

# Spiritual Disciplines - Purity

*Matthew 5:8 – “Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”*

## The Need for Purity:

A lack of purity (also known as impurity) is at epidemic proportions in our society, even among those who call themselves Christians. A 1988 article in Leadership magazine stated that in response to the question, “Since you have been in local church ministry, have you ever done anything with someone (not your spouse) that you feel was sexually inappropriate”, 23% of “Christian” pastors said, “Yes”. In response to the question, “Have you ever had sexual intercourse with someone other than your spouse since you have been in local-church ministry?” 12% said, “Yes”. To these same questions, 45% of “Christians” (not pastors) said, “Yes” to having sexually inappropriate behavior and 23% admitted to having had an affair. Let’s begin this study by defining purity.

Purity – Inner cleanliness. It is determined by who we are when no one else is around and our thought life. It is what God sees when He looks down upon our heart.

## The Fall of Purity – A Lesson from David

How do we lose our purity? What is the progression that leads us into this realm of sin? We find a descriptive example in Scriptures of a man who fell into this pit and the steps that led him there. No one enjoys having their dirty laundry aired, but the Lord had David’s sin recorded on the pages of Scripture to be a lesson to all concerning the need to guard our purity. Read 2 Samuel 11 and discuss the five steps that led David into sin.

### 1. Desensitization

- Read Deut. 17:14-17 and 2 Sam. 5:13 to discuss what David had done to desensitize himself – **He had married several women**
- What are some things that desensitize men today? – **images on television, magazines, perverse conversations with co-workers and friends**

### 2. Relaxation

- David felt he was **safe** and he let his **guard** down (2 Sam. 11:1)
- How do we fall prey to this weakness today? – **We allow ourselves to think that our desensitized minds are not really weak and that we are above sin.**

### 3. Fixation

- David’s sin began when he didn’t turn his **eyes** off of Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2-3)
- Dietrich Bonhoeffer noted that when lust takes control, “At this moment God ... loses all reality.... Satan does not fill us with hatred of God, but with forgetfulness of God.”

### 4. Rationalization

- What took place in David’s mind before committing this sin? – **He rationalized the sin in his mind so that he believed that greater good would come from sin than obedience to God.**
- What lies do men tell themselves before falling into a sin? – **We allow ourselves to believe that we (and even others) will be better off if we sin.**

### 5. Degeneration

- What followed as a result of David’s sin? – **He had Uriah killed, lost his child, saw his other children fall into sin and saw his kingdom decline.**
- How will impure acts such as viewing pornography snowball into more sin? – **It will lead us to impure and lustful thoughts, dissatisfaction with our spouse, and tempt us to adultery.**

## Restoring Purity – Biblical Teaching

Before we talk about how to guard ourselves against purity, we need to establish that God’s will for us is purity. Read the following passage:

*1 Thessalonians 4:3-8* - “It is God’s will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, 5 not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.” (New International Version)

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*Matthew 5:8* – “Blessed [are] the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

This verse not only makes it clear that God wants us to be pure and avoid immorality, but that the responsibility is upon our shoulders to learn to control ourselves. How do we accomplish this task? Not without the help of the Lord and His Scriptural instruction. Below are some suggestions for overcoming these issues in your life.

## Accountability

*Proverbs 27:17* – “Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”

*2 Timothy 2:22* – “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

Maintain an **accountability** partner that you can speak openly and frankly with about these issues regularly.

## Prayer

*Matthew 26:41* – “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak.”

Consistently pray for the Lord to **protect** you from temptation and to give you **strength** if you are tempted.

## Scripture Memorization

*Psalms 119:11* – “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.”

Commit **Scriptures** to memory that pertain to the particular **weakness** in your life.

## Controlling our Thoughts

*Job 31:1* – “I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”

*Ephesians 5:3-4* – “But immorality or any impurity or greed must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.” (NASU)

What comes into our **eyes** and **ears** enters our mind and will eventually come out of our **mouth**. **Garbage In Garbage Out.**

## Setting up Hedges

*2 Timothy 2:22* – “Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

*Ephesians 4:27* – “Neither give place to the devil.”

Avoid any **opportunity** for temptation.

## Living in Reality

*Proverbs 16:18* – “Pride [goeth] before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.”

Never allow yourself to feel **invulnerable** or above **sin**. Recognize your need to constantly rely upon the Lord.

## Maintaining Intimacy with God

*Genesis 39:7-9* – “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?”

Keep close in your walk with the **Lord** so that you may never forget about Him when **tempted**.