

Live Pure Free From Pornography and Lustful Thoughts

by Tim Conway

The sermon emphasizes the importance of purity in the Christian walk, highlighting the consequences of delaying purity and the power of setting one's mind on pure things.

Duration: 28:18

Scripture: Psalm 24:3-4, Matthew 5:8, Romans 8:13, Philippians 4:8, Colossians 3:2, James 4:8

Topics: "Sexual Purity", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of purity, particularly sexual purity, in the Christian walk. It addresses the prevalent issue of sexual immorality among young people and the battle against impure thoughts and actions. The speaker urges individuals to make visible progress in their pursuit of sexual purity, highlighting the need for maturity and growth in this area of life. The sermon stresses the significance of setting the mind on pure and spiritual things to overcome impure images and thoughts, ultimately leading to a closer relationship with God.

Transcript

Look, it's not surprising when Paul's talking to a young man that he says one of the things you need to mature in, one of the things you need to be practicing and devoting yourself to and making progress in is purity. And I believe the fact is he's probably speaking to him very specifically about sexual purity. If he's using it in a broader sense, he's at least including this idea unquestionably.

When he's talking to a young man and the way he talks to him in other places, flee youthful passions, youthful lusts, brethren, you can be sure of it. This is an area that he wants him in his youthfulness to be making progress. And I just ask you young people, some of you that aren't so young, have you made progress? Listen, this is one thing that we find.

This is one thing that if anything, I'll be honest. You guys know James started that website. He started it really dealing, because of the background he comes out of, dealing with a lot of the sexual immorality that is prevalent among young people today.

And in the things that have been posted there, we see by the amounts of traffic. Even it's interesting to me, the messages that I've done on different aspects that have dealt with sexual purity tend to be some of the

biggest things watched. We have a generation with computers primarily.

It's in the movies and in the television too, and it's in the magazines no doubt. But with the computer access to pornography, the problems, basically what we have young people, even the ones that are being saved, that are being well saved, that are coming out of these backgrounds, and you have so polluted your minds with images, that you know what, no matter how pure you are right now, no matter how much you're devoted to Christ right now, the fact is you've got images in your mind that they're there. And they'll come back and you know it as well as I do.

You'll just be in the middle of anything and bang! Images can shoot into your head. You guys can keep remembering the same things you saw in the past, and it's not things necessarily that you're even doing right now as a Christian. It's things you did when you were lost, things you did when you were dead in sin, and they're coming back now, they're haunting you.

Some of you are not being, even in your outward and physical conduct, you're not being chased in your approach to this Christian walk and in this run. Listen, I'm calling you guys to maturity. Paul was calling Timothy to make his progress evident, visible.

I'm calling you folks to the same thing. When it comes to sexual purity, there is an expectation biblically, and so I have that expectation of you. Look, I'm not expecting that there won't be battles.

I'm not expecting that some of you won't fall and rise up again and go on to fight. If you're claiming to be a follower of Christ, then there should be progressive maturity in this area in your life, and it ought to be visible, it ought to be evident, it ought to be something that is making strides. There ought to be visible manifestations of growth in this area of your life.

And I'll tell you this, I'm not talking about sexually illicit conduct on your part. Look, you guys need to be conquering that. If there are some of you that are still viewing things on website, you need to get your act together.

Look, there are young people that are being saved, and they're getting past that. They're getting past looking at the garbage on the internet anymore. If you're still there, you're behind in the race.

You're getting left behind. And you better be careful that you don't find yourself falling out of the race altogether. If that's still where you are, you're in trouble.

I'll say that, you're in trouble. And I'll give you, you know the verses. Listen, if you've been coming to this Bible study any length of time, I could take you to numerous verses in the New Testament that would lead you to believe that you are in trouble.

And if you're still doing that as a habit of life, I can give you numerous verses that would tell you, don't be deceived, you're not going to inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. You are living a pattern of life where you ought to be doubting your salvation. If you're still falling into that on a regular basis.

You're still falling into masturbation on a regular basis. If there's no fight, and you're pretty much a slave of that, and there is no victory in your life, you're in trouble. I mean, basically you're in trouble.

You're in a bad place. And if you are truly a Christian, and that's still where you're at, like I say, you're getting left behind in the race. And I will remind you of this again, and I do it to put fear in you.

Because even if you're a Christian, I think this is a fearful thing. I've said it before, I'll say it again. It strikes fear in me.

Spurgeon said after going through his life, and viewing people in his ministry, he said this, he said he saw people that started out the Christian race fast, and finished fast. He saw those who started fast and finished slow. Maybe even those who started fast and fell out of the race altogether.

But you know what he never saw? He never saw anybody start the race slow and finish fast. That ought to put fear in you. If you're still there, waiting around in your misery, and bringing on pathetic aspects of your past lost life, I tell you, you need to repent, you need to be rid of it.

In the power of the Spirit, you need to put that thing to death. You need to make some strides. You're getting left behind.

There are other young people that are making strides. They're passing you up. Don't get left behind in this race.

This is not a race you want to get left behind in. It's a fearful thing when everybody around you is moving away. They're pulling away from you.

That's bad. Because at best, that's an indication that your life as a Christian is not going to amount near as much as it is in other people. And the worst case is you're going to find in the end the reason that you're falling back in the race is because you're still in your sin.

And you're going to find out you've never really repented. You've never really looked to Christ. The power of the cross is not demonstrating itself in your life.

Listen, you ought to take this very seriously. There needs to be progress. Hey, you guys can look back at the resolutions that Jonathan Edwards made.

I can guarantee you he did not live in a day of internet pornography. He did not have to fight the things. I'm sure they didn't have the billboards.

They didn't have the magazines. They didn't have the racks at HEB. I mean, basically, they lived in a day when they did not have to deal with what you have to deal with.

They're very likely... He didn't have the images in his mind. He didn't have the background you guys have. There are things, no doubt, you have to overcome that he didn't have to overcome.

I suspect if he lived today, his resolutions would look different. He'd be resolved to have purity in his life in ways that he didn't even have to talk about back then. These are things you have to conquer.

You have to battle that he didn't. But that's just a matter of fact. That's the day and the age you and I are born in.

We're in another generation. The things we have to overcome may be different. But I'll tell you, folks, you've got to be putting these things to death by the Spirit of God.

That's the path Romans 8.13 says to life. If by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. Why? Because regeneration is so real, it's so dynamic in the life of that person who has received the

effects of it that it will happen, that this sin will be putting to death.

But I'll tell you something else you're forfeiting if you're back there in the line. Listen. Have you ever heard a text like this? Blessed are the pure in heart.

Why? They shall see God. Now I'll tell you this. Somebody could come along and say, Yeah, but... That sounds like future.

That sounds like I'll see God in glory. Yep. I won't argue.

But let me ask you this. Is it possible that that beatitude found in Matthew 5, that that beatitude may actually have a present reality as well as a future reality? Might it be that those who are pure in heart now will see the most of God now? You say, well maybe that's a stretch. Maybe you're reading something into it.

I'm just saying, might there be the possibility? And if in fact that was possible that those that are most pure see the most of God now, what might you be sacrificing? Okay, maybe you're not convinced. Let me take you to another place. Let me take you back into the Old Testament Scriptures.

Some of you are familiar with this verse, Psalm 24. We had a Bible study before where we dealt with this. Psalm 24, verse 3. Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place? Who is it? Anybody know? He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

So the pure in heart see God. Here we find out the ones that ascend the hill of the Lord stand in His holy place. They're the ones with clean hands and a pure heart.

Listen to this. Who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully. What do you think? Somebody still may look at that and say, yeah, but that sounds like standing there, ascending the hill of the Lord, standing in His holy place.

That sounds awful literal. Like maybe at the end of life. Oh, I would say this.

There have been brethren throughout history who have not taken it that way and who have found great reality even in this life. But maybe you're still not convinced. How about this? If you still lack convincing, then let me convince you.

James 4, verse 8. Draw near to God. And what? He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Purify your hearts. Clean hands, pure heart. What is it? Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.

When? Now. It's a hand matter and a heart matter. Okay? Did you guys hear that? Did you hear what? Purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Remember what purity is? It's singleness. Let me jump back to Psalm 24. Did you catch what was said there? Listen to this.

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart. Sound familiar? A little bit like James chapter 4? See, it's the same idea, folks. He'll draw near.

Who ascends His holy hill? Brethren, there are implications of that now. Here. In this place.

In this life. Those who see God are the pure in heart. Brethren, there are implications here.

You draw near to God. How do you draw near to Him? With clean hands and a pure heart. What is it? To put away, you double-minded.

Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Listen to how it says it in Psalm 24. He who has clean hands and a pure heart.

Listen to this. Who does not lift up his soul to what is false or does not swear deceitfully. James says double-minded.

The psalmist says deceitfully. What is deceit? What is deceit? Is deceit not when you will two things? And brethren, I mean like this. You will to do one thing but you will to be seen as something else.

Is that not what deceit is? Is that not being double-minded? Is that not the very essence of impurity? Purity is singleness. It means I want to be before God what I want you guys to see me as but more than that, what I want Him to see me as. What I am in the dark, in the closet, in the bathroom, in the bedroom, in my house by myself, in my car alone, when you see me, when I'm in the church.

That's singleness. Duplicity. Double-mindedness.

Deceit is when you basically are double-willed. You want to be seen as one thing while you actually desire to do something else. And oh brethren, is this not applicable to sexual purity? Right? Nails it in the head.

Why? Because I guarantee those of you that have been sexually impure in this room don't want us to think you are. You don't want the others to know what you are in the dark, in your heart. You want to appear another way.

Brethren, when you live life like that, whether it's sexual sin or any other way, you know what it is, it's hypocrisy. It's what it is. It's double-minded.

You're basically split. You want one thing but you want to appear as another. That's deceit.

You're wearing a mask. You don't portray yourself publicly what you really are in the dark place. Brethren, let me tell you this.

This hinders what you can see of God. And I mean in this life, being full of awe and fear and joy and ecstatic. I mean brethren, experiencing such things in this life as give you a joy that is unspeakable and full of glory and out of this world and nothing else can touch it.

I mean being able, even though we look through a glass darkly, there are some folks in this world that see a whole lot more clearly through that glass than other people. And who is it? Brethren, it's those people with clean hands and a pure heart that get to ascend that holy hill and see what other people cannot see. And I know it.

I know it's true. I come across people who have seen more of God and put it together brethren, it is not those of you that are masturbating off quietly somewhere out of the view of people that portray yourself another way that are experiencing these types of interactions with God. I guarantee you folks, and if it is, if

you are, it's because you have come into this thing and you are battling and through many gouging out of eyes and tearing out of eyeballs and cutting off of limbs, there have been blood, sweat, and tear in your battles and some days you've failed but you've laid hold on Christ, you've looked to Him, you've prayed, and you've wept, and you've fought.

Possibly in that state, you've drawn very close. But typically, where you're giving yourself to that, where your basic, your conscience gets so defiled, you come before God, there is guilt, there is stain, there is impurity. Brethren, we've got to be making, we've got to be making strides, there's got to be progress.

You want to make a resolution about something right there, such as probably Edwards never had to make. You be done with it. Be done with viewing what you shouldn't view.

Be done with doing in the dark what you ought not to do. But brethren, you know as well as I do, the majority of this battle does not take place in the physical realm, it takes place in the mind. That's where the bulk of this battle is fought.

It's in the mind. Brethren, I'll tell you this, the Bible does not say simply when you've got images in your head or your mind is somewhere that you simply pray passionately and you're done with the battle. The Bible does not say that's enough.

That is not adequate in fighting this battle. Brethren, sexual purity, the battle for it is won in the mind. You know what the Scripture says? It talks about the mind.

In Philippians chapter 4 it tells us to set our mind on certain things. Think on these things. And one of the things that we're supposed to think on is that which is pure.

Brethren, let me tell you this, when impurity attacks the mind it is not enough to just feverishly and passionately pray to God, God please take this away. Brethren, that is not gouging out eyes and cutting off feet to simply do that. Yes, that's necessary.

Yes, your prayer life needs to be fervent, intense, militant, yes. But unless your actions are likewise, you're not doing enough. Brethren, it doesn't say just pray militantly.

It says work out your salvation with fear and trembling. You've got to work, you've got to fight. When Christ says gouge out, He doesn't mean just simply that's all prayer picture.

That's not what He meant. He meant you've got to be rooting sin out at the deepest levels. And if the battle's in the mind, then be certain of this, the way you rid illicit images in the mind, impure images in the mind, is not to try to blank your mind, put a vacuum in your mind, not just prayer feverishly.

What is it? Brethren, does the Scriptures not say repeatedly set your mind on this or on that? In Colossians chapter 3, set your mind on things above. Brethren, the Scriptures portray in the power of the Spirit the Christian has the ability to set his mind where he wants to set it. You're plagued by images.

You're plagued by things that are crowding out. Listen, I don't doubt at all that Satan can't come along and project images. He has a way of speaking to us.

I don't know how it is. Well, I think Matt dealt with that on Sunday morning. The fact is, folks, how do you confront these things when all of a sudden, like a bullet, you've got this image from the past, something.

It's there. What are you going to do? It's not just enough to pray. Somehow, we've got to be replacing that imagery with something that is pure, something that is lovely, something that is wholesome, something that is righteous.

How do I do it? I set my mind on things that are appropriate for a Christian. It's exactly what I do. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on things of the flesh.

Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. Brethren, too many people think that when they've struggled with temptation and prayed for deliverance, the battle's over.

Brethren, the battle's just starting. You say, what do you do? You think on something else. You don't try to just say, No! I don't want to think about that! Because a vacuum doesn't win the battle.

Brethren, you set your mind on things above. You set your mind on things of the Spirit. Like, what's that? Brethren, I'll tell you, in my estimation, one of the most soul-stirring pictures that I can set my mind on is Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Sometimes I'm affected by that just as much or more as the cross itself. Why? Maybe because I've spent more time trying to develop images from Gethsemane. Because Gethsemane hits me so powerfully because of what Christ seemed to suffer there before He was on the cross.

And what it does is it helps me feel the cross to be an even greater thing. But because of the time I've spent trying to develop the greatness of the cross as I see it in Gethsemane, I think I've had my mind and I've spent a lot of time thinking there and I find myself greatly moved when I see Christ saying, Abba! He's asking His Father if it's possible that that cup be removed. He was actually at the point of death.

He was at the point of death. Brethren, I'll tell you this. When you've had images, have you been fighting lust? Are you trying to make progress by setting your mind on something like that? Can you see Christ literally on His face sweating, as it were, great drops of blood at the point of death? Because even the anticipation of what He's going to endure, the agonies on that cross are so overwhelming to Him.

He's not even there yet. He's not even enduring the separation from His Father yet. He's not bearing the load of sin.

The sun hasn't gone dark. The crush of God upon that cross has not come. He's only thinking ahead.

He's bearing the thought of what's going to happen. Have you tried to take your mind to the image of that when you're confronted by the thought of a picture of a woman in your head or a man in your head? Or have you taken yourself? Brethren, what are the graphic imageries of the Scripture that you can set your... Look, there are images that you can set your mind on that will kill impure images. You need images that are more powerful.

Look, there may be ones that are more powerful to you than to me, but you need to find out what they are. I'll tell you one of the images that often stirs my soul is Isaiah chapter 6. Go there. Read it.

Dwell on it. Meditate on it. Pray over it.

And when you find yourself locked in some temptation and battle where you've got to pluck out some image from your mind, set your image upon Christ high and lifted up and you imagine Isaiah down on his

face, pronouncing a curse on himself. The very doorpost shaking and the place is in a smoke and those seraphim are going back and forth antiphonally. You think about that.

You set your mind there. You see fire come out from the altar and consume Nadab and Abihu and think of Aaron holding his peace in the face of a holy God. You think of what it will be like on judgment day when the sinners are cast into the lake of fire.

Set your mind on things above. Think about what it will be like the moment you first see Christ and what it will be like that moment when all unrighteousness is gone from you forever. You'll never think evil, act evil, never again will you speak evil and you will see Christ face to face and you will be as he is and in all of his glory and I'll tell you this, you just think about those who as I said just last week or the week before men who have only stood in his presence, angels who have only been in his presence who other men have seen they have fallen down before.

Only at the reflection of an angel or the glow of God in the face of Moses you think what it will be to set your eyes on Christ. You think about what it will be. You try to imagine Christ as those spikes are tearing through his flesh as the agonies are upon him as the sun forbears to shine and our mighty maker hangs there between heaven and earth and God has forsook him and every ounce to the last drop of that bitter cup that you deserved and I deserved is being crushed in upon his soul.

You let your mind go there. These are images brethren, these you talk about setting your mind on things of the Spirit on things above. Can you think of anything beyond these images? Brethren this is where the battle is fought but I'm thinking some of you probably don't even think this way you come across these verses and it's like I don't even know what to do with them.

There it is brethren, our minds are for images, our minds are for thoughts. If you're going to fight in there you've got to set your mind where the battle is won. You need images that conquer this is the path to purity make progress.

My brothers especially, young men, make progress. A year from now let your progress be discernible. Brethren that's my call to you tonight and I'm done.

Amen.

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