



Session 2- Purity Over Compromise
Ephesians 5:1-14; 1 Corinthians 10:6-13
3/3/2019

MAIN POINT

In the sermon the point is made, compromise weighs you down and purity allows you to travel light. Even when Christians face morally tempting situations, there will always be a morally right solution that allows us to be obedient to God. God is faithful. He stands ready to walk with us and keep us through every circumstance and inconvenience. He doesn't just stand nearby watching to see what we will do but promises to provide a way *out* of temptation and into the joy of being made like him. He creates the way of escape and waits to reward us with more of himself. Will we live light and take the way out?

INTRODUCTION

What is one task that you've wanted to complete or one hobby that you've wanted to master that you've never actually gotten around to doing?

What is it that has prevented you from succeeding?

Transition: Depending on the complexity of the task or hobby, the process of mastering it can be lifelong. In fact, it might feel like you take two steps back for every step forward. Sometimes growing in Christ can feel like that. Even though we were made brand new by Jesus, we still battle with sin, and the process of growing in our holiness is a lifelong pursuit.

UNDERSTANDING

This portion of Ephesians comes in the midst of a larger section in which Paul describes specific ways a person's identity in Christ impacts daily behavior. Paul told the Ephesian believers to imitate God by living a life of love modeled on Christ's self-sacrificing love for us. Before the believers were saved, their lives were characterized by thoughts and deeds of spiritual darkness, but in Christ by light. They were to please the Lord by living consistently as those who belong to the light. The believers also were to live wisely, seeking to know and follow God's will. Those filled with the Spirit are distinguished by a close walk with the Lord that is characterized by praise and thanksgiving toward God.

Have a volunteer read Ephesians 5:1-6.

¹ Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children ² and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

³ But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴ Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵ For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.^[a] ⁶ Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them.

If you had to put these verses in your own words, how would you? What are some of the things that Paul states are the hints?

Jesus modeled, among other things, love and sacrifice. Because of how much He loves us, He sacrificed His life for us, and that should motivate us to love others. Imitating God is a matter of character and action. The sins Paul listed in verses 3 and 4 are examples of self-gratifying sins through which people find value and acceptance in things other than their identities as children of God.

What can we learn from Jesus about loving as God loves (v. 2)?

Now read verses 3 and 4. Think about the “hints” of compromise that are a part of our lives that we allow. What are some examples that you may think of?

What's the common link among the sins listed? What purposes do these sins serve in our lives? How is God's standard for our lives different?

Sermon Notes

Have a volunteer read Ephesians 5:7-14.

⁷ Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸ For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹² It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³ But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:

***“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”***

What are some “fruits” that you heard in these verses?

The fruits of the light are qualities the Holy Spirit brings about in our lives to help us live as children of God. When we choose daily to live in the light of God’s truth, we put on goodness (moral excellence), righteousness (a right standing we gain through Christ’s sacrifice for us), and truth (honesty, integrity, and trustworthiness).

What should characterize the lives of those living as “children of light” (v. 8)?

What characteristics are the result of “the fruit of the light” (v. 9)? How do these compare with the fruit of the darkness in Ephesians 4:18-19?

What role does the Holy Spirit play in helping us live in the light? What role do other Christians play?

Sermon Notes

Have a volunteer read 1 Corinthians 10:6-13.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.”^[a] 8 We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We should not test Christ,^[b] as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! 13 No temptation^[c] has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted^[d] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,^[e] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

According to verse 6, what was one intended outcome of Israel’s struggles with temptation?

How would Paul respond to a believer who says, “I have to learn things the hard way”?

What five negative examples of Christian behavior from Israel’s past does Paul warn us against? Why?

By eating food sacrificed to idols in pagan temples (8:10), the Corinthians were playing with fire. Their desire for food could take priority in their hearts over their loyalty to God. They could misunderstand the serious nature of idolatry. Being in the pagan temple could lead them down the path of sexual immorality. They could become dissatisfied with what God had given them in Christ. They could become complaining and rebellious toward Paul's leadership. Each of these things had been demonstrated in Israel's history and were dangers for the Corinthians and every believer who is overly confident and careless about personal holiness.

From these five warnings, which stands out the most to you right now? Why?

How do you know if you're in danger of falling (v. 12)?

What truths do you learn about temptation in verse 13?

How is this verse an encouragement to us when temptation comes?

What are some of the ways God gives us to get out of a situation where we could sin?

Transition: God doesn't just give us an example of bad choices and the encouragement to make wise choices; He gives us the ability to do so. If we are in Christ, we never have to give in to temptation. God is faithful and always gives us a way out of temptation that doesn't include sinning against Him. We need to recognize the seriousness of our choices and stand with God in order to withstand temptation.

Sermon Notes

APPLICATION

What needs to be a part of our "battle plan" for purity? Personally? For your family?

In the battle with sin, what roles do Scripture, prayer, and close relationships with other believers play?

Why is knowing the Word of God essential to overcoming temptation? What can you do this week to be better equipped for the temptation that will come?

Besides knowing God's Word, what are some other practical ways you can daily stand with God to withstand temptation?

Pray

As a closing prayer time, divide up into smaller groups (men with men and women with women) and share about how you are dealing with the struggles of this life. As you pray for each person in your group, pray specifically that our outward obedience to God will align with the inward joy of our salvation.

