

The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity #6

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It is true that every time a servant of God stands to open the Word of God, there is a direct frontal attack upon the kingdom that is built upon error and ignorance and lies, the very kingdom of darkness. But I believe in a very specific and heightened way, the prince of darkness hates when his kingdom is attacked in areas where he has set up some of his most thick embattlements and some of his most powerful strongholds in which he holds his captives. And so I ask you to join with me in praying that as we seek to wage war with the Word of Truth, God will by His mighty power dismantle aspects of that kingdom through the Word of His Truth coming in the power of His Spirit.

Our Father, we are mindful of Your Word which says that we do not wrestle with flesh and blood but with principalities, with powers, with the rulers of darkness. And we would, therefore, consciously by faith take to us afresh the whole armor that You have provided. And we pray that in these coming moments together as we seek, by Your grace, to wage warfare against the kingdom of darkness and error and lies by the Word of Your Truth, that those weapons will be mighty through Your power to the pulling down of strongholds, and that our Lord Jesus may take to Himself the spoils of His conquest over the powers of darkness. Come then, O Lord, we pray and take the field in every one of our hearts for our good and for Your glory. Amen.

We come tonight to the sixth and what will be the final message in this series that I have entitled "The Divine Antidote to Sexual Impurity" or positively stated, "The Divine Prescription for Sexual Purity." Given the climate of the age, and given the fact that it has been fourteen and a half years since I addressed this subject in any focused way, I judged that it was time to consider it afresh and come to the Word of God concerned to see in it the divine antidote to sexual impurity. What I propose to do in this final message is to set before you what I'm calling some final Biblical directives in relationship to the divine antidote to sexual impurity. And the counsel or directive I give to you is this: no matter what our age and stage in life, once we have been sexually awakened, we must continually engage in the Spirit-empowered, Gospel-orientated mortification of sexual sins. Now, in opening up this directive or word of counsel, we will first of all establish this duty, explain the duty, and make some final applications.

First of all, then, let me seek to establish this duty, the duty of continually engaging in mortification that is marked by the empowerment of the Spirit and suffused with Gospel motives and dynamics. And I want us to look at two basic text: one is the generic text, and the other is the specific. The generic text is Romans 8:13. Why do I counsel you if you would deal with the sins of sexual impurity; that you and I must continually engage in the mortification of these sins, a mortification enabled by the Spirit and driven by Gospel motives and Gospel realities? I rest the case first on this generic text, and secondly on the specific text that we will consider in the book of Colossians.

In Romans 8:1-13, the Apostle is establishing that the believer's union with Christ delivers him from the state of condemnation and also the realm in which the flesh governs his life. Romans 8:1: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...." Union with Christ brings us out of wrath and condemnation into a state of grace and justification. But that union with Christ not only alters our legal status before God, in this passage, the Apostle says it radically and fundamentally alters our ethical relationship to the law of God. And so he goes on to say,

"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh [now here is his end as it focuses on the ethical and moral conduct of the believer]: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

And then Paul goes on to demonstrate that you live in one or two realms as the fundamental sphere of your ethical and moral relationship to God and to His law. You are either after the flesh or after the Spirit. Verse 5: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit." And Paul goes on to demonstrate that there is no middle ground, and that all who are united to Christ are in a state of no condemnation and have also been delivered from the realm of the flesh as the realm of their ethical and moral conduct. He says very clearly in verse 9, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." So if you've not experienced this union with Christ bringing you to no condemnation and bringing you into the realm of the Spirit, you are none of His. Now based upon that (those are Gospel realities), we have a conclusion drawn in verses 12-14:

"Therefore, brethren [in the light of this teaching], we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify [present tense verb: continually putting to death] the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

So you see the basic teaching of this text. If you continue to live after the flesh, the wages of sin is death. To live after the flesh is to live in that realm where the flesh dominates, and the end of it is death. But those who are united to Christ; indwelt by the Spirit do not live after the flesh. They live after the Spirit, and one of the concrete activities of that life after the Spirit (or in the Spirit) is by the power of the Spirit putting to death the deeds of the body. And as John Owen so powerfully demonstrates in his masterful exposition of this text in his treatise *On the Mortification of Sin*, it is we who put the sin to death. Look again at the text: "...if ye through the Spirit do mortify...." As believers united to Christ; indwelt by the Spirit, we are active in this ongoing work of mortification. But it is by the Spirit. It is Spirit-empowered mortification. The Spirit's work does not negate ours; our work does not negate His. His work comes to life in our work. We put sin to death by the Spirit. And what is true of sin generically is true of sexual sins specifically and concretely.

Now then, turn to this passage in which mortification is specifically applied to sexual sins: Colossians 3. I'm simply establishing that this counsel I'm giving you is rooted in and grows out of the words of Scripture, particularly these two texts. In the preceding context, Paul is underscoring the implications of being united to Christ. Chapter 2 and verse 20: "...if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world...." Here he says that in union with Christ you have died with Christ. Chapter 3 and verse one: "If ye then be risen with Christ...." You

were raised together with Christ. And in your union with Him, you not only died with Him; you've been raised together with Him, and in Him, you are seated at the right hand of God. Verse 3: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Paul is underscoring some of the implications that grow out of what it means to be united to Christ in His death, in His resurrection, and in His session at the right hand of God. Now, on the basis of those Gospel realities, he says in verse 5, "Mortify therefore [in the light of who and what you are as a result of being united to Christ] your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." The first two sins are unmistakable references to sins of sexual impurity. "Fornication" refers to every form of illicit sexual union with another. "Uncleanness" refers in a broader sense to every kind of sexual impurity. And Lenski, the Lutheran commentator, suggests that what we really have are two couplets moving from the outward manifestations of sexual sins in the first two, and the next two pointing to the inward. He renders it "the inward fire" and "the base desire" what is rendered in the American Standard Bible "passion" and "evil desire." And Paul adds to that "covetousness," for often these are joined in Scripture because covetousness is also a form of the moral uncleanness of the human heart. It is the capstone commandment of the Ten Commandments touching the deepest springs of the desire of the heart. And here in this passage, mortification focuses predominately upon sexual sins. So in addressing the subject in this way, this not the result of a perverse mind in the preacher. It is the result of the sensitivity to the emphasis given by God the Holy Spirit. And so my counsel to every one of you who is serious about God's antidote to sexual impurity, serious about God's prescription for sexual purity in a crassly immoral age it this: you must engage in this Spirit-empowered, Gospel-oriented mortification of these sexual sins whether in their outward manifestations or in their inward mental inward burning and desire. We must, by the grace of God, be putting these sins to death. Well, I hope those two key texts are sufficient to persuade you that it is indeed your duty and mine as Christians to engage in this mortification.

Now we come, secondly, to the duty or directive explained. And here I heartedly recommend for those of you that don't feel you could bite off the full treatise of Volume 6 of John Owen. There are three separate treatises, one on temptation, another one on mortification, and the third one I have forgotten. But it's three treatises. And here in this condensed version that is done by Andrew Swanson, *What Every Christian Needs to Know*, Owen's treatment on temptation and mortification are very helpfully condensed and put into modern language. And I cannot recommend too strongly the help that God has given to His church since Owen penned these things many years ago. And interestingly, they were originally preached to teenage students at Oxford. He preached them in chapel to help young men be pure in what was, according to today's standards, a very prudish age. How much more do we need the wise counsel of God's servant. We carry this in the bookstore; I heartedly recommend it. Now then, what does the Scripture mean and how do we go about, by the Spirit, putting to death the deeds of the body? How do we go about killing, putting to death our members upon the earth (fornication, uncleanness, passion, and evil desire)? Well, obviously I cannot be exhaustive in the remaining time of the message, but I set before you four specific things involved in this Spirit-empowered, Gospel-oriented killing of sexual sins.

First and foremost, foundational to all aspects of mortification is this: we must seek to mortify our sexual sins from the posture of justified sinners. Now, what do I mean by that? Well, I'm simply trying to put in common parlance what Paul emphasizes in Romans 8. He says in verses 12 and 13, "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." Who is the "ye"? It is the "brethren." And these brethren Paul describes in chapter 8 verse 1: "There is [present tense] therefore now no condemnation to

them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." If we are united to Christ by faith, in a very real sense, the Day of Judgment has come and is past for us. The sentence of the Last Day has already be uttered over us. Do you believe that, Christian? That's what he is saying. There is right now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. So when Paul goes on to say that those who know that reality of no condemnation in Christ still have, though delivered from the dominion of the flesh (they are no longer in the flesh but in the Spirit), sins yet remain that have to be killed, mercilessly taken by the throat and choked with Gospel power and Gospel grace. Paul does not want those engaged in mortification ever to forget their status of no condemnation. You see, the devil trips up people by one or two things. He either gets them to take their sin too lightly or to take it seriously in the wrong category. If he can get you to be indifferent to sin, Christ crucified will mean nothing. If he can get you to rationalize that your remaining sins are little things, you will never deal with them ruthlessly. But once you get serious about your sin as an unconverted person, what does the devil say? "You mean to think you can be forgiven just by believing on Christ? That's ridiculous." And he tempts people to be unbelieving before the free, gracious provisions of God's mercy in Jesus Christ. And then when such people lay hold of Christ and are serious about killing sin, the devil says, "How can you be a Christian, and you still have this to kill and that to kill?" And they relinquish their state of no condemnation, and it bleeds them of all vigor and strength to go after the sin for mortification. And we must learn, by the grace of God, whenever we are engaged in Romans 8:13, to take our stand on Romans 8:1. Do you follow me? If you don't, you're going to be crippled. You're going to be dispirited and overwhelmed. "There is therefore now [right now] no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus...." And it is those who in the joyful embrace by faith of those Gospel provisions that are called upon to mortify their remaining sin. So then, if you're serious about mortifying sins of a sexual nature that in a peculiar way clog the conscience with crippling guilt and a sense of defilement, hear me carefully. You must seek to mortify your sin from the posture of a justified sinner.

Secondly, we must seek to mortify sexual sins by a well informed faith in the implications of our union with Christ. What am I trying to say here? Again, I'm trying to say what Paul teaches in Romans 6 and Galatians 2, and what our Lord teaches in John 15. Look at Romans 6:1: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" Paul has just said that where sin raises a mountain ten thousand feet high, grace comes along and raises a mountain twenty thousand. So someone says, "The mountains of grace are higher where the mountains of sin are higher? Then let's go out and raise a whole mountain range of sin that grace may abound." That's the devil's logic added to the doctrine of free justification based on the doing and dying of another. And Paul says that's impossible. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. [May it never be.] How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? " And it's as though someone said, "Died to sin? When did I die to sin?" He's going to tell them:

"Know ye not [are you ignorant?], that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ [all of us who have been united to Christ vitally and truly by the Spirit of God symbolically in our water baptism] were baptized into His death? Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection: Knowing this [you see why I used the term 'We must have a well-informed faith in the implications of our union with Christ'], that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised

from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves [have an active faith that intelligently lays hold of this reality in being united to Christ. What happened to Him once for all in space-time history objectively outside the city wall of Jerusalem--He was crucified, buried in a borrowed tomb and rose from the dead the third day--happens in the experience of everyone who is united to Him by faith. And the virtue of His death to sin and for sin becomes our death to sin, and His resurrection to newness of life is our resurrection to life. Paul says, 'Know this. Don't be ignorant of it. And having grasp it with intelligent spiritual understanding, count it true'] to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. [Why? It's a usurper whose power has been stripped by death. Don't let it come and say, 'I'm your master.' You point him to Christ's tomb and say, 'In union with Christ, I died to sin's dominion, and in union with Christ as alive from the dead.'] Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (vv. 3-14).

You see what Paul is doing? He's saying, "You Roman Christians have a well-instructed faith about the implications of being united to Christ. In union with Christ, you not only receive the virtue of His perfect life in His substitutionary death resulting in your free justification, but His death to sin is your death to sin; His resurrection to life is your resurrection to life. Count on that reality. Even when sin through every sense of your own soul is saying, "I'm master, and I'm lord," You say, "No." You reckon yourself to be dead unto sin. And as alive from the dead, you present your instruments (your eyes, hands, and sexual members) as instruments of righteousness unto God.

John 15 is another whole approach to the doctrine of union with Christ. The Lord says,

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman [the gardener who takes care of the vine]. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without [apart from, severed from] Me ye can do nothing."

Here the Lord Jesus gives us the doctrine of union with Himself, not under the figure of being crucified with Him, buried with Him, raised with Him, but a living vine. And we've been grafted in that vine. The life of that vine flows into the branches. And severed from that vine, the branch is just a brittle stick. But in union with it, it bears fruit. And as it bears fruit, the Father lovingly prunes it that it may bear more fruit. And what is that fruit but an expression of the life that ultimately is in the vine itself. So you have the doctrine of union with Christ here under the imagery of a vine. In Romans 6, it is under the imagery and the reality of sharing in the virtue of His death, burial, and resurrection.

Now, Galatians 2:20 seems to bring both of these concepts into a beautiful and intimate conjunction. The Apostle says,

"I am crucified with Christ [well, are you dead, Paul? He says, 'no.' You mean you're a crucified man but not dead. 'Yes.' How come?]: nevertheless I live; yet not I [my unblest

Adamic 'I was put to death in my representative head, the Lord Jesus.' The sentence of death was passed upon proud, Pharisaic murderer Saul of Tarsus. He was put to death in the death of Jesus. The 'I' that was put to death is out of the way], but Christ liveth in me [Christ is so united to me and I to Him that I can say He lives in me. Well, does that mean I just sit back and say, 'O Lord, live in me; live through me. I'll just get lined up right and let the Head...?' No]: and the life which I now live in the flesh [well, does Christ live in him or does Paul live? I'll never forget A. W. Tozer speaking to a large group of evangelical leaders and saying, 'If any of you editors here ever got a statement like this from some aspiring writer, you'd have shot it back return mail the same day saying the poor guy is hopelessly confused.' It's a bunch of mumbo jumbo double talk. No, it isn't. It's a beautiful synthesis of so much rich Biblical theology. Christ lives in me, but not in such a way that He blots out the conscience exercise of my will, my judgment, my understanding] I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

This was a well-instructed faith focusing upon the doctrine and the implications of his union with Christ. So I say to you, my dear people, if you and I would make progress in dealing with our sins generically and with our sexual sins in particular, we must not only seek to mortify sin from the posture of justified sinners, but we must mortify these sexual sins by a well-informed faith and the implications of our union with Christ.

Now we move from the broad theology to where the rubber meets the road in the practical. Thirdly, we must mortify sexual sins by a purposeful and righteous avoidance of anything or anyone that tempts us to indulge such sins. Now, let me explain why I used the qualifying words "purposeful" and "righteous." We must mortify sexual sins by a purposeful avoidance, a conscious deliberate calculated thing, whether anticipating a given set of circumstances or reacting to unexpected circumstances in a kind of predetermined, preprogrammed reflexive response. Some of you who've been active in sports know that the reason you get drilled by a good coach again and again in the basics is that they know in the heat of athletic contests, it's what you have programmed yourself to do by rigorous repetition that comes out spontaneously in the field of conflict. That's why I've continually mortified my desire to get a pilot's license. Everything in me still wants to fly a plane. I have for thirty-five years. But I know enough to know occasional pilots are dead pilots. And one of the reasons is: if you're not flying continually, what you do in a crisis by reflex leaves you short end. What I'm saying is: this principle of mortifying sexual sins by a purposeful avoidance is that purposeful avoidance may be preprogrammed in certain situations--and we'll turn to the Bible to see it illustrated--or become such an internal spiritual discipline that if we are surprised with temptation, we reflexively turn from the situation or the person who is the occasion of that temptation. Now, I qualified with the word "righteous." Why did I do that? Because in the path of doing the will of God, sometimes temptation is unavoidable. Our blessed Lord Jesus was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. His temptations were ordered by the Spirit. There are some situations where if you're going to be a righteous man or woman, you cannot avoid the circumstances or the people that will tempt you to sexual sins. You have a responsibility to provide for your family. You may work in a school. You may work in the city in a high-class office situation with women that buy \$100 and \$200 blouses, and they know how to be sexy in a very sophisticated way. And they're walking by you day after day. Righteously, you can't quit your job and put your family on welfare. You cannot righteously avoid the temptations that come with that, so you've got to learn how to deal with it. That's why I've qualified the words "We must mortify sexual sins by a purposeful and righteous avoidance of anything or anyone that tempts us to indulge such sins."

Let's look at the Biblical basis for this counsel. Romans 13:11-14:

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day [now notice the three couplets]; not in rioting and drunkenness [this is partying and wanton abandonment to booze], not in chambering and wantonness [bedding around and fulfilling animal passions], not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ [it's a beautiful imagery. The verb for 'put on' means 'to dress yourself with.' You mortify by Spirit-empowered, Gospel-oriented dealing with your sins. Clothe yourself with all of the Gospel realities and motives, but you must not stop there], and make not provision [forethought] for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Don't set yourself up for temptation. You can try to put on Christ until your arms are weary, but if you take forethought to place yourself in positions of lusts, you'll never mortify sexual sins. How wise is the Spirit of God in giving this directive. John Owen said, "He who takes no care to avoid the occasions of sin is not serious about dealing with sin itself."

Now let's look at a couple of Biblical examples of people engaging in Gospel mortification. In Genesis 39:5, we read concerning Joseph now down in Egypt in Potiphar's house:

"And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured. And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. But he refused, and said unto his master's wife, Behold, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand; there is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God? [Here's a Gospel motive: 'God has pardoned and forgiven me and wonderfully superintended the dark chapters in my life. Thrown in a pit to die. And here I am in Potiphar's house, and all he's withheld from me is you. How can I sin against a God who has conferred such grace.' Gospel motives are percolating though his heart.] And it came to pass, as she spake to Joseph day by day [why was he still around her? Because the will of God demanded it. He could not righteously get away from her. See how the principle is there. He had a dispensation of stewardship from Potiphar, and he seeks to fulfill it. And in the way of righteousness, he's still confronted with this temptation day by day] that he hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her. [When he could righteously do it, he turned away and split when she came into his room. What was he doing? He was mortifying sexual sin. By doing what? By a purposeful and righteous avoidance of anything or anyone that would tempt him to such sins. He's a marvelous example of this. And though in doing it, all the circumstances point to the fact that he must have caved in.] And it came to pass about this time, that Joseph went into the house to do his business [as a righteous man, whatsoever his hands find to do, doing with all his might as unto his Lord. He went into his house not to cast his eyes upon her, not to flirt with her, not to talk with her, not to be near her, but to do his work. That was the path of righteousness]; and there was none of the men of the house there within. And she caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me: and he left his garment in her hand, and fled, and got him out. [He didn't stay there and reason with her. She had him alone, and he said, 'I'm out of here.' What is he doing? Purposely and righteously avoiding that person that would seduce him.] And it came to pass, when she saw that he had left his garment in her hand, and was fled forth, that she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, That she called unto the men of her house, and spake unto them, saying,

See, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us; he came in unto me to lie with me, and I cried with a loud voice: And it came to pass, when he heard that I lifted up my voice and cried, that he left his garment with me, and fled, and got him out."

Now she comes up with her plausible story: "He tried to rape me." "No, No, not Joseph!" "I've got his coat in the hand. I've got the smoking gun." It's amazing what people do with their so-called evidence, isn't it? She had the evidence. It was his coat. Nobody could deny it. She had it in her hands, and she put her spin on the facts. And God allowed this man in a way of righteous mortification to end up in prison. But you see this beautiful example of the principle. There it is. God puts it there that we might see what it is.

Another key passage. Remember, we're trying to see that the third element of mortifying sexual sins is by a purposeful and righteous avoidance of anything or anyone that tempts us to indulge such sins. In Proverbs 5, Solomon is teaching his son things that apparently he forgot himself through a critical period of his life. He speaks to his son and says in warning against the immoral woman, giving descriptions of her in the opening verses from verse 3 onward. Verses 7 and 8:

"Hear me now therefore, O ye children, and depart not from the words of my mouth. [If you're going to heed my counsel and take my warnings about the sexual sins that will be your portion with the immoral woman, this is what you're to do.] Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house."

He doesn't say, "Don't go to her bed. Don't fall into her arms. Don't embrace her." He says, "Don't even go by her door." If you don't go by her door, you'll never be in her arms. And if you're not in her arms, you won't be in her bed. Don't say the Bible is prudish. The Bible is very frank and very realistic. And here is Solomon's warning. And then in chapter 7, he opens up this subject again and says he was looking and viewing a young man who did not take this kind of counsel:

"For at the window of my house I looked through my casement, and beheld among the simple ones, I discerned among the youths, a young man void of understanding, passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house, in the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night" (vv. 6-9).

He is setting himself up for this married woman whose husband is away on business. And she is on the prowl to seduce an innocent and simple young man. And what was his folly? It was the time of the day he goes for his walk to have the security of darkness. He takes his walk by her street and by her house. He's setting himself up by making provision for the flesh to fulfill the lust thereof. And she sweet talks him and sweet smells him and sweet embraces him into her bed. And then we read the end of the chapter what the result is. Isn't it interesting that, to my knowledge, the only sin we are told to flee is sexual impurity. 1 Corinthians 6:18: "flee fornication." I don't know of a verse--I racked my brain to find one in my preparation that said, "flee pride," "flee envy," "flee jealousy," "flee murder," "flee blasphemy." I don't know of any such command in the Bible. But when God says, "flee fornication," He is underscoring this truth that among all the sins in which we can fall, these more than any others require, if we're to mortify them, a purposeful and righteous avoidance of anything or anyone that tempts us to indulge such sins.

Fourth and finally, if we would with Gospel motives and with Spirit-empowered grace mortify sins, we must jealously guard all the inlets to the soul that would provoke us to mental

or actual sexual sins. And what are the main inlets to the soul? They are the eyes and the ears, hands, and eyes. (I'm not sure I should put hands in that category, but since Jesus addresses hands in Matthew 5, I stuck them in.) Eyes are the inlet to the soul particularly with reference to sexual sins. Remember Job's words, "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?" When Job is protesting his moral integrity, he said he made a covenant with his eyes not to look lustfully at a girl. He doesn't say he made a covenant never to look at a woman or to appreciate the beauty of a woman other than his wife. But his covenant was that his eyes would never be the inlet to lustful desires toward a woman other than his wife. What was Samson's downfall? One of the old writers perceptively said that in God's chastening of Samson, it was right that God should allow his eyes to be gouged out, for it was his eyes that led him to dishonor His God and be shorn of his power. In Judges 14, notice how clearly the eyes are emphasized as the inlet to the soul of Samson:

"And Samson went down to Timnath, and saw a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines. And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife" (vv. 1-2).

She was a stunner. He didn't know a thing about her character. She's from the hoards of the uncircumcised Philistines whom Samson is raised to defeat on behalf of Jehovah and the people of God. But he sees her, and looking the second time and the third time, his heart burns with passion--"I've got to have her!" What he meant is that he had to have her body. He didn't know diddly about her soul. His eyes became the inlet to a burning lust, which eventually led to them being gouged out. He grinds like an animal at the mills taunted by the enemies of God. I wonder how many times Samson may have mourned in his blindness-- "O God, why did I not guard my eyes while I had them?" You want to be shorn of your power and bring disgrace to God, then let your eyes be the inlet to soul's lust and a burning sinful passion. David's trouble began with his eyes. In 2 Samuel 11:2, the Spirit of God is careful to focus upon the eyes: "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon." The moment his eyes glanced upon the naked flesh of this woman other than his wife, he should have turned and run to his place of prayer. But he looked a second time until he began to notice the beauty of her form. Then lust was conceived and burned until he sends for her and commits adultery with her. And he seeks to cover his sin with murder and deception all because of what he let into his eyes. What did Jesus say in Matthew 5:28-29?

"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

The Lord is not talking about literal mutilation. You can pluck out one eye, and you've got another one to lust. What He's saying is deal with the eye that it not be the inlet to the soul, committing mental sin. Dear people, without being legalistic and legislate what you should and shouldn't look at, I want to raise my protest that people in this church watch movies that have scenes of lust and adultery and fornication and illicit physical contact between the unmarried and illicit scenes of married couples. No one has a right to look into a married couple's bedroom. It's voyeurism! It's uncleanness! You don't pay whatever you have to pay to go to the theater; you just check it out at the video store. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh

shall of the flesh reap corruption." David looked. Samson looked. How are the mighty fallen! Who are you, and who am I to think we can look and not fall? Even secular writers with no Biblical norms and sensitivities say in the arts and entertainment section of *The New York Times* that the hottest shows are nothing but a form of soft core pornography. (Whoever makes the distinctions, I don't know.) What is a Christian doing watching it? The sitcoms from 7 to 9--banal, raw, crass, bathroom talk--everyone neighing after someone else's wife in the language of the prophet. These things ought to have no place in your home, in your life, or in mine. And if we've gained a measure of victory over the movies we'll watch and rent and the TV shows we will or will not watch, there are always the billboards. When I occasionally go to the average market to pick up something for my wife, which is rare, I have to plot ahead of time when I go to the checkout line to have tunnel vision. Bared breasts on every side when you just want to check out a gallon of milk. Everywhere make a covenant with your eyes. Guard the inlets to the soul that would provoke to mental or actual sexual sins. Catalogs that come to your house--parents don't be naive as to what can provoke lust in your teenage girls and boys who are just beginning to have sexual awakening. What is in a JC Penny catalog now was pornography thirty years ago. "O Pastor, you're a prude." I'm determined to get to heaven pure. If your eye offends you; if a JC Penny catalog is a stumbling block to you or your kids, cancel it. You'll get to heaven without buying anything out of JC Penny's catalog. What about the romance novels some of you allow your daughters to read? "O, they're Christian romance novels." Rubbish! Your daughters can't read tender accounts of Mr. Right embracing Miss Right under the soft moonlight filtering through the trees and not have awakened desires that ought never to be awakened in that setting. Trash your romance novels. Give them good solid biographies. Give them good rich history. Don't be naive. Am I going to come into your home and check your books? No, you deal with God in these matters, but I'm appalled at some of the stuff that I hope is naively permitted. If you dads have not talked to your sons about the temptations they face with catalogs and flyers that come into the home, sit down with them tonight and say, "Son, be honest with me." If you ever have the pain of a son or daughter who goes astray sexually, you want to have a good conscience that before God you did nothing to provoke it. It's serious business, folks. The eyes--in 2 Peter 2:14, Peter speaks of eyes full of adultery.

Watch the ears. In Ephesians 5:4-6, Paul explicitly addresses dirty jokes, double entendre, off color, innuendo. He says, "...let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints...." Read Revelation 18 and the destruction of Babylon. And you know what is destroyed with Babylon? Babylon is the world and all that it has, and God says down with Babylon will go it's violins, it's clarinets, and its instruments of music that have been a vehicle of causing the world to come in and possess the souls of men. Watch your eyes. Watch your ears. Watch your hands. I couldn't help but remember the little diddy that many of us learned as kids:

Be careful little eyes what you see. Be careful little eyes what you see.
There's a Father up above
Looking down on you in love.
Be careful little eyes what you see.

Be careful little ears what you hear. Be careful little ears what you hear.
There's a Father up above
Looking down on you in love.
Be careful little ears what you hear.

We can go right down all of our inlets to the soul, and, dear brothers and sister, if we get serious--and we don't legislate for one another, but we legislate "as for me and my house, we

will be labeled a bunch of fundies, a bunch of weirdoes," but if by the grace of God, we can get through this moral cesspool clean to heaven, it will be worth it all when we see Jesus.

Summary: would you take God's antidote to sexual impurity? Then you and I must continually engage in the Spirit-empowered, Gospel-orientated mortification of sexual sins. That means you're not going to make any progress until you're in Christ. Romans 8:8: "So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Some of you may be utterly crippled by these sins, and your never going to make any headway until you get united to Christ. The fundamental problem with some of you may be that you're not in Christ. I urge you to go to Him. Go to Him as you are: filthy, vile, spattered, discouraged. Go to Christ who said, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." "Such were some of you," Paul could say. Then dear child of God, lay to heart, memorize Romans 8:13 and Colossians 3:5. Periodically ask yourself,

"Am I seeking to mortify these sins from the posture of a justified sinner? Am I seeking to mortify by a well-informed faith in the implications of my union with Christ? Am I purposely and righteously avoiding anything or anyone that tempts to these sins? And am I jealously guarding all inlets to the soul?"

If you are, then I believe you'll be able to say, "By the grace of God, I'm making progress in dealing with sexual sins." O yes, there may be falls, but when you connect the dots, you'll see, by the grace of God, there is a progress in the application of grace to your heart and life. May God help us.

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