. And then he came to the Lord, there was an instant repentance.

When she changed and truly lived as a Christian, he came to the Lord not only as a Christian, he became a great friend of mine. I visited him very often, he at my place and I went to him. So if you are, as a wife, you complain about your husband, you complain about your children, you complain about your wife, you complain about your husband, you complain about your children, you complain about your wife.

So if you are, as a wife, you're complaining about your husband and you are here in this audience, don't complain, rather start by looking at yourself. When you complain that he doesn't want to get saved and he's just a drunkard, well, what do babies do anyway? If they cry, they want the bottle. When you complain that he doesn't want to get saved and he's just a drunkard, well, what do babies do anyway? If they cry, they want the bottle.

And if you isolate him like that and you continue to complain and murmur like that, you're actually chasing your husband away. The prostitute will treat him kindly with kid gloves and you carry your own guilt if you

chase him away with your behavior. So now returning to the Jewish tradition which I've been speaking of, after that special ceremony of betrothal, that means the future bridegroom and future bride would go back to their homes with their families.

And the man, the father of the home, would say, now son, you're going to get married, start building a home. And he didn't have the right, the young man, to decide for himself on the day of marriage. And even if he had finished his house, that wasn't his right to go and do his own thing.

No, he had to wait until the father said, now is the right time, son, you can go and fetch your bride. The son wouldn't say, and he would not know, and he would not declare the day or the date, but the father was the one in authority who would know which day he could go for his bride. Do you remember when Jesus addressed his disciples? And he promised them, I'm going home to build a home, a house for you, a mansion.

And when I have built that home, I will come and fetch you. And Jesus said, that hour, that day, no man knows, only the father knows. And Jesus was saying, even as the son, I don't have that authority.

To the Jews, it was the language which they understood. The Lord made himself very clear. I don't know with you, maybe there are some who haven't yet got engaged.

I don't know with you, maybe there are some who haven't yet got engaged. The punishment you receive from that type of reasoning is not my punishment, but the Lord says, I will cut that person in pieces. You've heard how Uncle Martin introduced the bridal pair, and how he said that Octavia, from the day she was born, she was going to be his wife.

And when she was a little child, till now, she has been so faithful and pure, and the young man as well. A certain girl that I know, got engaged, ready to get married. And the parents of the bride bought her a very expensive bridal gown.

And then, when they had completed the finishing off, and the ornaments on this white gown, she, that is the bride, noticed that there was a small little spot of dirt. She She She wept bitterly, and she said to her parents, I just cannot get married in a bridal gown that has dirt on it. She said to the point that, let's try, let's wash it, do whatever we can, but if it doesn't work, I'm not going to get married unless I have a pure white gown.

The girl was insistent. Now, purity, as it got closer to the date of the marriage, when She knew that that dress, that gown, was symbolizing absolute purity, meaning that she hasn't been touched. And And the bridal gown, the white bridal gown and the veil symbolize absolute purity, meaning the girl is actually saying, I have not been touched by any man.

I have, you are the very first. And also, meaning that I'm not scrap, I'm not second hand and cheap. And the father of the bride And as we see how the father unveils the bride, lifting the bridal veil, he says to his daughter, you can get married now.

I don't know whether you parents, daughters, you and children, whether you understand and hear me correctly. Men, do you hear me? Because In traditional In traditional In traditional Zulu custom, it was that the girls were inspected regarding their virginity if she was found to be impure. The people that would see it as she came out and declared she's impure would spit on the ground and say she has misbehaved.



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