

Loving Righteousness: Making a Covenant of Purity with Our Eyes

I. THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A COOPERATION WITH GOD'S GRACE

- A. We can receive God's empowering grace in vain by not cooperating with it to overcome lust.
*¹ We as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.
² For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation...⁴ We commend ourselves as ministers of God...⁷ by the armor of righteousness (2 Cor. 6:1-7)*
- B. God requires us to work together with Him (cooperate with His grace) as an expression of His desire for partnership with us. ***God will not do our part and we cannot do His part.***
1. ***Our part*** includes making quality decisions to deny ourselves (saying no to sin), to feed our spirit on the Word, to ask for God's help through prayer with fasting, use our authority in Christ against Satan and to embrace godly activities (serving) and relationships (fellowshipping, confessing our weaknesses).
 2. ***God's part*** is to release supernatural influence on our heart (power, wisdom, desires), body (healing), circumstances (provision), relationships (favor), and ministry.
- C. Righteousness is an armor that thwarts Satan's attack against us. Nothing can substitute for continually renewing our commitment to make righteous choices. Things do not just "work out" in the grace of God if we do not continually make righteous choices. False teaching on grace minimizes the necessity to make righteous decisions.
⁴ Certain men have crept in unnoticed...who turn the grace of our God into lewdness. (Jude 4)
- D. We must make quality decisions to abstain from (deny) lust that wars against us.
¹¹ I beg you as...pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul... (1 Pet. 2:11)
- E. Jesus defines what loving Him consists of. We cannot come to Him on our terms but only on His terms. Denying our lusts is the theatre God chose for us to express our love to Him. Each of us has a different struggle, thus a different assignment from which we offer our gift of love to God.
²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... (Jn. 14:21-23)
- F. Our obedience begins when we set our heart to obey not just after we gain full victory in an area. We must feel His pleasure in each step of our growth unto full victory. This begins with setting our heart on obeying Him and confidently receiving His affectionate mercy. However, we must never be content with only setting our heart to obey. We want full victory in our behavior.
- G. The devil wants us condemned so that we give up and give in to a life of sin with hopeless and despair. God wants us confident in His mercy through the process of growing unto full victory.

- H. God “approves” some on the Last Day for leadership in the age-to-come by declaring that they were consistently faithful to obey Him under the pressure of temptation.
¹² ***Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him. (Jas 1:12)***
- I. Those with the crown of righteousness are champions in righteousness in this life. The “crown of life” is the reward we receive for enduring (persevering) in our obedience in our war with lust.
⁸ ***There is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and...also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Tim. 4:8)***
- J. The positive side of our struggle is that saying, “no” provides an opportunity to express love to Jesus and receive His reward for making righteous decisions in the midst of temptation. There is great reward in warring against lust. We will only see or encounter God with purity.
¹⁸ ***I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich. (Rev. 3:18)***

II. LEARNING TO POSSESS OUR BODIES IN HONOR

- A. The commands of God always contain the promise of His power to obey. We must learn how to possess our vessel (the passions of our body, mind and emotions) in honor and purity.
³ ***This is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor...6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such...8 He who rejects this does not reject man, but God... (1 Thes. 4:3-10)***
- B. We must study how temptation affects our personality by knowing what specific situations make us vulnerable to specific sinful desires. We understand how our fatigue, moods, music, movies, locations (lonely park, private room, sports bar, party, etc), alcohol, disappointing circumstances, various stresses all work together in our personality to trigger us into great temptation.
- C. The Lord will discipline believers who refuse to repent of immorality (1 Thes. 4:6).
¹ ***It is reported that there is sexual immorality among you...that a man has his father's wife! 2 You... have not rather mourned, that he who has done this might be taken away from among you...5 Deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (to become sick) that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord (instead of losing his salvation). (1 Cor. 5:1-5)***
²⁹ ***He who eats and drinks (at the Lord's table) in an unworthy manner eats...judgment to himself...30 For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep (dead). 31 If we would judge ourselves (repent of sin), we would not be judged (by Jesus). (1 Cor. 11:29-31)***
- D. God gives us time to repent. He does require that repentance.
²⁰ ***You allow...Jezebel...to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality... 21 I gave her time to repent...22 I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into tribulation, unless they repent. 23 I will kill her children with death. (Rev. 2:20-23)***

- E. God's house has both vessels that bring Jesus honor and vessels that bring Him dishonor. Vessels of wood and clay are destroyed in the fire of Satan's temptation. We all have the opportunity to be a vessel of honor by cleansing ourselves from sinful deeds that we might fulfill the fullness of our divine assignment in this age (the good works ordained for us to do; Eph. 2:10).

²⁰ In a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. ²¹ Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. ²² Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness... (2 Tim. 2:20-22)

- F. We need to flee from immorality with the same zeal that Joseph did in his youth.

¹² She caught him (Joseph)...saying, "Lie with me." He...fled and ran outside ... (Gen. 39:12)

III. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EYE GATE

- A. Jesus exposed how the spirit of immorality operates. It works first in the mind (imagination) and is fueled by sight. **Progression of adultery**: eye adultery leads to heart-adultery which leads to physical adultery. Lust of the eyes operates towards those one sees in person or in the media.

²⁸ Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out... for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Mt. 5:28-29)

- B. Sexual purity is established first in our eyes. It is much easier to close the eye gate than to try to put out the raging fires of immoral passions. Job understood this.

¹ I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman? ⁹ If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door... (Job 31:1, 9)

- C. David set his heart to keep his eye gate pure even in the privacy of his home.

² I will behave wisely in a perfect (spiritually mature) way ...I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. ³ I will set nothing wicked before my eyes... (Ps. 101:2-3)

- D. Peter spoke of false shepherds in the Church who had eyes full of adultery.

¹⁴ Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin... (2 Pet. 2:14)

- E. God has great passion against spiritual and physical adultery.

⁹ I was crushed by their adulterous heart...by their eyes which play the harlot... (Ezek. 6:9)

² True and righteous are His judgments, because He has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication..." (Rev. 19:2)

- F. Our imagination is an expression of being created in God's image that enables us to draw close to God in intimacy. Satan seeks to defile our imagination to hinder our intimacy with Jesus.

²³ Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23)

IV. WE MUST MAKE A QUALITY DECISION TO FLEE IMMORALITY

- A. Immorality defiles one's body making it a vessel of darkness giving Satan access to them.
¹⁸ ***Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against (by granting access to Satan defile) his own body. (1 Cor. 6:18)***
- B. We refuse to present the members of our body to sin by aggressively avoiding situations that inflame sin. We must not go to places, buy items, look at or talk about that which stirs up lust.
¹² ***Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. 13 and do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin (Rom. 6:12-13)***
- C. We must be ruthlessly honest in refusing to stir lust by identifying it as "innocent touching."
¹ ***It is good for a man not to touch a woman. (1 Cor. 7:1)***
- D. The Scripture requires that we say no to immorality.
⁵ ***Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire....⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming... (Col. 3:5-6)***
- E. A common question concerns how far one can go in lust before God considers it immorality. In other words, where is the line? This question is proof that darkness still has a strong hold in the mind of those asking this sincere question. This is like asking the question, how much cancer can I inject or how much poison can I drink before it is dangerous. All traces or expressions of the spirit of immorality will injure our heart and minimize our ability to enjoy God's presence.

V. GOD WILL ETERNALLY JUDGE ALL WHO REFUSE TO REPENT FROM IMMORALITY

- ⁵ ***For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man...has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. (Eph. 5:5-6)***
- ⁹ ***Do not be deceived...neither fornicators...nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves...nor drunkards...will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)***
- ⁸ ***Sexually immoral...liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire... (Rev. 21:8)***
- ¹⁴ ***Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city...outside are...sexually immoral...(Rev. 22:14-15)***