

# Avoiding Sexual Immorality by Shane Idleman and Steve Gallagher

by Steve Gallagher

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of applying God's Word to our lives and the power of obedience, highlighting the destructive power of sin and the need for a fully surrendered life.*

**Duration:** 1:06:02

**Scripture:** Proverbs 4:23, Romans 6:12, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 2 Corinthians 7:10, James 4:8

**Topics:** "Sexual Purity", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of repentance, restoration, and the need to guard our hearts and minds against the influences of the world, particularly in the realm of sexual sin. It highlights the power of desire, the necessity to stay away from temptation, and the significance of repentance for salvation and restoration. The message underscores the need for a heart transformation and a deep commitment to God's kingdom.

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## Transcript

Lord, we give you this service tonight. Lord, I pray that you'd bring hope to those who are in desperate need of it. Lord, I pray that you'd bring restoration to those who need to know you.

Lord, I pray that you'd rebuild marriages tonight. Lord, as we always pray, we pray that you'd bring the prodigal home. Lord, bring the wayward daughter back to you.

Lord, we pray and we contend. We plead the blood tonight. Lord, I pray that miracles would happen throughout this valley and this congregation.

Lord, we know that you are the God that heals and delivers and restores. Lord, we call upon your name tonight. Lord, I pray that you'd give me clarity and direction.

Lord, we pray more than anything that you'd send out your word and it would begin to heal and restore and rebuild. And Lord, please convict those that need conviction tonight. Let the hammer of your word fall upon those hard hearts.

Lord, that need to be broken tonight. Lord, we give you this service. Would you have your way in this place? I ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

Thanks guys, that was awesome. Thank you. And we're going to have a little bit different service tonight.

What I want to do is, we've been in Proverbs, as you know. Proverbs 1, Proverbs 2, Proverbs 3, Proverbs 4, Proverbs 5. And we're going to be on Proverbs 6 next week, so definitely read that. But I want to take some time and just stop and consider and recap.

Because we've ingested a lot of things. And what happens if you eat too much too soon, you don't digest it properly. Same with the word of God.

We can get so much into it. We can read chapter after chapter after chapter. But sometimes we need to stop and we need to sit and we need to process all that.

And consider everything that's been said. And last week we talked about this theme of sexual purity. And it's been consistent throughout Proverbs.

And it's consistent throughout the New Testament. There's something about sexual purity that draws you closer to God. We see Paul saying, flee from it.

Don't even have anything to do with it. As a matter of fact, the church in Corinth that was tolerating it, had a severe rebuke from Paul. And we're going to get into that in just a minute.

But I want to back up and just talk about, briefly, four points that got us to where we are now from Proverbs 1 to Proverbs 5. And these will parallel right into where we're going. The first thing we talked about is He guides those who are willing to follow. Let me say that again.

God is willing to guide those who are willing to follow. And a lot of times we forget that. The Bible has a lot of conditions.

If you turn from your sin and back to me. If you abide in me. If you make no provision for the flesh.

If you flee sexual immorality. If you walk according to my ways. If you obey.

And if my people who are called by my name. If, if, if, if. So we see that in Proverbs.

Proverbs isn't as much for the person who's not going to read it. It's for the person who's going to read it. And going to apply it to their lives.

And the power of the gospel is in the application. Not in the knowledge. Many people know what the Bible says.

They can quote scripture all day long. But the power is in the application. And for you that haven't been here much before.

Or this is your first night. I've really driven this point home. And there's a reason for it.

Because repetitive themes are important. Let me say that again. The Word of God is only as powerful to the degree you apply it to your life.

The message of salvation. Much of the church knows about the message of salvation. Yeah, Jesus died on a cross.

Say a little prayer. Blah, blah, blah. But the power comes in applying that to your life.

And repenting of your sin. And turning to God and confessing Him as Christ. As Lord and as Savior.

And that's one of my concerns today for the church. And I see this a lot in counseling. I've talked about this before.

Is we can know it. And people know the Word of God. Oh, I know this.

And I know that. And I know it says this. But it doesn't matter.

If you don't apply it to your life. See, knowledge is knowing it. Wisdom is applying the knowledge that you possess.

The Bible talks a lot about wisdom. Making the right choices. And it's right here.

It says right here. Right here. Will you not take of this and begin to obey this.

And I'm not talking about legalism. I'm talking for those who have a love for God and His Word. Who want to apply it to their lives.

And we talk a lot about the Spirit filled life. Being empowered by the Spirit. This joy and this peace and this full surrender.

Loving God. Loving worship. Can't getting enough of Him.

Devouring the Word of God. Walking in the Spirit. Do you know where that comes from? It directly comes from obeying the Word of God.

When we do not obey the Word of God, we quench and we grieve the Spirit within us. That's how powerful obedience is. Now you do walk a careful road here.

A rope I should say. Because on one hand you have legalism. And check mark Christianity.

I did this. And I did this. And I did this.

And I don't go to the movie. And I don't do this. And I don't watch this.

And I'm so spiritual, aren't I? No, you can become a modern day Pharisee. And that's dangerous. So obedience is not about becoming legalistic.

It's about wanting to serve the God who bought us with the price. And who says if you do these things. That's why we said before, God's Word is like guardrails through the canyons of life.

It's not some nice little cliché or saying there. That's true. God's Word is like guardrails through the canyons of life.

It doesn't prevent us from enjoying life. They protect us from falling to save man from himself. So that's what the theme of Proverbs up until this point.

It's going to be consistent in this area. The power comes in the application. When you begin to apply Proverbs, watch your tongue.

Be gentle. A harsh word will stir anger. Being gentle to your spouse.

Putting away these things. Walking in wisdom. Not signing.

Co-signing. All these things that we're going to get into. It's in the application.

And I can't drive that point home enough. The next thing I talked about is wisdom. According to the book of Proverbs, it says that there are no excuses.

There's no excuses. Proverbs 2 and 3 says, Wisdom cries out in the streets. It cries out in the open squares.

Will you not obey Me? Will you not look to Me? I will guide you. Wisdom is the principal thing. Therefore, in all your getting, get understanding.

She will exalt you. She will promote you. So wisdom cries out.

And we learned in Romans 1 that God says, I am available. And not only available, but I am visible to all. You might say, that doesn't make any sense.

I can't see God. His invisible attributes are clearly seen so that we are without excuse. We have a conscious.

We have conviction. And we are without excuse because just look around. The universe screams, Creator, there is no excuse.

When we stand before God someday, there will be no excuse. Well, this or that, and you're a great salesman. I'm a great salesman.

I give God a sales pitch. No, we'll fall on our face. The angels cry, Holy, Holy, Holy in the presence of God.

They fall down in the presence of God. You will not negotiate. I will not negotiate.

That's just the truth in love. Wisdom cries out. It says, Turn to me and I will save you.

But see, we're not robots and we're not puppets. God doesn't just make us do anything. He calls us to him.

He calls us to repentance. He calls us to the fully surrendered life. And this will be the hardest thing you have to do because what happens is that fully surrendered life that I want to promote and the flesh are at war with each other.

The carnal mind is at enmity with God, is at war. So that fully surrendered life, the pulling of the Holy Spirit and that flesh are constantly at war. Well, that doesn't sound very encouraging.

Well, just because there's a battle, it shows you how much that commitment is worth. And the word of God is given to us to feed the spirit within us, to build up the spirit, the Holy Spirit within us so we can defeat the flesh. So wisdom cries out.

There's no excuses. We also talked about warnings are very important. The warnings are good.

What happens if this was just grace and mercy and love and forgiveness and no warnings, nobody would embrace them. It's a love of God that compels us but it's also the warnings of God that say, listen, if you

do this, if you don't turn from here, here's the consequences. So we shouldn't look down on the warnings.

We should preach the warnings just as much as we preach the pleasantries. Because the good news of the gospel can only be appreciated with the bad news as the backdrop. When we talk about love and grace and mercy, you should not use those terms flippantly because sin put Christ on the cross.

Those are very serious issues. And the American church in our nation today is in crisis. You say, Shane, what are you talking about? Because they say, I want to feel good, not I want to be good.

Tell me what I want to hear. Tell me, pastor, what I want to hear. What was that? I can continue in this destructive lifestyle? That's why Paul told Timothy, Timothy, preach the word.

Be ready in and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort. Because, Timothy, the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.

And they will be led away by their own desires. And they will look for teachers who will tell them what they want to hear. Think about that.

If the pulpits of America are feeding fleshly desires instead of fighting them, we are encouraging sin and perverting the words of the living God. Look at Jeremiah 23 when you get home. There are some serious warnings against that.

So as much as we preach love and mercy and grace, and it's the grace that's brought me here thus far, it'll be grace that leads me home. Amazing grace. God's amazing grace.

We cannot forget the other side of the coin. So embrace God's warnings. Do not be scared of them because they are actually the map to convict sinful man to turn to God.

You think the Bible just says if we reject God and we spend eternity separated from Him, you think God puts that in there as a joke? Oh, look at this. He puts it in there to break the heart so you turn to Him. So as difficult as that sounds, there's also a way of escape.

The Christ's atonement on the cross. We've talked about that before. Propitiation.

Christ absorbed the wrath of God on the cross. The price has been paid. And we walk in that newness of life.

That's powerful. So embrace the warnings. And we have to remember that the hammer of God is good.

Remember, I've talked about that a few months ago. We talked about the love of God and the grace of God and the mercy of God. But rarely do we talk about the hammer of God.

What's the hammer of God? Well, a lot of times the Bible says that my word is like this, my word is like that. Is not my word like a fire that devours? Is not my word like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? He's not talking about a literal rock. He's talking about the hardness of the human heart.

The Word of God goes in and like a hammer, crushes and breaks so the human heart repents and is broken and fully opened before God. That's what the Word of God does. So when we preach it in its totality in the power of the Holy Spirit with boldness, compassion, and love, then it can go forth and do what it's set to do and accomplish what it's meant to accomplish.

So we should not be scared of those things. That has to happen. The hammer of God is a very good thing.

The only reason I'm up here today is because of the hammer of God. It broke and crushed a pridefully arrogant man. And as I said before, I'm still working on those things.

I'm a proud man working on humility by the grace of God. C.J. Mahaney said that many years ago and I've remembered ever since. We have to remember that we are proud people.

There is no person who is humble, completely humble. We all have agendas, ulterior motives, and pride is waiting to just rear its ugly head. We have to remember that, folks.

If you remember anything from tonight, I hope it's this, that as you humble yourself and submit your life to God, He can take over and redeem and restore and rebuild. The last thing. You have to remember this.

Sin has a very destructive power. See, the problem is, too, and I don't want to beat up on the churches because the true church is the bride of Christ. So you have to be very careful when you tarnish the bride of Christ because that is very serious.

However, Jesus had severe rebuke for the churches, especially in Revelation, because they coddle the very thing that put Christ on the cross. They coddle sin. It's no big deal, and it is a very big deal because sin entraps us, it binds us, it seduces us, it destroys us, it misleads us, and it hardens us.

It's a destructive force that is sent to kill, to steal, and to destroy everything. Your marriage, your integrity, your testimony, your walk, your relationship with your kids. That's what it's done.

It is hell-bent on destroying your life, and you better wake up and look at it that way because the very thing we play with is the very thing that will destroy you. The flesh says, feed me so I can destroy you. That's what the flesh says.

Feed me, feed me, feed me so I can destroy you. I say, Shane, this is weighty, but there is hope. That's why we always focus on that relationship with Christ and that fully surrendered life because that comes in, and when you are entrapped, it sets you free.

When you're bound up, it releases you. When you're seduced, it brings you clarity, and when it begins to destroy your life, God can rebuild it, and when sin begins to mislead you, Christ and that relationship can get you back on track, and when it hardens your heart, that relationship can come in and break the hardest of hearts. That's the hope.

There's great hope. Look at Jesus' message throughout the entire New Testament. You'll see tons of grace and mercy and love, but you also see where he calls people to righteousness and purity and holiness, those things we don't want to talk to anymore.

It's all biblical. We just don't want to talk about it. The reason we don't want to talk about it, somebody did a survey, and people don't want to hear it, so if we want to build a big church, we better avoid these topics that upset people, but the Bible says it's okay to upset.

I'll build the church. God says, I'll build your church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it, and we just talked last week about a very important issue on the sexual purity and remaining pure before God, not perfection, but direction, a heart that's bent on serving God, so what I wanted to do today, a lot of you guys hear a lot of times from me and my testimony, my examples, but I wanted to bring, I'll introduce him in just

a minute, Steve Gallagher, who's going to kind of give us his testimony, tell you a little bit about what he does, and offer some insight that I might not be able to bring to this topic of sexual purity and remaining pure before God and how important that is, so with that, Steve, I'll just ask you to come on up now, and I'll turn my mic off, and you can turn yours on. Okay, praise the Lord.

Let me just grab this. This all kind of happened quickly. Pastor Shane invited me here.

I was speaking at Sermon Index Conference a couple weeks ago in Atlanta, and I guess he saw a video of me on there. Somehow it all happened. We just happened to be out here and it just worked out, and it's such a blessing to be here with you, and I mean that.

I'm not just saying that because I say that every time I'm out. It's not true. We got to spend some time with Pastor Shane, my wife Kathy and I today, and we've been emailing back and forth, and you're blessed to have a young man who really sincerely loves God.

You're really a blessing. You know? I'm glad to hear that. I really am.

I'm so glad to hear that. But it probably is good to hear from a different voice occasionally. It just kind of keeps us on the edge of our chair a little bit, and Pastor Shane shared with me he was going through this Proverbs study, and I didn't understand that I was supposed to do chapter six until it was too late, and the Lord kind of gave me some words out of seven, so anyway, he'll get you covered on six next week.

But I'm going to touch on chapter seven tonight in a minute, but I felt like maybe as a way to introduce the topic, that I would share my testimony with you if you wouldn't mind me doing that. I'm going to begin my testimony in 1968. Tom Brokaw, a number of years ago, did a documentary for the History Channel, and I think this was the title of it, 1968, The Year That Changed America, and he went over, you know, how Vietnam escalated that year and the peace movement broke out and swept across the country and about the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy, but he actually began the show with a clip of him as a young man doing a, you know, as a reporter on the corner of Haight and Ashbury in San Francisco in 1968, and some phenomenon was breaking forth then in that summer of 68.

It was the hippie movement, and the hippie movement somehow, now we know now, looking back, we can see how the enemy was at work, can't we? But somehow the enemy was allowed the reign and the license to use this drug culture and it just swept across the country in 1968. Well, I just happened to grow up in Sacramento, and by the way, it's so nice to see a bunch of California folks. You'll find out here in a few minutes the price I've had to pay for this ministry I've been called to, but I'll get to that in a minute.

But it's so nice to be with Californians. I understand you and you understand me, you know? I'm not in a foreign culture here. I can, this is home.

Okay, well anyway, so I grew up in Sacramento and in 1968, I was a 14-year-old kid. I was in trouble and I was, you know, messing up and stuff like that. But that thing that swept across the country hit Sacramento, I suppose, first of all, and it hit me.

And it was in 1968 that a couple of my friends and myself, you know, got off in a field somewhere and smoked our first joint. And man, I want to tell you, I never had so much fun in all my life. I mean, we just laughed and laughed and laughed and carried on.

My cheeks hurt so bad from laughing, you know? And I thought, man, this is awesome! This is great! And so, you know, we started smoking pot. Well, how many of you know that sin comes with a price tag? And what starts off to be so much fun and something so enjoyable, something that seems so innocent and almost positive in a way, pretty soon the enemy uses it to get in. It's like a door opens inside your soul and he gets in there and starts wreaking havoc inside you.

And sin has a way of hollowing out a person. Well, so that was 1968. 1969, things went downhill further, didn't they? The Doors came out, Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin, all that, and man, I was in the middle of it.

And I threw myself into it. And by this point, I was shooting drugs, shooting heroin. By 1970, I was just totally given over to all of that.

And I was actually, in just that short amount of time, I was completely hollowed out and worn out with sin and just in trouble, just in trouble. Really, actually in 1970, I know that, I remember that during a several months period, I took psychedelics every single day, every single day for several months. I want to tell you, it's a miracle that I can stand here and have any coherence at all.

Really, trust me, I was going insane. I really was. I was detaching somehow emotionally.

And I was losing track of reality. I was really in trouble. Well, just then, I got busted for growing marijuana and possession.

And that was a godsend because I got sent into this youth thing where I had to, you know, it was called work project. And you would go out and work eight hours a day out in the sun and all that. And I see some nodding heads here.

I don't know. Anyway, I'll tell you what that did for me. Because it got me off the dope for a while, a period of time because I was, frankly, I was just too exhausted to get, you know, party at night.

I just wanted to go home and go to bed. And so my mind started clearing up. And at the end of that period of time, I went on for, it was about a month.

And at the end of that time, and God's timing is always so perfect, this guy witnessed to me about the Lord. And I went to this Jesus festival. I got saved.

I got excited about the things of God. I was 16 years old and I became an evangelist, you know. And I was out preaching at parties and stuff.

One night a party got raided and I got busted too. Got hauled into jail and, you know, and all that. And I would tell everyone about the Lord and if they didn't want to hear it, I'd beat them up, you know, until they got saved.

No, I'm kidding. But I was kind of like that. You know, I was so zealous.

I just knew everyone would want to know the truth that God had given me. Well, I was excited. And this went on for a number of months and, you know, I just started devouring biographies of great men of God.

That affected my life so much. And I just want to encourage you to read biographies of the great men of God of the past. Because there was a kind of Christianity, a depth of Christianity that you rarely see today.

And that's what affected my life and really gripped me. But there was one problem. It was like a worm in this, you know, tender shoot of faith that I had.

There was a worm eating away at the inside and that was sexual sin. And you know, now, I got started, well, for those of us who've been around for a while, back in those days it was magazines, you know, men's magazines. And my dad had some and I got into them and that got things going in a certain way.

And then I started becoming promiscuous with girls and so on. Well, when I came to the Lord I tried to stop all that. But I was immature and kind of out of it and so on.

And this thing just kind of just kept after me. And finally I felt like, you know, I'm just a hypocrite. I would rather just go back into sin than live this double lifestyle.

And so I finally just in despair I gave up. And I went back into sin. And now, though, instead of drugs, you know, I really kicked the drug habit then.

I mean, I never really went back to drugs. But now sex became my thing. And I really got into this whole thing of seducing girls.

And I want to just say, I don't know how many young girls, I don't like to even look around too much, but I became such a manipulator with girls. See, girls, every young girl has this fantasy in life that Prince Charming's going to come along, sweep her off her feet, and they're going to live happily ever after. Every young girl believes that, right, ladies? Don't you all go, you know, you grow up with this naive thought.

And all you need is some devil like me to come along with a smooth tongue and a nice smile and make you believe that I'm that guy. And pretty soon, you know, I'm having my way. And that's what I did.

I would go from girl to girl to girl. And I was just obsessed with it. Just completely selfish.

I didn't care about them. I was just using them for my own purposes. I know.

You got to wait and hear the end of the story, though. Well, I'm telling it just like it is, and some of the younger girls probably need to hear this. Because some of the guys, that cute guy at school that's, you know, looking at you and kind of paying attention to you, he's probably just like I was.

And you better make sure that the guy you get interested in knows who Jesus Christ is in a real way. Not in some fake plastic way, but really walks with the Lord. Now am I back in good graces? She's reading her text.

Never mind. Well, listen, in 1972, something really bad happened to me. I snuck into an adult bookstore and scared to death that someone that knew me might see me.

You know, this was in Sacramento. And when I went in that place, wow, it was like the devil just shot right into my inner being. And I just, from that moment on, I was a different man.

Once I saw hardcore pornography, it gripped my soul. You know, in a way that drugs never did. And for the next 10, 12 years, whatever it was, for the next years, it possessed me.

And I just went down a terrible path. I won't even get into the specifics of it. We don't need to know about it.

It was horrible, you know. And I just was totally given over now in that realm of sin. Well, in 1979, I met Kathy.

And I really fell in love with her. You know, as selfish as I was and all of that, and I still was unrepentant about what I was doing. But I fell in love with her, and she got radically saved.

And so we, you know, got married. And I just kind of, because I was such a mess, she ended up just kind of losing that fire for the Lord, and we just ended up in trouble. And pretty soon, I was right back to the bookstores.

But now, instead of dating girls, I started going to prostitutes because it was easier to get away with, you know. Well, in 1981, I needed a job, so I joined the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, and Kathy and I moved down here. And, you know, after I graduated from the academy, I was assigned to the Peter J. Pitchess maximum security unit over here, not far from you guys.

And, you know, I mean, can you tell that I was a little bit crazy? I hope it's coming across. I was a little bit crazy. And you put a former street guy in the jail with a bunch of other street guys.

You know, the other deputies, they're clean-cut football player type guys, you know. But I knew the deal because I grew up on the streets. And, of course, I lied my way on the department and all that, but I managed to get in.

And, you know, so I'm working in the maximum security jail facility, and I'm fighting, and I'm getting in all kinds of trouble and stuff like that. And the stress of the job is just pressure, pressure, pressure. And I'm going further and further into sin.

I mean, you would think that the pressure to get my life cleaned up to be a cop would have given me the incentive, you know, but instead it was driving me further into sin. Well, Kathy got to where she finally couldn't take it anymore, you know, my unfaithfulness, and she left me. And I, you know, I just got to keep the story short, but the Lord worked out a series of miraculous events.

I mean, I ended up with my off-duty revolver to my head right off Sepulveda Boulevard in 1982. You know, I just could not see going another day in life. All I could see ahead of me was darkness.

And I had a gun to my head, but a jail chaplain stepped in. The Lord used him that day and stepped in and rescued me. You know, I mean, I was right there.

I was shaking. I was so terrified about what I was going to do. But God rescued me, praise the Lord.

And, you know, I would like to tell you that that experience changed me in an instant, but it didn't. Sexual sin had such a powerful hold on my life that it wasn't but three weeks later that I was right back into it again. And, you know, Kathy had come back to me, but here's what happened.

Over the next couple of years, God started helping me and showing me some things that I needed to incorporate into my life. When I first came to the Lord, I was just a typical American Christian. You know, I was taking God on my own terms.

I was just doing my own thing, going to church on Sunday. I was reading books. I was sincere, but I was just still full of myself and full of self-will, doing my own thing.

But God started dealing with me and showing me things. And one of the first things He started showing Kathy and I both was that we needed to have a regular devotional time. And, man, you know, to spend five minutes in prayer felt like ten hours, you know? What do I say? You know? I mean, I would say everything I knew to say in 20 or 30 seconds.

Now what? I mean, that's the way it felt to me when I first started. But, you know, I stuck with it. Because I knew the Lord was speaking to me and so did Kathy.

And we stuck it out. And pretty soon, you know, it was 20 minutes, 30 minutes, an hour. The Lord just started.

I'll tell you what, when you develop a prayer life, pretty soon, you'd be surprised how much time you need to cover everybody. You know, have you looked around at how much trouble people are in? I mean, there's a lot to pray about, isn't there? So, you know, I mean, that's what happened. And something started changing inside me.

And in 1985, the Lord dealt with me about television. I would come home from work and, you know, I'd flip the TV on and I was just watching old reruns. It's not like I was watching raunchy stuff or anything.

But I would just watch old reruns and stuff like that and God started speaking to me. And I knew it was the Lord and it got confirmed through my wife. And, you know, I just gave up television.

And Kathy did too, but it really wasn't a big deal for her. It was more me. I just wanted to sit in front of a television set.

It's just the way I am by nature. And I'll tell you what, when we gave up television, it took a month or two. It's like a cigarette smoker.

You know, when you're a cigarette smoker, you can walk into a smoke-filled room and you don't even notice it, right? But when you quit smoking and then you walk into a smoke-filled room, man, it's horrible. And that's how television was. You know, when I was watching it, I didn't notice nothing.

I mean, I was just oblivious. But when we got away from it and then we'd go to a friend's house or something and they'd have their television set going, I'd be sitting there with my mouth open. And I couldn't believe the stuff, you know, that was on TV.

But more than that, more than the sexual innuendo and the girls scantily dressed and all that stuff, much more than that was the spirit behind it. And I started to see it for what it was. Well, anyway, I went to Bible school.

I quit the department. I went to Bible school. And Kathy had a good job in management.

And she basically funded all that. And while I was in Bible school, the Lord laid it on my heart to start a ministry to men in sexual sin. So we began Pure Life Ministries in 1986 in Sacramento.

And because of the novelty of it in those days, it just kind of became known in certain ways. And so we found ourselves on all kinds of big television shows, you know, 700 Club and Oprah Winfrey and Focus on the Family, just all these different shows because we were the only ones doing what we were doing, ministering, ministering from God's Word, telling people that God could set them free. And, you know, that began in 1986 in Sacramento.

Now here's where things got rough. In 1989, the Lord called us to move to Kentucky. Now how many of you know that's got to be a call from God? So I want you to know all these years, Kathy and I have been living out there in Kentucky.

And God remember us for this. That's all I can say. It has not been easy.

You know, the good thing about it is, you know, the girls don't have many teeth, you know, so it wasn't much of a struggle there. So that was kind of helpful. But anyway.

Anyway, those first few years, it was just the Lord, the way the Lord used things. He just kind of put us out there and made, got word out about Pure Life Ministries. And then the Lord started dealing with us.

And we moved to Kentucky and for probably 10, 11 years it was grueling. You know, the Lord laid it on our hearts. Right off the bat, we bought this house out on some property.

And He laid it on our hearts to open it up to men and sexual sin. So six guys moved in with us. And, you know, how much fun is that? I don't even need to tell you what that must have been like.

It was worse than you can imagine. I can tell you that. And that began our residential program in 1980, well, actually 1990.

And then down through those years, though, the Lord was just dealing with us. I mean, every time we turned around we were getting humbled and getting corrected and disciplined. Praise God.

That's all I can say is praise God. Just exactly what Pastor Shane said. I'm a proud man and it's only by God's grace of humbling me.

Putting me through humiliating experiences and hard experiences. I remember one time we had gotten the residential program up to, I think, a dozen guys. And, I mean, I was preaching every weekend.

I was traveling. I would spend my weeknights counseling these guys. I was the fix-it guy.

Kathy was the cook. She handled all the book orders and all that stuff. I mean, we did everything.

We were killing ourselves, you know. And I remember, I don't remember what happened. It was probably my fault, I'm sure.

But in one day, every guy except one guy walked out. And man, I just wanted to die. God, I am just, I'm done, man.

I am done. I'll just go be a preacher, you know. I'll go pastor a church at 10,000 or something, you know, like that.

That would be a lot better. But, you know, the Lord, you can't argue with Him, you know. And so pretty soon, guys started coming back.

And it's been a long, hard haul. But I'll tell you what, I thank God for the 90s because it was in the 90s that the Lord really started giving Kathy and I a deep sight of the kingdom of God. And we really started getting a sense of who He is and His grace and His love and His mercy.

Not the sloppy kind that's so often presented out there, but the real thing. The love of God that is a fire. The love of God that is a fire.

That's a jealous God who loves with everything in Him. And we started getting a sight of this God and it completely transformed us. I found out I didn't have to beat up guys anymore to get them to repent.

I could just share the Lord with them, you know. And tears would be coming down my cheeks and I'd just be sharing how much God loved them. And it just would transform guys.

Well, all these years later now, we have a staff of 35 living out there in Kentucky and really they're running that ministry nowadays. Kathy and I are kind of doing a different thing, more of a message to the church. But we have such a tremendous work the Lord has blessed us with.

We have 35 people that live together. We pray together every morning. We have two hours of our personal time with the Lord and then we get together for another hour of either worship or Bible study.

Every morning it's like that. And there is like a glory cloud. I don't mean to exaggerate it, but I'm telling you I've heard it so many times that there are some visitors that come in there and it's like, what is it with this place? You know, I appreciate what you guys do.

You get some worship time. And you know, instead of like church like normal where everyone's just talking and carrying on, you know, and then they come in and then they're going to meet with God? No. You know, and at Pure Life, one of the things that we started early on was those men have to be in there in the chapel service at least a half an hour early, sitting in silence, waiting on God.

So when that meeting starts, their hearts are ready to hear from the Lord. And the presence of God is there powerfully. So these men come into that place, they're full of themselves, full of sin, full of despair, full of darkness, but they come into that atmosphere and you see their faces changing.

You know, they come in there, they're hard and cynical. But, I mean, usually within a couple of weeks they're softening. And usually within a couple of months they're starting to break down.

You see guys that come in there just so hard and a couple months later they are laid out, weeping before the Lord in His presence. I want to tell you folks that God transforms lives. He transforms lives today just like He did 2,000 years ago.

And just because we don't see the power of God at work so much out there in the church world, I don't care. I want to tell you, if you really give yourself over to the Lord, He will do that inside you. Just as He's done for Pastor Shane and so many others down through the years.

All right, now I promised you I'd share a little bit out of Proverbs 7. So let's take a look here real quickly. I'm going to have to kind of blow through this. I didn't mean to go on so long about my story, but I just felt like, I don't know, whatever.

I just have to leave it to the Lord. Chapter 7 begins with basically along the same lines as Pastor Shane was sharing. That Solomon, it's his familiar plea to his son to hear, to assimilate, and to live by his teachings.

It's what he's been saying for six chapters. He's saying it again, just like he said. He's reiterating, reiterating, reiterating the truth.

And verse 6 through 23 is kind of like an eyewitness account of this story that unfolds. This naive young guy is walking down the road where he shouldn't have been in a part of the city where he should not have been. And some adulterous prostitute, whatever, comes out to meet him and all of that.

And then it ends, I mean, verse 24 through 27 is an exhortation that Solomon gives to these young men. All right, now let me just tie it in with my testimony real quick. I was involved with two subcultures that are very much thriving in America today.

One is the drug world, and the other is the sex world. And I'll tell you, in the church, the drug world is not that big of an issue because that is an entire lifestyle that's consuming. It's a little bit hard to party all week and be in that kind of a lifestyle and then go to church on Sunday.

But what you can do and what you can get away with is you can be in sexual sin all week long and go to church on Sunday. You can get away with that a lot easier. And it is a tremendous problem in the church today.

There is a mindset of pornography. I'm going to read just this little thing. It's out of this little book.

There's one of them. We've got a couple of them back there, I think. *How America Lost Her Innocence*.

Let me just read this thing. There is a huge sex-for-sale industry thriving in America and Europe. There are thousands of massage parlors, strip clubs, escort services, and homosexual bars in our country.

Involved in this X-rated trade are hundreds of thousands of sex workers. In addition to this multitude are the thousands of people who make up the pornography industry. The adult entertainment industry alone has its own directors, producers, film crews, and of course stars and starlets.

And they all live not very far from here too, by the way. This vast underground community exists for the sole purpose of catering to the millions of hetero and homosexual addicts that live amongst us. The pornography industry has its own culture and values.

The sex-is-everything mindset is constantly communicated in every picture, every movie script, and every scene. The adult entertainment industry lives and promotes the hedonistic message that pleasure is the ultimate purpose of life. All right.

Now, here's what I want to do. If you look at verses 24 through 27 here, I'm going to read it to you in the Living Bible. I use the New American Standard, but the Living Bible says it in kind of a neat way, and I'm going to just read it to you from that version.

Listen to me, young men. Don't let your desires get out of hand. Don't let yourself think about pornography.

Don't go near it. Stay away from where it is, lest it tempts you and seduces you. For it has been the ruin of multitudes.

A vast host of men have been its victims. If you want to find the road to hell, look for the places that offer pornography. All right.

Now, the Living Bible doesn't actually say that exactly like that. I put in the word pornography where the word prostitute is because in that day, you would have to go, a young guy would have to go to the certain

area of town where the prostitutes were or whatever. That was sexual sin in those days.

In our day, it's different, isn't it? Now, it's just a click on the mouse, and there is a whole realm right there before you. And so, I'm using this text, and I'm just putting the word pornography in there instead of the word prostitute. So, let me just go over these three points real quick.

Don't let your desires get out of hand. Don't go near it. Don't let yourself think about it.

All right. So, number one, don't let your desires get out of hand. We are led through life by desire.

Did you know that? We are led through life by desire. And you all are here because some portion of your heart is drawn to the things of God. Right? It's Saturday night.

You don't have to be here. You could be doing something else. And I suspect that most of you are here because you're hungry.

You're hungry for something real in your life, aren't you? And, you know, we're all different people. We're all at different places in our journey with the Lord. And, you know, so there's no blanket statements here, but I'm sure that there's a good portion of you that really are hungry for God in your life.

If I was to follow your life, you know, Monday through Sunday, and the whole week, the way you lived your life, I would see someone who really reflects a godly lifestyle. I know that there are some of you that are that way. And then there's others who want to be there, and you're struggling.

Some, you know, things have a hold of you, and you just haven't been able to break free like you want to and so on. But it's desire that will keep you going if you will continue going in the right direction. So what's Solomon saying? Above all else, guard your affections.

You know, this is basically what Jesus said. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You know, it's what is compelling you in life.

And pornography is something that is very powerful, and when you start to get involved with it, it has a way of drawing you into itself. Well, what's at the bottom of it? What is at the bottom of it? You know, never mind that stuff. What's underneath it? It's the desire for pleasure, isn't it? You know, that's really what it's all about.

And we all have our ways that we seek pleasure. Pornography is one way, and I was asked to talk on this topic tonight, but really the deeper issue is the desire for pleasure. Let me say something to you parents, and you may not like this, but you're used to a confronting pastor, so you can take it.

We teach our kids by the way we live life, don't we? You know, our words are one thing. It's so easy to preach at them and tell them what they need to do and all that stuff. I can't tell you how many times I've been out preaching and some parent comes to me distraught because they just found out their 15-year-old daughter is pregnant, or their 16-year-old son is into drugs, or hooked on pornography or something.

And if I start asking them questions about the way they live their lives, it changes their thinking real quick. Because here's the thing, if you are living your life for the pleasures this world affords you, you may not be into pornography, you may not be into sexual sin, or drugs or whatever, but let me tell you something, you are teaching your kids that that's what... That's how you're going to find your happiness in life. You know,

it's through pleasure.

So your pleasures are different. Your pleasures are watching television. Your pleasures are surfing the internet.

Your pleasures are going and buying stuff and having all this stuff in life. That's where your value system really is. So your kids are watching this, they're growing up in that atmosphere, and then they're thrown into school, and what's the value system in the school of other kids? Well, they're not necessarily into buying houses and stuff.

What is it? It's drugs, it's sex, it's porn. And because we're teaching our kids by this pleasure-oriented lifestyle that that's what life is all about, well, you know, what can we expect? Why would we think that our kids would do anything different than that? But on the other hand, if we're teaching our kids that the things of God are really what's important and what's valuable, where you really get the joy in life, if we're showing them by our lifestyle that that's what we really truly desire in life is the Lord, then you're going to have kids that are going to emulate you. They may go through some period of struggles or whatever, but I'm telling you, if a kid sees his parents love God, the chances that that child is going to follow them in their footsteps is, you know, off the charts higher.

It just is. Another thing about this is we get guys that come to Pure Life and they want to maintain their lifestyle of pleasure and entertainment and all that. They just want this little segment, this sexual sin segment that has gotten out of control and makes them look bad and all that sort of stuff.

It has their wives angry with them, or they can't feel like they're really walking with the Lord or whatever. Their whole life is given over to the things of this world and to pleasure, but, you know, they want to keep that. But they just want to get rid of this troublesome little section, and it doesn't work that way.

You have to have a radical amputation in your life. You need to completely change your value system. You will never be able to be the kind of person that can keep one foot in the realm of pleasure and one foot in the church.

It's not going to be that way for you. It is not going to happen. You have to learn to love God like you have loved your sin, and nothing less than that is going to set you free.

Nothing less than that is going to set you free. All right, the second thing Solomon said is, don't go near it. You know, the truth is, you know what this boils down to, this part of it? A lack of fear of God, a lack of fear of sin.

You're not afraid to push the envelope. You're not afraid to get up as close as you can to the line. Me, I'm terrified of it, because I know what's in my heart.

I know I can't trust myself, so I don't mess around. I do not dabble. I do not get up to the edge.

You know, I don't want to watch television and fill my mind. You know what's happening is, like, people watch television, and they're going deeper and deeper and deeper. Well, pornography is really just one more step down that path.

It really is. How many Christians are watching stuff? They have no business watching. No business.

I mean, you know, I just can't spend a lot of time on it. But the Internet and all of it, it's the enemy's territory. One guy said, if you want to avoid the devil, stay away from his neighborhood.

You know, and I'll just mention, I have a book back there called Intoxicated with Babylon, and it really is a very powerful book. Now, if you knew me, you would know that I don't talk that way. I'm not a bragger.

I am not that way. But I'm telling you, we've sold tens of thousands of that book, and it affects people. It's just because it exposes the worldliness in the church, you know, and the worldliness that we've allowed in our lives.

And I would just recommend that you get it. I mean, whatever, I mean, there's other books back there. But in that book, I made a little illustration.

We lived in Florida for a time once, and I would go and have my prayer walks on this country road, and there was a little bridge, and one time I looked down, and there was a snake. I think it was a water moccasin down there in the creek. And just then the Lord spoke to me about this whole worldliness thing.

And here's the way it came to me. It was like, that's the devil. And as long as I'm up here on this bridge, I've got nothing to fear of him.

But if I go down there and get in that water with him, that murky, slimy Florida water down there, well, then I may have some problems, right? And that's what Christians do. They get closer and closer and closer and closer. Pretty soon they're dabbling, pretty soon they're ankle deep, and pretty soon a snake is latched on their leg, injecting poison in them.

You know, and then it's too far. They're too far gone. The last thing is, don't let yourself think about it.

Guard your minds and your hearts. Dear ones, I'm telling you, guard your minds and your hearts. Your heart is the central core of your being.

It's out of your heart that springs forth everything in life. But you have these five senses, and they are the things that influence your heart. And if you are filling your minds with the trash of television and the world and all that stuff, and that's just pumping in, then it's affecting you and tarnishing the way that you see life.

You know, it affects the way that you see life. Your value system is not going to be the value system of God's kingdom. And dear ones, I want to tell you, the way this world is going, the church is just sliding off further and further into the spirit of the world instead of towards the kingdom of God and preparing our hearts and lives to see the king.

And one day there's going to be someone on television, and he's going to be a smooth talker, and he's going to have an adorable personality. And you know what? Because we have so calloused ourselves by the voice of this world, and this man is going to be possessed with the spirit of the world. And his voice is not going to sound much different than the voice we've been filling our minds with.

Guard your hearts, dear ones, because we are coming into very frightening times, perilous times. And the peril isn't earthquakes and persecution. The peril is spiritual.

And we have got to be vigilant and diligent about the things of God. We've got to make a decision. Am I going to serve God, or am I going to serve myself? Praise the Lord.

God bless you all. And Pastor Shane is going to come up and wrap things up. Well, just a few quick things.

You might say, and I hear this a lot, that man, you guys make this a big deal, this issue of sexual morality and sexual purity. And I think what we fail to realize is something that many Christians obviously fail to realize, I did for many years, is that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. It's where God resides.

And God had harsh words in the Old Testament for when they profaned His sanctuary, when they brought things into His sanctuary that should not be there. And I was reading of Eli and his sons this morning, where they seduced the women, and they profaned God's sanctuary. And he said, if a man sins against another man, God will judge.

But if you sin against God, who will intercede? And then that parallels with Corinthians, where Paul was saying to the church in Corinth, do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy. Which temple are you? And then Paul goes on to say, do not be deceived.

Idolaters and the sexual immoral and the homosexuals, all these things will not even inherit the kingdom of God. This is a serious issue that's been ignored in the church. It's no big deal.

We don't need to talk about it. If it'll separate you from God eternally, and you're defiling as a Christian, you're defiling the holy temple of God in your body, this is a serious issue. You might say, well, Shane, what do I need to do? One word.

We talk about it often. Repentance. See, that is a beautiful word because there's repentance to salvation.

If you repent and call on the only name that saves, God will save you. But there's also repentance that many people don't talk about. It's repentance to restoration.

If you repent and turn back to me, I will restore you. I will rebuild your life. I will cleanse you of these things.

And a lot of times we get confused. It's not raising our hands or saying a little prayer. It's the heart breaking.

And we see this with the woman who brought that alabaster box to Jesus. It's an amazing story. She didn't say a quick little prayer.

She didn't raise her hand. She didn't walk forward to the altar. She just wept and wept and wept and anointed Him for His burial.

And Jesus said, woman, your sins are forgiven. She didn't say a word. No prayer, no raising the hand.

Why? Because the heart broke. And that's all it is. It's the heart breaking, the hammer of God coming because of the love of God.

He brings the hammer of God. And we repent and we cry out. So as difficult as this message is, that's the hope.

It is difficult, but there's a hope. He said, Christ came to eradicate all that. I came to conquer sin, death, and the grave.

As we talked about before, sin. We are dead to sin. You say, why is it still alive in me? Because whatever you choose to obey becomes your master.

So as the worship team comes up, we conclude the service. Or if it's just you, Ashley, or Chelsea, she's here too as well. We're just going to go into a time, as we usually do, of worship.

But I want to do something a little bit different tonight. If you guys need to, I'm not going to ask you to come forward. I'm just saying, you can do it in your seat.

Just say, Lord, I need what Shane, what Steve was talking about, I need to truly repent. Maybe for salvation, but also maybe towards restoration. Because many people go through sexual sin and trapped in this for years.

And they never are filled with the spirit of God. They're quenching and grieving the spirit of God. And he's saying, repent of this.

Let me rebuild your life. Let me restore your life. And God will do that.

But you take heed of what Steve was saying, because it's the choices we make. What we fill our mind either draws us away from God or pulls us closer to Him. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he.

So during this time of worship, Bernie's going to get the lights. We're just going to do a song or two of the blood of Christ and what He did for us at that cross. You can just stay in your seat.

And this is the time to repent and pray for healing, pray for deliverance, pray for restoration. This is the time where you commune with God. And I love what A.W. Tozer said.

He said, don't come up here and cry about it. Go home and live it out. And that's what the Christian is commanded to do.

Lord, we give you the service. I pray that this video will go out, that A.W.'s message will go out, and we would help people change from the seductive sin that is destroying marriages and destroying families. Lord, I pray right now that pride in all of our hearts will be broken.

Lord, all of us struggle with lust. So purify our hearts. Lord, bring us closer to the cross so we see what the sin did to Christ and what it means to God for us to eradicate that and turn from it and repent of it.

Lord, I pray that people have breakthroughs tonight. I pray as they cry out to You that You would bring deliverance and hope. Lord, tell them that they are just a choice away from being redeemed and restored.

We thank You for Your Son. We thank You for Calvary. We pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/0hzWrUhhSSU.mp4>

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