

Directions Against Fornication and Uncleanness

by Richard Baxter

Fornication and uncleanness are sins that lead to spiritual death and ruin relationships and families.

Duration: 49:45

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 6:9

Topics: "Audio Books", "Fornication", "Holiness"

Description

Richard Baxter delivers a powerful sermon on the dangers of fornication and uncleanness, emphasizing that no sin is so vile that it cannot be rationalized by frequent engagement. He argues that the will of God, as expressed in Scripture, is sufficient to condemn such actions, and that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, which should not be defiled. Baxter provides practical directions to avoid temptation, including the importance of self-control, avoiding idleness, and the necessity of marriage for those unable to contain their desires. He warns that those who reconcile their consciences to fornication often become desensitized to other sins, leading to a life devoid of moral integrity. Ultimately, he calls for a return to holiness and the recognition of the severe consequences of sin.

Transcript

From the book, *The Christian Directory* by Richard Baxter. Directions against fornication and all uncleanness. There is no sin so odious, but love to it, and frequent using it, will do much to reconcile the very judgment to it, either to think it is lawful or tolerable and venial, to think it no sin, or but a little sin, and easily forgiven.

And so with some brutish persons it does in this. But first, it is reason enough against any sin that it is forbidden by the most wise, infallible, universal King of all the world. The Maker's will is enough to condemn it, and shall be enough to condemn those who are servants of it.

He has said, Thou shalt not murder, 1 Corinthians 6, 9, and 10. Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, shall inherit the kingdom of God. Verses 15 to 19.

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid! What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot

is one body? For to, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication! Every sin that a man does is without the body, but he that commits fornication sins against his own body.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you? Mark, that he speaks not this to fornicators, for their bodies are not temples of the Holy Ghost. But to them that by filthy heretics in those times were tempted to think fornication no great sin. So, Ephesians 5, 3 to 6. But fornication in all uncleanness and covetousness, let it not be once named among you, is become a saint's, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting.

For this ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words. For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Be not ye therefore partakers with them. Galatians 5, 19. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

2. Besides Scripture, God has planted in nature a special pudor and modesty to restrain this sin, and that they commit it do violate the law of nature, and sin against a witness and condemner that is within them. As scarce any one of them ever committed it boldly, quietly, and fearlessly, till first they have hardened their hearts, and seared their consciences, and overcome the light of nature by frequent willful sinning. Nature hides the obscene parts, and teaches man to blush at the mention of anything that is beyond the bounds of modesty.

Say not that it is mere custom, for the vitiated nature of man is not so over-precise, nor the villainy of the world so rare and modest. But before this day it had quite banished all restraints of this sin above most others, if they could have done it, and if God had not written a law which condemns it very deep in nature, with almost indelible characters. 3. So that, in despite of the horrid wickedness of the earth, though mankind be almost universally inclined to lust, yet there be universally laws and customs restraining it.

4. So that, except a very few savages and cannibals like beasts, there is no nation on the earth where filthiness is not a shame, and modesty lays not some rebukes upon uncleanness. 5. Ask no further than for a law, when thy nature itself is a law against it. And the better any man is, the more does he abhor the lusts of uncleanness.

6. So that, among saints, says the apostle, it is not to be named, that is, not without need and detestation. Ephesians 5.3 and verse 12. For it is a shame even to speak of those things that are done of them in secret.

7. And when drunkenness hath uncovered the shame of Noah, his son Ham is cursed for beholding it, and the other sons blessed for their modesty and reverent covering him. 3. And that God hath not put this law into man's nature without very great cause, albeit the implicit belief and submission due to him should satisfy us, though we knew not the causes particularly, yet much of them is notorious to common observation, 4. Is that if God had not restrained lust by laws, it would have made the female sex most contemptible and miserable, and used worse by men than dogs are. 5. For first rapes and violence would deflower them, because they are too weak to make resistance.

And if that had been restrained, yet the lust of men would have been unsatisfied, and most would have grown weary of the same woman whom they had abused, and take another, at least when she grew old. 6. And so the aged woman would be the most calamitous creature upon earth. 7. Besides, that lust is addicted to variety, and grows weary of the same.

8. The fallings out between men and women, and the sicknesses that make their persons less pleasing, and age, and other accidents, would expose them almost all to utter misery. 9. And men would be lawmakers, and therefore would make no laws for their relief, but what consisted with their lusts and ends, so that half the world would have been ruined, had it not been for the laws of matrimony, and such others as restrain the lusts of men. 4. Also there would be a confused mixture in procreation, and no men would well know what children are their own, which is worse than not to know their lands or houses.

5. By this all natural affection would be diminished or extinguished, as the love of husband and wife, so the love between fathers and children would be diminished. 6. And consequently, the due education of children would be hindered, or utterly overthrown. The mothers that should first take care of them would be disabled and turned away, that fresh harlots might be received, who would hate the offspring of the former.

So that by these means, a world in all societies and civility would be ruined, and men would be worse than brutes, whom nature has either better taught, or else made for them some other supply. 7. Learning religion and civility would be all in a manner extinct, as we see that they are among those few savage cannibals that are under no restraint. 8. For how much all these depend upon education, experience tells us.

In a word, this confusion in procreation would introduce such confusion in men's hearts and families, in all societies, by corrupting and destroying necessary affection and education, that it would be the greatest plague imaginable to mankind, and make the world so base and beastly, that to destroy mankind from off the earth would seem much more desirable. Judge then, whether God should have left men's lusts unrestrained. 9. But you will say, there might have been some moderate restraint to a certain number, as it is with the Mohammedans, without so much strictness as Christ doth use.

Answer. That the strictness is necessary, and is an excellency in God's law, appears thus, first, by the greatness of the mischief which else would follow. To be remiss in preventing such a confusion in the world would be an enmity to the world.

2. In that man's nature is so violently inclined to break over, that if the hedge were not close, there would be no sufficient restraining them. They would quickly run out at a little gap. 3. The wiser and better any nation or persons are, even among the heathens, the more fully do they consent to the strictness of God's laws.

4. The cleanest sort of brutes themselves are taught by nature to be as strict in their copulations, though it be otherwise with the mere terrestrial beasts and birds. Yet the aerial go by couples. Those that are called the fowls of the heaven that fly in the air are commonly taught this chastity by nature.

As if God would not have lust come near to heaven. 5. The families of the Mahometans, that have more wives than one, do show the mischief of it in the effects, in the hatred and disagreement of their wives, and the great slavery that women are kept in, making them like slaves, that they may be kept in quiet. And when women are thus enslaved to have so great a part in the education of children, by which all virtue and civility are maintained in the world, it must need tend to the debasing and brutifying of mankind.

7. Children being the preciouslest of all our treasure, it is necessary that the strictest laws be made for the securing of their good education and their welfare. If it shall be treason to debase or counterfeit the king's coin, and if men must be hanged for robbing you of your goods or money, and the laws are not thought too strict that are made to secure your estates, how much more is it necessary that the laws be strict against the vitiating of mankind, and against the debasement of your image on your children, and against that which tends to the extirpation of all virtue, and the ruin of all societies and souls? 8. God will have a holy seed in the world that shall bear his image of holiness, and therefore will he have all means fitted thereunto. Brutish, promiscuous generation tends to the production of a brutish seed, and though the word preached is a means of sanctifying those that remain unsanctified from their youth, yet a holy marriage, and holy dedication of children to God, and holy education of them are the former means which God would not have neglected or corrupted, and to which he promises his blessing.

As ye may see, 1 Corinthians 7.14, Malachi 2.15, did not he make one, yet had he the residue of the Spirit, and wherefore one, that he might seek a godly seed? Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth, for the Lord hates putting away. 9. Yea, lust corrupts the mind of the person himself if it be not very much restrained and moderated. It turns it from the only excellent pleasure by the force of that brutish kind of pleasure.

It carries away the thoughts and distempers of passions, and corrupts the fantasy, and thereby does easily corrupt the intellect and heart. Pleasure is so much of the end of man, which his nature leads him to desire, that the chief thing in the world to make a man good and happy is to engage his heart to those pleasures which are good and make men happy. And the chief thing to make him bad and miserable is to engage him in the pleasures which make men bad and end in misery.

And the principal thing by which you may know yourselves or others what you are is to know what your pleasures are, or at least what you choose and desire for your pleasure. If the body ruled the soul, you are brutish. You shall be destroyed.

If the soul ruled the body, you live according to true human nature and the ends of your creation. If the pleasures of the body are the predominant pleasures which you are most addicted to, then the body rules the soul, and you shall perish as traitors to God that debase his image and turn man into beast. Romans 8 13 If the pleasures of the soul be your most predominant pleasures, which you are most addicted to, though you attain as yet but little of it, then the soul does rule the body, and you live like men.

And this cannot well be till faith show the soul those higher pleasures than God, an everlasting glory which may carry it above all fleshly pleasures. By all this set together, you may easily perceive that the way of the devil to corrupt and damn men is to keep them from faith, that they may have no heavenly spiritual pleasure, and to strengthen sensuality and give them their fill of fleshly pleasures, to imprison their minds, that they may ascend no higher, and that the way to sanctify and save men is to help them by faith to heavenly pleasure, and to abate and keep under the fleshly pleasure that would draw down their minds. And by this you may see how to understand the doctrine of mortification and taming the body and abstaining from the pleasures of the flesh, and you may now understand what personal mischief lust does to the soul.

Number 10. Your own experience and consciences will tell you that if it be not exceedingly moderated, it unfits you for every holy duty. You are unfit to meditate on God or pray to Him or to receive His word or sacrament, and therefore nature teaches those that meddle with holy things to be more continent than

others, which Scripture also secondeth.

1 Samuel 21, 4 and 5. Such sensual things and sacred things do not well agree to near. 11. And as by all this you see sufficient cause why God should make stricter laws for the bridling of lust than fleshly lustful persons like, so when His laws are broken by the unclean, it is a sin that conscience, till it be quite debauched, does deeply accuse the guilty for, and bears a very clear testimony against.

Oh, the unquietness, the horror, the despair that I have known many persons in, even for the sin of self-pollution that never proceeds to fornication! How many adulterers and fornicators have we known that have lived and died in despair, and some of them hang themselves! Conscience will condemn this sin with a heavy condemnation, till custom or infidelity have utterly seared it. Number 12. And it is also very observable that when men have once mastered conscience in this point and reconciled it to the sin of fornication, it is an hundred to one that they are utterly hardened in all abomination and scarce make conscience of any other villainy whatsoever.

If once fornication go for nothing, or a small manner with them, usually all other sin is with them of the same account. If they have but an equal temptation to it, lying, and swearing, and perjury, and theft, and murder, and treason, would seem small too. I never knew any one of these, but he was reconcilable and prepared for any villainy that the devil set upon.

And if I know such a man, I would no more trust him than I would trust a man that wants nothing but interest and opportunity to commit any heinous sin that you can name. Though I confess I have known a number of the former sort that have committed this sin under horror and despair, that have retained some good in other points and have been recovered, yet of this latter sort that have reconciled their consciences to fornication, I never knew one that was recovered or that retained anything of conscience or honesty, but so much of the show of it as their pride in worldly interests commanded them. And they were malignant enemies of goodness and others, and lived according to the unclean spirit which possessed them.

They are terrible words in Proverbs 2, 18 and 19. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold on the paths of life.

Age keeps them from actual filthiness and lust, and so may hell, for there is no fornication there. But they retain their debauched, seared consciences. 13.

And it is a greater sin, because it is not committed alone, but the devil takes them by couples. Lust inflames lust, and the fuel set together makes the greatest flame. You are guilty of the sin of your wretched companion, as well as your own.

14. And lastly, the miserable effects of it, and the punishments that in this life have attended it, do tell us how God accounts of the sin. It has ruined persons and families and kingdoms, and God has borne His testimony against it by many signaled judgments, which all history points you with.

Is there as scarce any sin that the New Testament more frequently and bitterly condemns, as you see in Paul's epistles, and 2 Peter 2, and Jude, and so on? 15. So there are not many that God's providence more frequently pursues with shame and misery on earth. And in the latter end of the world God has added one concomitant plague not known before, called commonly the venerous pox, so that many of the most brutish sort go about stigmatized with a mark of God's vengeance, and the prognostic or warning of a heavier vengeance.

16. And there are none of them all that by great repentance be not made new creatures, but leave an infamous name in memory when they are dead, if their sin was publicly known. 17.

Let them be never so great, and never so gallant, victorious, successful, liberal, flattered, or applauded while they lived. God orders it so, that truth shall ordinarily prevail with the historians that write of them when they are dead, and with all sober men their names rot and stink, as well as their bodies. Proverbs 10.7 The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot.

So much of the greatness of the sin. Boniface, Archbishop of Mince, writing to Ethelbald, an English king that was a fornicator, Epistle 19, saith, Fornication is a reproach, not only among Christians, but pagans. For in old Saxony, if a virgin had thus stained her father's house, or a married woman, breaking the marriage covenant, had committed adultery, sometimes they force her to hang herself with her own hand, and over her ashes, when she is burnt, they hang the fornicator.

Sometimes they gather a band of women that lead her about, scourging her with rods, and cutting off her clothes at the girdle, and with small knives cutting and pricking all her body. They send her from village to village, thus bloody and mangled with little wounds, and so more and more, incited by a zeal for chastity, do meet her and scourge her again, till they leave her either dead or scarce alive, that others may fear adultery and luxury. Objection.

But, saith filthy ones, did not David commit the sin of adultery? Did not God permit them many wives among the Jews? How many had Solomon? Therefore this is no such great sin as you pretend. Thus every filthiness a little while will plead for itself. Answer.

David did sin, and is a sin nevertheless for that. It is easier to forbear it than undergo the tears and sorrows which David did endure for his sin. Besides the bitterness of a soul for it, his son Absalom rebels and drives him out of his kingdom, and his own wives are openly defiled, and yet God leaves it as a perpetual blot upon his name.

Solomon's sin was so great that it almost ruined him and his kingdom, though experience caused him to say more against it than it is said in the Old Testament by any other. Yet it is a controversy among theologians whether he was ever recovered and saved. And ten tribes of the twelve were therefore taken from his line and given to Jeroboam.

And is this any encouragement to you to imitate him? Christ tells you, in the case of divorcement, that God permitted, not allowed, but forbore some such sins in the Jews because of the hardness of their hearts. But from the beginning it was not so, but one man and one woman were conjoined in the primitive institution. And a special reason why plurality was connived at among the Jews was for the fuller peopling of the nation.

They being the only covenanted people of God and being few among encompassing enemies and being separated from the people of the earth, their strength and safety and glory lay much on their increased number. And therefore some inordinancy was connived at for their multiplication, but never absolutely allowed and approved of. And yet fornication is punished severely and adultery with death.

Section 2. The Directions Against Fornication Direction 1. If you would avoid uncleanness, avoid the things that dispose you to it as gluttony or fullness of diet and pampering the flesh, idleness and other things mentioned under the next title of subduing lust, the abating of the filthy desires is a surest way to

prevent the filthy act, which may be done if you are but willing. Direction 2. Avoid the present temptations. Go not where the snare lies without necessity.

Abhor the devil's bellows that blow up the fire of lust, such as enticing apparel, filthy talk and sights, of which more also under the next title. Direction 3. Carefully avoid all opportunity of sinning. Come not near the door of her house, saith Solomon.

Proverbs 10.8 Avoid the company of the person you are in danger of. Come not where she is, and this you can do if you are willing. None will force you.

If you will go and seek for a thief, no wonder if you are robbed. If you will go seek fire to put in the thatch, no wonder if your house is burnt. The devil will sufficiently play the tempter.

You don't need to help him. That is his part. Leave it to himself.

It is your part to watch against him, and he will find you work. If you watch as narrowly and constantly as you can, it is well if you escape. As you love your soul, avoid all opportunities of sinning.

Make it impossible to yourself. Much of your safety lies in this point. Never be in secret company with her you are in danger of, but either not at all or only in the sight of others.

Especially contrive not such opportunities as to be together in the night, in the dark, or on the Lord's day when others are at church. One of the devil's seasons for such works, or any such opportunity, leisure, and secrecy for opportunity itself is a strong temptation. And it is a way to make a thief to set money in his way, or so to trust him is that he can easily deceive or rob you and never be discovered.

So it is a way to make yourself unclean to get such an opportunity of sinning that you may easily do it without any probability of impediment or discovery from men. The chief point in all the art or watch is to keep far enough off. If you touch the pitch, you will be defiled.

Whosoever touches her shall not be innocent. Proverbs 6.29 Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burnt? Can one go upon hot coals in his feet not be burnt? So he that goeth into his neighbor's wife. Verse 27 and 28 Don't bring the fire and the gunpowder too near.

If you cannot keep it a distance, nor forbear the presence of the bait, you are not like to forbear the sin. Direction 4 Reverence your own conscience. Mark what it speaks now, for it will shortly speak it in a more terrible manner.

Hear it voluntarily, for it is terrible to hear it when you cannot resist. Treat with conscience in the way while it is reconcilable, for you know not how terrible a tormentor it is. I don't doubt, but it has given you some gripes for your very lust before it ever came to practice.

But the sorest of its gripes now are but like the playing of the cat with the mouse before the killing gripe is given. Does no man see you? Conscience sees you. And you are a wretch indeed if you reverence not conscience more than man, as Chrysostom saith.

Suppose no man know the crime, but himself and the woman with whom he did commit it. How will he bear the rebukes of conscience when he carries about with him so sharp and bitter an accuser? For no man can overrun himself, and no man can avoid the sentence of this court within him. It is a tribunal not to be corrupted with money, nor perverted by flattery, for it is divine being placed in the soul by God himself.

The less the adulterer now feels it, the more he hastens to the perdition of a soul. Do you not feel a sentence passed within you, a terrible sentence, telling you of the wrath of a revenging God? Bless God that it is not yet an irreversible sentence. But sue out your pardon quickly, lest it come to be that.

Do you not feel that you are afraid and ashamed to pray or to address yourself to God, much more afraid to think of dying and appearing before Him? If your sin make you ready to fly from Him now, if you knew how, can you now look Him in the face at last, or can you hope to stand with comfort at His bar? Are you fit to live in heaven with Him that makes yourself unfit to pray to Him? Even lawful procreation, as I said before, does blush to come too near to holy exercises. Conscience is a better friend to you than you imagine when it would reclaim you from your sin, and will be a sharper enemy than you can imagine if you obey it not. Direction 5 Suppose you saw written upon the door of the house or chamber where you entered to sin, whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

Hebrews 13.4 And write that or such sentences upon the chamber door or at least upon your heart. Keep your eye upon the terrible threatenings of the dreadful God. Dare you sin when vengeance is at your back? Will not the thought of hellfire quench the fire of lust to restrain you from your presumptuous sin? Do you not say with Joseph, How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God? Genesis 39.7 As it is written of a chaste woman that being tempted by a fornicator wished him first at her request to hold his finger in the fire, and when he refused, answered him, Why then should I burn in hell to satisfy you? So ask yourself, Can I more easily overcome the flames of hell than the flames of lust? Direction 6 Remember, man, that God stands by.

If he were not there, you could not be there, for in him you live and move and are. He that made the eye must see, and he that made the light and darkness does he as well in the dark as in the light. If you imagine that he is absent or ignorant, you believe not that he is God, for an absent and ignorant God is no God.

And dare you, I say, dare you commit such a felony and God behold you? What, that which you would be ashamed to do if a child should see? Which you would do not if a mortal man stood by? Do you think that your locks or secrecy or darkness have darkened or shut out God? Do you not know that he sees not only within your curtains, but within your heart? What a hardened heart you have, that in the sight of God your Maker and Judge you dare to do such wickedness. Ask your conscience, man, Would I do this if I knew tomorrow I was going to die and go before God? Would I do this if I saw God, yea, or but an angel in the room? If not, should you do it when God is assured there is if you saw him? O remember, man, that he is a holy God and hateth uncleanness, and that he is a consuming fire. Hebrews 12.29 Direction 7. Suppose all the while that you saw the devil opening the door and bringing you your mate and driving on the match and persuading you to the sin.

What if he appeared to you openly to play his part, as sure as he now plays it unseen? Would not your lust be cooled? Would not the devil cure the disease which he has excited in you? Why then do you obey him now when he is as certainly the instigator as if you saw him? Why, man, have you so little reason that seeing and not seeing will make so great a difference with you? What if you were blind? Would you play the fornicator before all the company because you don't see them when you know that they are there? If you know anything, you know God is there, and you may feel by the temptation that Satan is in it. Will you not be ruled by the laws unless you see the king? Will you not fear for the infection of the plague unless you see it? Use your reason for your soul as well as for your body, and do in the cases you would do if you saw the devil tempting you and Christ forbidding you. Direction 8. If thou be unmarried, marry.

If easier remedies will not serve, it is better to marry than to burn. 1 Corinthians 7. 9. It is God's ordinance partly for the sinned. Marriage is honorable in the bed undefiled.

Hebrews 13. 4. It is a resemblance of Christ's union with his church and is sanctified to believers. Ephesians 5. 1 Corinthians 7. Perhaps it may cast you upon great troubles in the world if you be unready for that state as it is with apprentices.

Forbear, then, your sin, it ease your race, or else a lawful means must be used so it undo you. It is better your body be undone than your soul, if you will needs have it to be one of them. But if you be married, already you are a monster and not a man if the remedy prevail not with you.

But yet the other directions may also be serviceable to you. Direction 9. If left's means prevail not, open your case to some able faithful friend and engage them to watch over you, and tell them when you are most endangered by the temptation. This will shame you for your sin, and lay more engagements on you to forbear it.

If you tell your friend, Now I am tempted to the sin, and now I am going to it, he will quickly stop you, break your secrecy, and you lose your opportunity. You can do this if you be willing. If ever your conscience prevails so far with you as to resolve against your sin, or to be willing to escape, then take the time while conscience is awake and go tell your friend.

Tell him who it is that is your wicked companion, and let him know all the haunts that he may know the better how to help you. Do you say that this will shame you? It will do so to him that it is known too. But that is the benefit of it, and that is the reason I advise you to it, that shame may help to save your soul.

If you go on, the sin will both shame and damn you, and a greater shame than this is a gentle remedy, and so foul and dangerous a disease. Therefore, if yet all this will not serve turn, tell it to many. Yea, rather tell it to all the town that not be cured, and then the public shame will do much more.

Confess it to your pastor, and desire him openly to beg the prayers of the congregation for the pardon and recovery. Begin thus to crave the fruit of church discipline yourself, so far you should be from flying from it, and spurning against it as the desperate hardened sinners do. If you say, this is a hard lesson, remember that suffering in hell is harder.

Do not say that I wronged you by putting you upon scandal and open shame. It is you that put yourself upon it by making it necessary and refusing all easier remedy. I put you on it, but on supposition that you will not be more easily cured, almost as Christ put you upon cutting off a right hand, or plucking out a right eye, lest all the body be cast into hell.

This is not the way that he commands you first to take. He would have you avoid the need of it, but he tells you that it is better to do the worse, and that this is an easy suffering in comparison of hell. And so I advise you, if you love your credit for sin in a cheaper way, but if you will not do so, take this way rather than damn your soul.

If the shame of all the town be upon you, and the boys should hoot after you in the streets, if it would drive you from your sin, how easy were the suffering in comparison of what it is like to be. Concealment is Satan's great advantage. It would be hard for you to sin thus if it were but opened.

Title II Directions Against Inward Filthy Lusts. Direction One. Because with most the temperature of the body has a great hand in the sin, your first care must be about the body to reduce it to a temper less inclined to lust.

And here the chief remedy is fasting and much abstinence. This may the better be borne, because for the most part it is persons so strong as to be able to endure it that are under this temptation. If your temptation be not strong, the less abstinence from meat and drink may serve the turn, for I would prescribe you no stronger medicine than is needful to cure your disease.

But if it be violent, and lesser means will not prevail, it is better your bodies be somewhat weakened, and your souls corrupted and undone. Therefore in this case, first eat no breakfast nor suppers, but one meal a day, and less a bit or two of bread and a sup or two of water in the morning, and yet not too full a dinner, and nothing at night. Don't drink wine or strong drink, but water if the stomach can bear it without sickness, and usually in such bodies it is better for you than beer.

Number three. Eat no hot spices or stronger heating or windy meats. Eat lettuce and such cooling herbs.

Number four. If need require it, be often to let blood or purge with such purges as copiously evacuate serocity, and not only irritate. Number five.

And oft bathe in cold water, but the physician should be advised with that they may be safely done. If you think this course too dear a cure, and had rather cherish your flesh and lust, you are not the persons that I am now directing, for I speak to such only as are willing to be cured, and to use the necessary means that they may be cured. If you be not brought to this, your conscience in need of better awakening.

I am sure Christ says that when the bridegroom was taken from them, his disciples should fast, Mark 2 19 and 20. And even painful Paul was in fasting often, 2 Corinthians 6 5 and 11 27, and kept under his body, and brought it into subjection, lest by any means when he had preached to others, himself should be cast away, 1 Corinthians 9 27. And I am sure that the ancient Christians that lived in solitude, and ate many of them nothing but bread and water, or meaner fare than bread, did not think this cure too dear.

Yea, smaller necessities than this engaged them in fasting, 1 Corinthians 7 5. This unclean devil will scarcely be cast out, but by prayer and fasting, Mark 9 29. And I must tell you that fullness does naturally cherish lust, as fuel does a fire. Fullness of bread prepared to sodomize for their filthy lusts.

And it is no more wonder that a stuffed paunch has a lustful fury than that the water runs into the pipes when the cistern is full, or than it is a wonder to see a dunghill bear weeds, or a carrion to be full of crawling maggots. Plutarch speaks of a Spartan being asked why Lycurgus made no law against adultery. Answered, There are no adulterers with us.

But saith the other, What if there should be any? Saith the Spartan, Then he is to pay an ox, so great as shall stand on this side the river Taget, and drink of the river Eurota. Saith the other, That is impossible. And saith the Spartan, And how can there be an adulterer at Sparta, where riches, delights, and strange attire, or ornament, are a disgrace or reproach? And contrary to this shame-facedness, modesty, and the observance of any due obedience to magistrates, is an honor and praise.

And if rich men think it their privilege to fare sumptuously and satisfy their appetites, they must take it for their privilege to feed their lust. But God gives no man plenty for such uses, nor is it any excuse for eating and drinking much, because you have much, any more than it would be to your cooks to put much salt in

your meat, more than in poorer men's, because you have more. He that observes the filthy and pernicious effects of that gluttony which has accounted rich men's honor and felicity, will never envy them that miserable happiness, but say rather is atisthenes.

Let it befall the children of my enemies to live in delights, but that the curse is too heavy for a Christian to use to any of his enemies. But for himself he must remember that he is a servant of a holy God, and has a holy work to do, and a holy sacrifice to offer to him, and therefore must not pamper his flesh, as if he were preparing a sacrifice for Venus. For his first Thessalonians 4, 3, and 4, this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that you should abstain from fornication, that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel and sanctification and honor, not in the lust of concupiscence, as the Gentiles have known not God.

As a philosopher answered Atagonus, when he asked him whether he should go to a merry feast that he was invited to, you are the son of a king. So it is an answer enough for a Christian that he gives temptations to voluptuousness, I am the son of the most holy God. If you be invited to feasts, where urgency or allurements is like to make you break your bounds, don't go, or go back when you see the bait.

As Epimanondas and Plutarch, finding excess at a feast that he was invited to, went away when he saw it, saying, I came to dine, and not to be wanton or luxurious, to support my body for duty, and not to pamper it for lust. Plutarch marvels at the folly of those men that detest the charms of witches, lest they hurt them, and fear not but love the charms of dishes, which hurt a thousand, where witches hurt one. Withdraw the fuel of excess, and the fire of lust will of itself go out, or at least this enemy must be besieged and starved out when it cannot be conquered by storm.

Direction 2. Take heed of idleness, and be wholly taken up in diligent business of your lawful callings, when you are not exercised in the more immediate service of God. David, in his idleness or vacancy, caught those sparks of lust, which in his troubles and military life he was preserved from. Idleness is the soul, the culture, and the opportunity of lust.

The idle person goes to school to the devil. He sets all other employment aside, that the devil may have time to teach him, and treat with him, and solicit him to evil. Do you wonder that he is thinking on lustful objects, or that he is taken up in feasting and drinking and chambering and wantonness? Why, he has nothing else to do.

Whereas a laborious diligent person has a body subdued and hardened against the molities and effeminateness of the wanton, and a mind employed and taken up with better things. Leave your body and mind no leisure to think of tempting filthy objects, or to look after them. As Hyrum says, Be still doing some work, that the devil may always find you busy.

And do not for your fleshly ease remit your labors, and indulge your flesh. Rise early, and go late to bed, and put yourself upon a necessity of diligence all the day. Undertake and engage yourself in as much business as you are able to go through, that if thou would, thou may not be able to give any indulgence to the flesh.

For if you still be not pressed by necessity, lust will serve itself by idleness, and the flesh will lie down if it feel not the spur. Therefore are the rich and idle more lustful and filthy than the poor laboring people. The same bed is a place of sloth and lust.

Hear a heathen, and don't refuse to imitate him. Seneca saith, No day passes me in idleness. Part of the night I reserve for studies.

I do not purposely set myself to sleep, but yield to it when it overcomes me. When my eyes are wearied with watching, and are falling, I hold them to their work. I had rather it went ill with me than delicately or tenderly.

If ye be delicate or tender, the mind by little and little is effeminate, and is dissolved into the similitude of the idleness and sloth in which it lies. I sleep very little, and take but a short nap, and it suffices me to a ceased watching. Sometimes I know that I slept, sometimes I do but suspect it.

Aristotle says, Nature made nothing to be idle, and Plato calls idleness a plague of mortals. If ye be resolved to serve and please your flesh, and never ask advice against your lust, for it is a part of the pleasure of it. And then no wonder if ye refuse, as physic is too bitter, and the remedy is too dear.

But if ye be resolved to be cured, and to be saved, stick not at the pains. Give up yourself totally to your business, and lust will die for lack. And three, if ye would be free from lust, keep far enough from the tempting objects.

If possible, don't dwell in the house with any person that you feel yourself endangered by. If that be not possible, avoid their company, especially in private. Abhor all lascivious and immodest actions.

Do ye give yourself the liberty of wanton dalliance, and lustful embracements, and yet faint to be free from lust? Will ye put your hand into the fire when ye are afraid of being burnt? Either ye have the power of your own heart, or ye have not. If ye have, why do ye not quench your lust? If ye have not, why does it cast you upon greater temptations, and put it further out of your power than it is? Fly from a tempting object for your safety, as ye would fly from an enemy for your life. These loving enemies are more dangerous than hating enemies.

They get the key of our hearts, and come in and steal our treasures with our consent, or without resistance, when an open enemy is suspected and shut out. Direction 4. Command your eyes, as in Job 31.1. Make a covenant with them that ye may not think on tempting objects. Shut these windows, and ye preserve your heart.

Don't look upon any alluring object. A look that has kindled the fire of lust in many a heart has ended in the fire of hell. It is easier to stop your lust at these outward doors, and drive it out when it has tainted your heart.

If ye cannot do this much, how can ye do more? An ungoverned eye fetches fire to burn the soul that should have governed it. Direction 5. Don't linger in the pleasant snares of lust, if ye feel but the least beginnings of it. But quickly cast water on the first discerned spark, before it break out into a flame.

The amorous poet can teach you this. If ever delay be dangerous, it is here. For delay will occasion such engagements to sin, that ye must come off at a far dearer rate.

If the meat be undigestible, it is best not to look on it. It is the next best not to touch or taste it. But if once it go down, it will cost you sickness and pain to get it up again.

And if ye do not, ye perish by it. Direction 6. Abhor lascivious and modest speech, as such words come from either vain or filthy hearts, and show the absence of the fear of God, so they tend to make the hearer like the speaker. And if your ears grow but patient and reconcilable to such discourse, ye have lost much of the innocence already.

Christians must abhor the mentioning of such filthy sins in any other manner, but such as tends to bring the hearers to abhor them. Be not deceived, evil words corrupt good manners. 1 Corinthians 15.33. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers.

And don't grieve the Holy Spirit of God. Corrupt communication is rotten, stinking communication, and none but dogs and crows love carry on. But fornication and all uncleanness, and inordinate lust or luxury, let it not be once named among you as become saints, neither filthiness nor foolish talking nor jesting.

7. Abhor the covering of filthy lust with handsome names to make it the more acceptable. Their discourse is more dangerous that would thus dress up an ugly lust, and theirs speak of it in nasty language. Thus among the brood each party it goes under the names of love, and having a mistress, and courting, and such like.

But as one said that it is doubled. Lust that is commonly called love, and doubled love, is stark madness. If filthiness will walk abroad, let it go for filthiness and appear as it is.

8. Avoid the reading of romances and love stories, which are to the library of Venus, or to the devil's books of the lustful art, to cover over filthiness with cleanly names, and bewitch the fantasies of fools with fine words, to make men conceive of the ready way to hell, under the notions and images of excellency, beauty, love, and gallantry, and by representing strong and amorous passions, to stir up the same passions in the reader as he that will needs read a conjuring book, as well enough served if devils come about his ears, so that they will needs read such romances and other books of the burning art. It is just with God to suffer an unclean devil to possess them, and to suffer them to cast a fever of lust, which may not only burn up the heart, but cause that pernicious deliriation in the brain which is the ordinary symptom of it. 9. Avoid all wanton stage plays and dancings, which either cover the odiousness of lust, or produce temptations to it.

As God has his preachers, and holy assemblies, and exercises for the communion of saints, and the stirring up of love and holiness, so these are Satan's instruments, and assemblies, and exercises for the communion of sinners, and for the stirring up of lust and filthiness. They that will go to the devil's church deserve to be possessed with his principles, and numbered with his disciples. The ancient Christians were very severe against the seeing of these spectacular shows or plays, especially in any of the clergy.

10. Avoid all tempting, unnecessary ornaments or attire, and regarding or gazing on them upon others. It is a precocious, lustful desire to seem comely and amiable, which it is the common cause of this excess.

The folly or lust of both the fashionists and gaudy gallants is so conspicuous to all in their affected dress, that never did pride more cross itself than in such publications of such disgraceful folly or lust. They that take on them to be adversaries to lust, and yet are careful when they present themselves to sight, to appear in the most adorned manner, and do all that harlots can do to make themselves a snare to fools, do put the charitable heart to it, whether to believe that it is their tongues or their backs that are the liar. As Aram saith, Thou deserves hell, though none be the worse for you, for you brought the poison, if there had

been any drink to it.

Let your apparel be suited not only to your rank, but to your disease. If you be inclined to lust, go the more meanly clad yourself, and gaze not on the ornaments of others. Don't think on your tempting object as it is within, and as shortly will appear without.

For ordinary is it for that which you call beauty, to be the portion of a fool, and a fair skin, that cover a silly, childish, peevish mind, and a soul that is enslaved to the devil. As Solomon saith in Proverbs 11.22, As a jewel of gold in a swine's snout, so is a fair woman without discretion. And will you lust after such an adorned thing? Think also what a dunghill of filth is covered with these ornaments, that it would turn your stomach if you saw what is within them.

And think what a face it would be if it were but covered with the pox, and what a face it will be when sickness or age has consumed or wrinkled it. And think what your admired carcass will be when it is laying a few days in the grave. Then you would have little mind to it, and how quickly will that be? O man, there is nothing truly amiable in the creature but the image of God, the wisdom and holiness and righteousness of the soul.

Love this then, if you will love with wisdom, with purity and safety. For the love of purity is pure and safe. Direction 12.

Think on your own death, and how you hasten to another world. Is a lustful heart a seemly temper for one that is ready to die and ready to see God and come into that world where there is nothing but pure and the holy doth abide?

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