

## FOR MEN (AND BOYS) ONLY

*It is God's will that you should be sanctified: 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. (1 Thess. 4:3-4)*

It was virtually a given in the first century that Gentile pagans indulged in sexual vices. Sometimes it was very difficult to lead converts out of that lifestyle into the purity of life demanded by Christ. This moral struggle is reflected in the Scriptures, especially in St. Paul's letters to Gentile congregations. In these letters, St. Paul very clearly condemned passionate lust and all forms of sexual immorality as sins issuing from the flesh (Gal 5:19ff). Even though he spoke to Christians, he warned them that such practices and lusts are marks of the former life without God, not the new life in Christ. He also warned them that God's judgment comes on those who walk according to the flesh (1 Cor 6:9). As our culture today reverts, in many ways, to the pagan spirit, these problems are again surfacing even in the church.

Sexual immorality is not, of course, a sin limited to men. The title of this article does not intend to imply that. The Scriptures condemn both the adulterer and the adulteress, but the warnings are addressed *primarily* to men. This should not be surprising. The sex-for-sale industry (Prostitution, pornography, strip clubs) is created and sustained primarily to satisfy male demand. It has always been so and will continue to be so. Sexually immoral women are often using sex to get something else (money, love), but men tend to use other things to get sex. Sex is often a means for women, but the end for men. The powerful sex drive, when dominated by the flesh, leads to havoc and destruction to both women and men. It is especially destructive to families. We need to address this issue, and it needs to be addressed to men by men. That's the reason for this article. (I'll let women take the lead in addressing sins that primarily afflict them.)

The temptations and opportunities for sexual immorality are abundant today in America. First, societal norms have removed all boundaries against sexual immorality. We have been led to believe that sex outside of marriage is normal and good, and that yielding entirely to one's sexual appetites is natural and healthy. Very little is ever spoken about the dangers and disastrous consequences of sexually immoral behavior. Absolutely nothing is spoken about self denial or self control. Second, we are bombarded with temptations to the flesh wherever we turn. Billboards, magazines, television, and movies display pictures, scenes, and dialogues that would have been scandalous only a few decades ago. It is becoming exceedingly difficult to "flee fornication" (1 Cor 6:18). Where does one flee? Where do we turn our eyes? Third, we have internet, sex talk phone numbers, cable TV, and ever new communication devices that make pornography and other forms of sexual immorality so easy to obtain, only the most self controlled are able to avoid it. We live in a world that vexes the Christian soul day by day.

Christian men are also being caught up in these things. Church-going men are voluntarily clicking internet sites that war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). Christian men are feeding their

flesh with pornography, and other forms of sexual vice. This is happening not only to adolescents, but to married men of all ages. It is happening not just to fringe members of the church, but to church leaders. It is happening even to pastors. It is happening not only in other denominations, but in the Missouri Synod. It is happening, not only in other congregations, but in Messiah Lutheran Church. The problem is real, and it is not only on our doorstep, it has made its way into the inner recesses of the church. It is a problem that must be confronted. The great problem in confrontation is that we always tend to minimize and justify sins we love. Bill Clinton was able to justify himself in regard to his sexual immorality by limiting the definition of adultery to sexual intercourse. Christian men in churches today have a thousand ways to excuse indulging in pornography. They have made themselves believe that it is really harmless, and that it is certainly a better alternative than other ways of satisfying sexual appetites. Such justifications are whitewashing a serious problem. Dear brother in Christ, if you are now engaged in one of the “lesser” forms of sexual vice, consider the harm they cause you and others you love:

## **1. PORNOGRAPHY DEMEANS WOMEN**

Eve was not made to be a sex object for Adam. She was made to be his help-meet and companion for life. The wonderful gift of sex was to be enjoyed as an expression of love in a deep and satisfying relationship which filled all their needs. Pornography reduces the value of women to be fitting objects of male lust. Their value is found only in the size of their breasts and the beauty of their bodies. This is a horrendous dehumanization that any man would deplore in regard to his wife or daughters, and any Christian man would deplore in regard to all women. Pornography demeans not only the women who are pictured, it demeans all women. The prevalence of pornography today is hurting *your* wife and *your* daughters. It is potentially corrupting the minds and the behavior of young men who may one day ask your daughter (or granddaughter) for a date, or who may one day propose to her. Is pornography really harmless?

## **2. PORNOGRAPHY CORRUPTS MEN**

It is a foolish thing to think that indulging one’s evil lust does no damage to the soul. It is a foolish thing to think that lust can be fed without making it grow. It is a foolish thing to think that you can throw gasoline on the fire and still contain the blaze. King Solomon gave wise counsel to young men in this regard. In Proverbs chapter 7 he observes from his window a foolish young man who followed a seductive woman into adultery. He writes:

With persuasive words she led him astray; she seduced him with her smooth talk.  
All at once he followed her like an ox going to the slaughter, like a deer stepping  
into a noose till an arrow pierces his liver, like a bird darting into a snare, little  
knowing it will cost him his life. (Prov. 7:21-23)

This seductive woman comes through internet today and leads men into a noose set by Satan. Indulging in pornography not only destroys innocence, it destroys the moral compass. It does not enhance sexual satisfaction, but eventually destroys it through addiction. Young men who have become addicted to sexual perversion will not find the sexual fulfillment God has designed

for them in marriage. Young women who marry men addicted to pornography must give up the hope that they can satisfy them in the marriage bed. They are competing against a thousand fantasies branded on his mind through the years. They cannot win this competition.

### **3. PORNOGRAPHY DESTROYS MARRIAGES**

The married man who thinks pornography is harmless should see the pain in his wife's eyes. Unfortunately, he can't, even as the alcoholic cannot see the devastation he or she is causing others. Addictions are blinding. I have heard the cries of several women whose husbands indulge themselves in pornographic material, and I know that there are probably many more who bear their pain silently. A Christian man is called to love his wife as Christ loved the church. His love makes his wife beautiful and gives her fulfillment as a woman. A man who indulges in pornography deeply wounds his wife's spirit and sense of dignity. She does not feel valued and loved by him. His body may be with her, but his mind and heart are with others. She must share him with women who have no flaws because they are not real. It should be no surprise that pornography often leads to outright adultery and the destruction of marriage.

Brothers, let us be men who are true and courageous men of God. Let us learn to "control our own body in a way that is holy and honorable." Self-control is a manly virtue, and there is very little of it today. There is very little of it, because fewer and fewer men know Jesus, the only REAL man. He was the man God created man to be. He did not give Himself over to sexual impurity or greed. He did not despise women. He was not unfaithful to His bride, the church. He was a man who controlled Himself in all situations. All those outside of Christ are ruled by Satan, the father of self-will and chaos. Only those who are connected to Christ by faith can battle against the desires of the flesh. Only those who have been buried and raised with Christ can crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts. Only those in whom Christ dwells can overcome sin and do good works. If you have fallen into sexual sin and vice, look not to your own strength, but to His. Jesus has come to set the captives free, and He alone can set you free. If you have, by God's grace, remained free from these vices, give thanks to God and continue in His Word, but do not be lifted up with pride. "If any man thinks he stands, let him take heed, lest he fall."

Brothers in the Lord, let us hold one another accountable in Christ for purity.

Pastor Huebel

*(Messiah Messenger, July 2001)*