

THE TEN PLEASURES

EXODUS 20:14

THE PLEASURE OF PURITY



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Of all the commandments, our culture views the seventh commandment more than any other as a pleasure-killer. **How can purity produce pleasure?** We're going to answer that question first by looking at the pain of impurity then at the pleasure of purity.

BACKGROUND

We need to keep returning to the four R's: Redemption > Relationship > Rules > Reward. We won't be able to keep God's rules or get God's reward if we don't start with redemption by God and relationship with God.



How does the seventh commandment produce pleasure?



1. IMPURITY IS PAIN

As usual we want to start by looking at our confessions and catechisms' teaching about what this commandment requires and forbids. We'll use the Westminster Larger Catechism (see also HC 108-9)

LC 138 The duties required in the Seventh Commandment are:

- chastity (purity) in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior;
- and the preservation of it in ourselves and others;
- watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;
- temperance (restraint/self-control), keeping of chaste (pure) company, modesty in apparel (clothes);
- marriage by those that have not the gift of continency (self-restraint)
- conjugal (marital) love, and cohabitation;
- diligent labor in our callings;
- shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations to it.

LC 139 The sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment are:

- adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts (e.g. homosexuality);
- all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections;
- all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto;
- wanton (seductive) looks, impudent (rude) or light (flirtatious) behavior, immodest apparel (clothes);
- prohibiting of lawful marriages, and dispensing with unlawful marriages;
- allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews (bath houses were places of prostitution), and resorting to them;
- entangling vows of single life (vows of singleness without the gift of singleness)
- undue delay of marriage;
- having more wives or husbands than one at the same time;
- unjust divorce or desertion;
- idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company;
- lascivious (lustful or lecherous) songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays
- and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.

Having summarized the Bible's teaching about what the seventh commandment requires and forbids, we want to ask, "Why?" Why does God forbid these sins and require these duties? As Sovereign, God is not required to give us an answer. His authority is sufficient. But he does explain why: It's because he wants to maximize our happiness. Let's consider the damage that immorality does to us, others, our society.

Physical damage

- Disease: STD's are soaring leaving infertility and impotence in their trail (1 Cor. 6:18)
- Diminished pleasure: Increase frequency and partners does not mean more pleasure but less.
- Death: It kills children through abortion.

Emotional damage

- Guilt: It broke the bones of David's soul (Ps. 51:8)
- Fear: It causes anxiety and insomnia (Ps. 32:3-4)
- Shame: It creates feelings of worthlessness, self-hatred, lack of self-respect, sense of uncleanness



2. PURITY IS PLEASURE

The "purity" we're talking about here is not the legalistic, will-powered, self-righteous, external purity of popular "purity culture." It's the Gospel-fueled, Spirit-empowered, humble, inner and outer purity of the Bible. Law-purity will give you a happier life than an impure life. But law-purity is a limited pleasure compared to the maximal pleasure of Gospel-purity.

God's pleasure in purity

God designed the exclusive loyal physical intimacy between a married couple (one man and one woman) for maximum pleasure. It did not just have a functional aim of procreation but a pleasure aim of recreation. When he first saw the results, he said "Very good!" He even left this good gift with us after the fall (1 Tim. 4:4).

Christ used the covenanted physical intimacy between a married couple (one man and one woman) to describe his greatest pleasure, that is the union between himself and his people (Ephesians 5:22-33).

The Holy Spirit inspired Song of Solomon in which the physical relationship between a married couple is celebrated in and of itself, and also as it points to the spiritual relationship between God and his people. The Holy Spirit also maximizes the pleasure of physical intimacy in marriage by applying the Gospel to take away guilt, shame, and fear, and replace them with joy, confidence, peace.

If marriage is not God's plan for us, we can know that God takes massive pleasure in our loyal faithful commitment to him (1 Corinthians 7:32-35). A single person's pure and total devotion to the Lord gives God even greater pleasure than a married couple's divided devotion does.

Our Pleasure in Purity

God's pleasure in purity is the foundation of our pleasure in purity. Knowing how much delight he gets from it should give us great delight in it too. But here are some practical helps to maximizing pleasure in marriage:

- **The Gospel maximizes pleasure:** Being each fully forgiven and forgiving fully each other multiplies joy.
- **Waiting maximizes pleasure:** Deny self pleasure for a short time to increase pleasure for a long time.
- **Contentment maximizes pleasure:** Entitlement, a sense of "I deserve this" does the opposite.
- **Serving maximizes pleasure:** Aim at satisfaction of another to increase and protect our own (1 Cor. 7:1-5)
- **Worship maximizes pleasure:** Healthy spiritual lives keeps God first and produces worship and gratitude.
- **Christlikeness maximizes pleasure:** Patient, kind, gentle, and sensitive, in words and actions.
- **Christ-centeredness maximizes pleasure:** John Piper wrote: "The deepest cure to our pitiful addictions is not any mental strategies—though I believe in them and have my own (called ANTHEM). The deepest cure is to be intellectually and emotionally staggered by the infinite, everlasting, unchanging supremacy of Christ in all things.

CHANGING OUR STORIES WITH GOD'S STORY

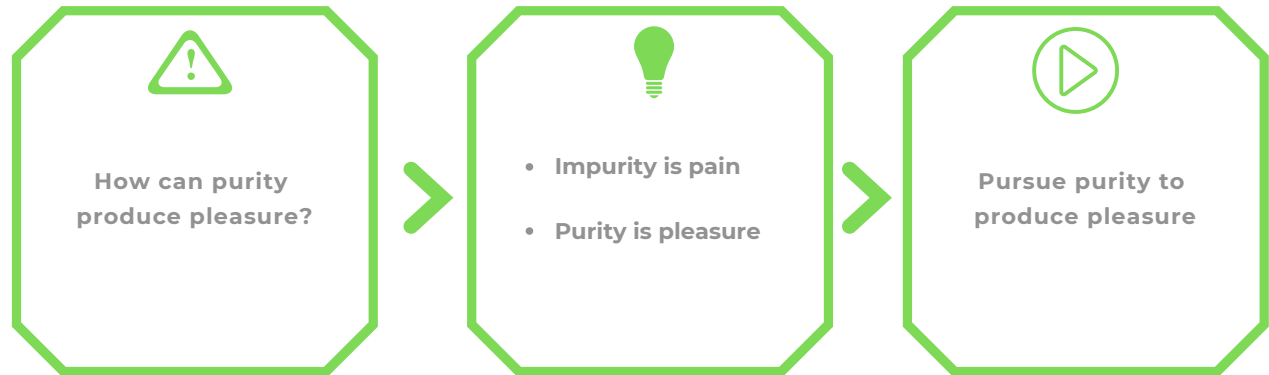
Enjoy the pleasure. Enjoy the pleasure. Enjoy the pleasure. Enjoy the pleasure. Enjoy the pleasure.

PURE PLEASURE IS
THE PUREST PLEASURE

Hear God's Story > Change your story > Tell the story > Change others' stories



SUMMARY



A NEW CHAPTER

- **Parents:** Talk, talk, talk! Talk about the pain of impurity and the pleasure of of purity.
- **Teens:** Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! Obsession with Jesus will deliver from obsession with sex.
- **Married:** Enjoy, enjoy, enjoy! Get as much pleasure as God does in marital intimacy.
- **Long married:** Loyalty, loyalty, loyalty. Secular research has found that there's more sexual satisfaction in many years of married commitment than in many partners (Prov. 5:18).
- **Tempted:** Count, count, count. One look, huge loss (Matt. 5:27-30).
- **Addict:** Repent, repent, repent! No repentance, no redemption (1 Cor. 6:9-10)
- **Convicted:** Gospel, Gospel, Gospel! Receive full, free, forever forgiveness and fear (Ps. 130:8)
- **Betrayed:** Forgive, forgive, forgive! You may leave an adulterer, but you don't have to.
- **Singles:** Devotion, devotion, devotion! Use singleness as positive example of spiritual devotion.
- **Prayer:** God of pure pleasure, thank you for giving us pure pleasures to enjoy. Forgive us for trying to find pleasure separated from purity and help us to find pleasure in purity.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How have you seen impurity produce pain in your life, others' lives, or in our culture?
2. In what other ways does impurity produce pain?
3. What other Bible passages show the pleasure of purity and the pain of impurity?
4. How did this sermon change your view of God?
5. Who can you help that is struggling in this area and how will you help them?
6. How will this sermon change your singleness, relationships, marriage, parenting?