

Four essentials of living a life of sexual purity

1. We must recognize our weakness

Failing to see our weakness and vulnerability is almost an assured path to failure and defeat.

Romans 7: 21-25 I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. I love God’s law with all my heart. But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

2. We must experience Christ centered transformation- starting with our thoughts

What we seek is more than merely modifying our behavior, eliminating certain objectionable things. Rather it is radical transformation of the inner person.

Zero tolerance is a helpful way to think about the evidence of transformation. It means we yield absolutely no ground in our thoughts or actions for impurity.

Romans 12:1-2 And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

3. We must Confess, Surrender & Repent as a matter of practice.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: *Our brother breaks the circle of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person. As long as I am by myself in the confession of my sins everything remains in the dark, but in the presence of a brother the sin has to be brought into the light. But since the sin must come to light sometime, it is better that it happens today between me and my brother, rather than on the last day in the piercing light of the final judgment. It is a mercy that we can confess our sins to a brother. Such grace spares us the terrors of the last judgment.* Life Together (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1954).

C.S. Lewis writes *...fallen man is not just an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms. Laying down your arms, surrendering, saying you're sorry, realizing that you have been on the wrong track and getting ready to start life over again from the ground floor - that is the only way out of a 'hole'.*

This process of surrender - this movement full speed astern - is what Christians call repentance. Now repentance is no fun at all. It is something much harder than merely eating humble pie. It means unlearning all the self-conceit and self-will that we have been training ourselves into for thousands of years. It means killing part of yourself, undergoing a kind of death... Mere Christianity (Harper San Francisco, 2001)

Those things in our life that we have not confessed to another person and turned from, are the very things that will continue to have power over us, making us its slave.

4. We must seek accountability with a trusted group of brothers.

An unwillingness to seek accountability in trusted relationships reveals pride and self-determination in us. It is like going onto the battlefield alone. A lone ranger is a dead ranger.

Hebrews 3:12-15 Be careful then, dear brothers ... Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. Remember what it says:

"Today when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as Israel did when they rebelled."

Notes from the May 13th, 2011 Men's Gathering

Presented by Jim Elwell

For additional support in the area of sexual purity, consider joining us for one of our Compass meetings. Details on the College Church website: www.college-church.com.