

Real Men

Are

Godly Men

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Looking for Men of Purity

To be pure, means that we are to be clean in our minds and clean in our behavior. The Bible is so very balanced; because the Bible does not deny that all of us have a problem in dealing with the flesh. It also gives us a plan and God has given us the power to be victorious over temptation while all that would have us live unholy and impure lives.

Twelve steps to help get us toward purity.

1. We must truly repent and confess impurity. All of us are sinners, and each one of us no doubt at some point has cherished some impure thoughts, if not engaged in impure activities. Although the title of this lesson refers to men it equally applies to women.

There's not a teenage boy, or a man, who does not have a problem to some degree in dealing impure thoughts. This may be true for some girls and women, perhaps all. If a man tells you he does not have a problem with that, he is either abnormal, lying, or dead. We must admit we have problems in this area and be truly sorry by changing i.e., repenting. Until we do, impurity is going to have a headlock on us that simply will not let go. So, the first step is to repent of it and to confess our impurity to God.

2. Make every effort to keep yourself pure. No one has the power to fight off Satan all by himself, or herself, because Satan is too strong, he's too devious and deceitful. We are far too weak. As we try to conquer impurity in our own lives without relying upon God, we will fail time and time and time again. Only God has the power to help us overcome impurity and evil in our lives. However, God is not going to make us pure without some effort on our part. He is not going to override our lack of effort in trying to be pure people. We must:

- a. "Keep yourself pure." (I Timothy 5:22)
- b. "Train the younger women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure so that no-one will malign the word of God." (Titus 2:4-5)
- c. "Every one who has this hope in him, purifies himself, just as God is pure." (I John 3:3)
- d. "Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed---not only in my presence, but much more now in my absence---continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose. Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe." (Philippians 2:12-15)

So Paul says, God works in you, but he begins that passage by saying, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. God is going to work in us if we're trying, but we've got to make that effort in conjunction with the power of God.

3. Be accountable to another Christian. Most of us don't like to be accountable to anybody. Maybe it's pride or arrogance that makes us want to do things our own way. We really don't like the idea that someone is watching us, or that someone is checking up on us. But Satan knowing that we don't want to be accountable to anybody else is able to exploit that very weakness on our part. The truth is **behavior that is observed, changes.**

People, who voluntarily will give some sense of accountability to another individual who's a trusted friend or group of friends, are people who are really serious about changing their behavior. If you know about my faults, and I have asked you to hold me accountable, and if I have asked you to check with me on a regular basis and to pray with me about that particular weakness in my life, then I am much more likely to monitor my thoughts and to monitor my behavior; and in effect, to end up changing my behavior. "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other that you may be healed." (James 5:16)

4. Pray for yourself. Pray for your spouse if you're married. Pray for your children. Pray for others whom you love. Many Christians underestimate the power of prayer to help us overcome temptations in our lives. Even Jesus taught in the model prayer: "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." We will never ever be able to live lives of purity without depending on prayer and asking God to help us.

Consider David, King of Israel. After he had sinned so grievously in his adultery with Bathsheba and then murdered Uriah, he finally confessed his sin to God and he prayed "Create in me a pure heart [clean heart (KJV)] O God, and renew a

steadfast spirit within me." (Psalm 51:10) So David is praying for himself, God, create in me a clean and a pure heart and restore me after the sin which I have committed.

But then Paul in many places models for us how we ought to pray for others. Philippians 1, verses 9 and following, Paul says, "And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to" (now listen to this word) "discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ---to the glory and praise of God." So, we pray for ourselves, and others to help us discern the difference between what's right and what's wrong and to be pure and blameless.

5. Avoid even the hint of evil, flee from it. We say we want to be pure, but if we constantly engage in off-color jokes, look at the wrong kinds of movies, read the wrong kinds of material, and watch the kind of television. We constantly fill our minds and thoughts with all kinds of impure thoughts and behavior, we're fooling ourselves. We've pulled the wool right over our own eyes. We can't play with fire and not be burned by it. How foolish to think that we can taste just a little bit of evil and not be intoxicated by it.

I'm reminded of the difference between the way that King David and young Joseph in Egypt handled the temptation that came their way. David saw a beautiful woman bathing on her roof, and he lingered, lusted and pursued his desire which led to tremendous sin. Joseph, on the other hand, day after day, was tempted by a woman, his master's wife, who kept saying to him, "Come have sex with me." But Joseph fled and found deliverance.

Paul says, "Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." (II Timothy 2:22) "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out..." (I Corinthians 10:13) One of the translations says, "He will also provide a way of escape so that you can stand up under it." It is up to us to look for in order to find that way of escape and then to take that way.

"Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul." (I Peter 2:11) "But among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk, or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this, you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person---such a man is an idolater---has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." [NIV] Don't let sexual sin, perversion of any kind, or greed even be mentioned among you. This is not appropriate behavior for God's holy people. It's not right that dirty stories, foolish talk, or obscene jokes should be mentioned among you either. Instead, give thanks *to God*. You know very well that no person who is involved in sexual sin, perversion, or greed (which means worshiping wealth) can have any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. [GWT] (Ephesians 5:3-5)

So Paul says, don't even let there be a hint of sexual immorality among you.

6. Avoid relationships that tend to pull you down. We all influence other people, and other people influence us. That's just the way society works. Healthy associations with good people always have a way of building up, encouraging, and making it easier to live godly lives. Paul said the flip side of that coin is, "Evil companions corrupt good morals." If we run with people who engage in all kinds of impurity, then we shouldn't be surprised if somewhere along the line, we don't end up getting corrupted right along with them.

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?"... "Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God." "Therefore, come out from them and be separate, Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you, I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters." (II Corinthians 6:14... 7:1...17)

Being yoked with unbelievers applies in many areas of life. Why would a Christian want to be yoked with someone whose behavior, attitudes and beliefs are not characteristic of Christ? You're going to get yourself in trouble. Therefore, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates us.

7. Avoid fornication and adultery. Our society has become so preoccupied with sex that it oozes from all the pores of American life. Our society seems to have an insatiable desire for things that are sensual. Every large city, certainly in this country, has its porno shops, its hard-core X-rated films. It's really hard anymore even on the major channels to turn on the television at night and not see some sort of intimate bedroom scene, or to turn on the radio and hear some so-called humor about sexuality. There's so much of it that we're almost made to feel abnormal if we're not engaged in some sort of affair.

God has always desired purity over promiscuity. "Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be holy: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; 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. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit." (1 Thessalonians 4:1-8) "Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." (Hebrews 13:4)

8. Say no to ungodliness. Long before Nancy Reagan was telling us to "just say no" to drugs, God has been saying for centuries for us to say no to sin. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age..." (Titus 2:11-13) So God says, "Say 'No' to ungodliness."

9. Take control of your body. The desire of our bodies can easily lead us off course. It's not that the body in and of itself is evil. It's just that our bodies possess appetites which are all too ready to find satisfaction in many ways that are temporarily satisfying and so appealing, but wrong.

Do you know your body? Are you aware of the things that weaken your control of your body? Have you stopped to consider the danger zones and how to stay clear of those zones, or at least to rush by them as quickly as possible? It's impossible for us to really deal with the whole issue of purity if we don't come to terms with the practical facts related to our bodies. Paul says, "We are to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God" (Romans 12:1); "Do not offer the parts of your body to sin, as instruments of wickedness (Romans 6:13); "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you" (1 Corinthians 6:19); and "each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable." (1 Thessalonians 4:4)

10. Draw near to God. If we're not careful we may leave the impression that we by our own efforts can become pure. Make no mistake about it; much does depend upon your efforts to make your own life pure. Purity is not just automatic when you become a Christian, we almost also must say that we must draw near to God if we want to be holy and pure as we seek his face relying upon him then God will give us the strength to live lives of purity.

"Submit [yield to God's authority] yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you." (James 4:7-8)

11. Fill your heart and mind with good things. It's not enough to simply deal with the exteriors of our behavior; it's like putting a Band-Aid on a skin cancer. No healing ever really takes place; it covers the disease for a little while. Living a pure life really is a job from the inside out. Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they tried to look so good on the outside, while on the inside, he said they were full of all kinds of impurity and uncleanness. We will fail if we merely try to deal with the symptoms. Saying: "I will not lust, I will not deal with this temptation..." is like saying over and over again, "I will not think about a pink elephant. I will not think about a pink elephant." That never works. The only way to get rid of evil impurities is to replace them with something that is good.

Set your hearts on things above, not on earthly things. Paul instructs us to put to death whatever belongs to our earthly nature and he mentions specifically: sexually immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. (Colossians 3:5) Then he tells us in verses one and two, how we're supposed to do that. Notice, "...set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God."

Fill your heart and your mind with good things., Paul says, "...brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable---if anything is excellent or praiseworthy---think about such things." (Philippians 4:8)

12. Live up to your calling. Personal purity is an attainable goal. It doesn't mean we're perfect, but it is an attainable goal. In our day of moral decline, it's easy to think that purity is some sort of unachievable, outdated standard of yesteryear, but that's not so. Living a life of purity is a high calling, but it can be attained. "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live holy lives." (I Thessalonians 4:7) "Dear friends, I urge you as aliens and strangers in the world to abstain from sensual desires which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that although they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God." (II Peter 2:11)

The key or foundation to living pure lives is to honor God with your body, your life, and your mind. If that is the motivating foundational factor then these twelve steps will help us to live lives of purity.

The truth is, none of us are absolutely pure. "Who can say, 'I have kept my heart pure; I am clean and without sin?'" (Proverbs 20:9) None of us can say that. . Only God can make us pure, and he does that through the blood of his son Jesus Christ. The fact is: we can be pure through faith, repentance, trust and obedience to God's Word. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) *Amazing Grace #1210 - Dan Dozier May 28, 1995*