



## The *Pulpit Exchange*

It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (1 Corinthians 1:21)

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Nehemiah 8:8) Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend. (Proverbs 27:17)

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### **What is Lost When Youth Go Wrong?**

“What is Lost When Youth Go Wrong?” Maybe we could think about it this way, what is gained when youth go right? I would like to spend a little bit of time before we go on to the thought of the title, wanting to encourage our young people to go right. My heart is always blessed when I look into the face of young people who really love God, who want to serve Him, and have committed their lives to Him.

“Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment. Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity. Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the

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evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. . . Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.” (Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:1, 13, 14)

These words were written, I understand, by king Solomon. I

would like to say a little about that. We remember that he was the king, whom God asked after he became king, “Ask what I shall give thee.” (2 Chronicles 1:7) He chose wisdom above everything else. He could have chosen money, or chosen a lot of things, but he chose wisdom. King Solomon was a good king for a while. Then, the Bible tells us one of his weaknesses was that he had “seven hundred wives . . . and three hundred concu-

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bines,” (1 Kings 11:3) The Scriptures tell us that they turned him away from the truth and toward idols. I understand these verses which we read are some of the last words of king Solomon. We treasure the last words of people. What I get from this is that when king Solomon looked over his life, and made a study of it, he became burdened at the end of his life for young people that they would not go wrong, but that they would go right.

For young people, these are some words that need to be weighed very carefully. Solomon was a wise man. I would just like to quickly run through Ecclesiastes 2, and pull out a few things — all the things that king Solomon tried. The Scripture gives us a list. In verse 1, he tried pleasure. Verse 3 he tried drink. In verse 4 he had houses, vineyards, gardens, orchards, and trees of all kinds. Verse 6 he had pools of water. Verse 7 he had servants and maidens. It also tells us that he had great possessions and “cattle above all that were in Jerusalem before [him].” In verse 8 he tried money. Also, in verse 8 he tried music and musical instruments. “So I was great, and increased more than all that were before me in Jerusalem: also my wisdom remained with me. And whatso-

ever mine eyes desired I kept not from them, I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour: and this was my portion of all my labour.” (Ecclesiastes 2:9, 10)

Let us carefully look at verse 11, “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun.” Solomon was a man who had wisdom and had tried all the things that the world has to offer. At the end of his life, he said it does not amount to anything. Then, he turned to the young people and said, “Remember now thy Creator.” In Ecclesiastes 11 it seems to me that he said that you can go wrong if you want to, but remember you will need to give an account to God someday. Then in Ecclesiastes 12:1 we read, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.”

It seems to me Solomon was saying, “Go right.” Solomon’s last words and one of the last burdens on his heart was that young people would go right. I am glad that many of our young people are going right. I praise God for

that — when we see young people who mean business with God. I want to encourage youth to keep on. Be faithful and you will never be sorry for that. When we commit our life to God and mean business with God, that is one of the most important decisions that we will ever make. I would like to stress the fact of meaning business with God. I do not know of any person who has done that who is sorry when they come to their dying hour. However, I have heard of many who have chosen the wrong way and wished that they could do something different.

Another thought that stood out to me as I thought about this subject; Let us never ‘write people off,’ because they are on the wrong way. Instead, let us be burdened about their soul and let us do all that we can to help them. Someone said it this way, “As long as there is life, there is hope.” I would like to encourage us, if we know young people who are on the wrong way, we ought to be praying, and doing what we can to help them turn around. I want to stress to young people; you can go right. It is entirely possible. God has done everything that He can do. He has made all the provisions available so that young people can go right, and I am glad for that.

*Two examples of youth who did what was right.* Two of my favourites in Scriptures, when I think of faithful young people, one of them was David, who was the young man who was a shepherd boy and God called to be king. I like the account in 1 Samuel 17, when David was sent by his father to see his brothers who were in Saul’s army. We know the story well. When David arrived at the camp, he heard that giant shouting across the valley, “[if any of you will] come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants.” (verse 9) No one would do a thing about it. They only listened to that and never made a move. The soldiers, all of Saul’s army (probably many of them were older men) and Saul himself, were all sitting still. It was causing the work of God to stand still in a sense. David, the young man, saw the situation for what it was. He said to some of his brothers and some others, “Is there not a cause?” “Why does not someone do something about this?”

In 1 Samuel 17:29 is the phrase where David said, “Is there not a cause?” His brothers accused him of being a proud young man, and David was trying to explain. “Is there not a

cause here?" Should not someone do something? In verse 32, David said to king Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him." "Do not let any man's heart fail." In verse 46, David said to Goliath, "This day will the LORD deliver thee into mine hand; and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee; and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel." David, a young man, was speaking this way, when all of Saul's army was afraid to move. "And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose, and came and drew nigh to meet David, that David hasted, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine." (verse 48) Do we see the courage in this young man? He did not hesitate. It says, "He ran to meet this man." We know the story. He took his sling, used one of his stones, and the stone hit the giant in the head. The Scripture says, "the stone sunk into his forehead," and he fell over dead. David then went and used Goliath's sword to cut off his head.

Let us notice a few other verses. "And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine, he said unto Abner, the captain of

the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Enquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. And Saul said to him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse the Bethlehemite." (verses 55–58) I can imagine, when the army and king Saul knew that here was a young man who was ready to take on Goliath, that every eye was watching what would happen. When Saul saw the young man, and the courage that he had, he had a question, "Who is the father that raised this young man? I want to know who he is, whose son is this youth?" David is a very good example for young people, of a faithful young man who knew where he stood. He knew the power of God, and had a strong faith in God.

Let us think about Joseph. After Joseph had been sold into Egypt to Potipher, an officer of Pharaoh, we read, "And the LORD was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man; and he was in the house of his master the Egyptian. And his master saw

that the LORD was with him, and that the LORD made all that he did to prosper in his hand. And Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him: and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he had he put into his hand. And it came to pass from the time that he had made him overseer in his house, and over all that he had, that the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house for Joseph's sake; and the blessing of the LORD was upon all that he had in the house, and in the field. And he left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not ought he had, save the bread which he did eat. And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured." (Genesis 39:2-6)

Joseph was a young man who was loved by his father because he was the child of his old age. His brothers hated him because his father treated him a little better. We know the story, how they decided to kill him and several of the older brothers decided or talked them into selling him instead to the men going to Egypt, and then he would be out of their way. They did that, and God blessed Joseph. He was a godly young man. Everything that he did prospered. Potipher's house prospered because Joseph was there. One of the touching parts of Joseph's life to me was

the time when his brothers were in his presence, and he made himself known to them. He had everything in his hand and he could have done whatever he wanted to do. They were these mean brothers who sold him, told his father a lie, and sent him off to Egypt. In their presence he was the top man under the king. He could have put them in prison, or done all kinds of things to them. What did he do? He loved them. He told his brothers, Do not be afraid . . . "it was not you that sent me hither, but God: (Genesis 45:8) He forgave.

Young people, here are two examples showing that you can do and go right. I want to encourage you that way. I really believe that all young people's problems are not all young people's problems. I can think of two homes with older sets of parents and all their children are gone from home. I believe they wet their pillow many a night with tears because of their wayward children. However, I believe there is a reason for that. I think of the attitude that those parents had, when their children were at home, the way they talked about the church and the attitudes they had toward the leadership. One of the couples especially, dodged the ministry and did things behind their back.

One minister who worked with one of their children told me one time, “You know, I think those parents have taught the children to be deceitful.”

One of the fathers, I know for a fact, called me sometimes and talked to me about how things were going and his whole family was sitting there listening to everything they were saying. I could hear them in the background. The things that he said, were things that his children should never had heard. Parents, I am saying that all youth problems are not youth problems. We ought to study our lesson carefully. Which way are we pointing our young people — the right way or the wrong way? We will need to give an account as parents. Fathers and mothers we do need to say hardly a word.

Here is a little saying you might want to remember. “We teach much about what we say. We teach more about what we do. We teach most about what we are.” Our young people have good enough minds to figure out what we are, without us saying much. I want to encourage us as fathers and mothers, let us do our part, so our youth can go right.

2 Kings 22 gives another challenge to young people. This is an account of a young man whom the Bible says “was eight years

old when he began to reign.” (verse 1) We can hardly fathom and understand some of these things, but it is what the Bible says. I want to point out something in verse 2. Before we do that, let us look in 1 Kings 21 at a few verses. (This is not the beginning of it). In 2 Kings 21:1 the Scripture says that a man by the name of Manasseh began to reign in Jerusalem. He reigned and died. In verse 19 we read that “Amon . . . began to reign . . . in Jerusalem,” the son of Manasseh. He also reigned and died. Then in 2 Kings 22:1, “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign.”

Verse 2 tells us, “he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.” We realize David was not his father. Amon was his father, and Manasseh was Amon’s father. Both of those kings were very wicked. Then came Josiah. The Bible says he went back until he found a faithful king and used him for an example of how he ought to be king. He went back to David his father.

I said that all young people’s problems are not young people’s problems. On the other hand young people are responsible,

regardless of whom their father and mother are for how we live. We all will give an account for ourselves, and not for what our father and mother did. I have been impressed many times in my life when I see young people who we can say hardly had a chance, and yet have turned out well, are faithful to the Lord, and are Church building material, in spite of maybe their father and mother not being what they should have been. This is what I see in this young man.

*Young people can go right.* There is always someone — some faithful brother or sister — whom you can look to for an example to know how we ought to do. I want to encourage youth tonight, if your father and mother are not what they ought to be, go back to your grandpa or go to someone who has set a good example, take lessons from their life, and go in the right direction.

*Young people need to choose whom they will serve.* The Bible makes it clear that there are only two ways which we can go. In this world in which we live, there is much confusion. There are all kinds of mixtures. One brother said that today there is a church on every street corner. What he meant by that is that there are so many kinds, every shade and stripe that we can figure. These

churches are somewhere and we can find them if we want to. Someone said “Satan is a good mixer, but God is a good separator.” According to Matthew 25, God will separate all this confusion and put everything in place. We need to remember that there are only two ways — the right and the wrong way. We are either on one or the other. Which road are we on — the narrow and strait or the wide and the broad?

Young people, you may dodge your bishop, your minister and your deacon. You may be able to squirm around and fool and do some things that you know are not right. Solomon said, “live the way that you want to (you can do that if you want to) but remember (I like to say ‘remember God cannot be mocked’), you will never fool God. God knows the way things are. I am burdened about too many young people who are not fully surrendered to God. I am troubled about them because they have a false impression of what the Christian life is. They think that they can have one foot in this church and one in the world, and as long as no one finds out or does anything about it, everything will be all right.

However, they do not know the real joy and peace of making a full commitment to Jesus Christ and they judge the Christian life

that way, "If this is the Christian life, I do not think I really want it." They then turn in the wrong direction, and never really know what it is to have our "all on the altar," nor to have that deep settled joy in our hearts. I am burdened for young people. I want to encourage youth to give their all to God, to really know what it is to be His child, and know what it is to have that real joy down deep in their hearts. Lay your all on the altar. Go in the right direction.

*What is lost when youth go wrong?* Let us look at a few things quickly. You can add to the list, maybe you can make it better. I am not sure. One thing for sure when a young person goes wrong 1) A soul is lost. A soul is on their way to hell. Unless something changes or happens, they will miss out, and that is a lot to lose.

2) *The blessing of God is lost in their life.* We cannot go wrong and expect God's blessing in our life. In Deuteronomy 30:19. Moses was talking to the people and said, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." We can choose life. We can choose to go in the right direction. We

can choose the blessing of God. However, when we go wrong, we lose the blessing of God. In fact, the Scripture says that instead of blessing it will be cursing. Verse 17 says, "But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it." The blessing of God is lost when a young person goes wrong.

3) *A good example is lost.* I take this thought from 1 Timothy 4 where Paul was writing to the young minister Timothy. This is opposite from what we usually think about. Usually we like to think of the older people setting an example for the younger people, and I really do not think there is anything wrong with that. It is a good thought and I think that is the way it ought to be. The older should set an example for the younger. However, in 1 Timothy 4 it is turned around a little bit. Verse 12 says, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Paul was saying to Timothy, "You live in such a way that you

will be example to all the believers,” — young and old.

I think all of us would admit that we are impressed when we see a young person who means business with God. On the other hand, we can see in the world, young people who are not amounting to anything, are of no account, and are wasting their time and people do not appreciate that. When they are going in the wrong direction and not living for God they do not impress anyone. On the other hand even with our own faithful young people, people are touched, impressed or wish that they had an opportunity to live like they do. When a young person goes wrong, a good example and a privilege, or opportunity to be a good example, is lost.

4) *When a youth goes wrong the future of the Church is partly lost.* I would say I believe that young people are a real part of the Church today. A few years ago I was asked to preach three funeral sermons. One was an older sister in the state of Ohio from one of the Wisler churches whose daughter was teaching school in our congregation. I still do not understand why I was asked to go there. She was part of a liberal congregation where most of the church was not what it should have been. However,

she was an older sister who still believed and did right — about the only one (in a sense) in the congregation. Then I was asked to preach the funeral sermon for two of my aunts. They always stood out to me as faithful women who lived a life of example. The thought that came to me as I preached those messages was, “Do we have young people who are coming on behind, who can take their seats and fill them?”

When youth go wrong who will fill the seats of our older brothers and sisters if the young people are going in the wrong direction? I say the future of the Church is partly, not altogether affected, because there are other faithful young people. It is partly lost when youth go in the wrong direction. Youth is a time of much zeal and energy and we need that in the Church. We need our youth. They fill a place that no one else can fill. Again, when youth go in the wrong direction at least it partly affects the future of the Church.

5) *When we see a youth go in the wrong direction, might we say, much effort, many tears and many prayers, in a sense are lost.* On the other hand I do not think that they are. I will explain this. I talked to a father recently who had a daughter who was thinking

of leaving home. She was an adopted daughter. The parents have put much time and effort into that young girl. His wife told him, "All the effort that we have put forth, it seems like it is going down the drain." On the other hand, I remember the Scripture in Proverbs that says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6) I really do not believe, in a sense that our tears and our prayers and our efforts are in vain. The Holy Spirit is faithful to those wayward young people in bringing many of those things back.

I will give one example. One young girl who left home, ran away. After a number of years, we met that young girl one time in Oklahoma City on a Sunday afternoon. She tried to put on a very good front that everything was fine, "We went to church this morning. Everything is going well. Do not worry about us." However, before we left, the truth came out. She knew that her life was very wicked and she was far from God. She told us this when we left, "There is not a day that goes by that I do not know where I should be and what I should be doing." I do believe when youth go wrong, their parents many times put in much effort many

prayers, many tears in their behalf, and in a sense, maybe part of it is lost when youth go wrong but not altogether.

6) We cannot know or tell how much will be lost when a youth goes wrong. I will tell you why. I think it was a man by the name of B. Charles Hostetler in Virginia who, a number of years ago, took one couple and traced from them for one hundred years, and counted all the homes that started from that one marriage. I could not find my figures, but if I remember right (and I stand to be corrected) there were a thousand homes started in a hundred years time from one marriage — one home. How much is lost when a youth goes wrong? I am saying there could be many, many souls at stake from one youth or one home of a young couple that goes wrong. I do not believe we can know how much loss there can be.

The Scripture says in Deuteronomy 30:19, 20, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life." I want to encour-

age young people to study your lesson carefully, and like Moses said to these people, “Choose life. Cleave unto the Lord. Love

and obey Him for He is your life.” The Lord Bless You.

## The Need for Purity

When there are needs we need to make it known. The only way we will receive help is where we make our needs known, and pursue the right avenues to have our needs met. The subject before us is The Need for Purity. Why this subject? As we look around in church, everyone is wearing clean clothes. We all look ‘pure.’ We dress up in our best, and we look pure, do we not? But, God sees the heart. God sees our heart. If we are honest with ourselves, we would give recognition to the fact that we do have a need of purity. I do. I confess that. I have a need for purity in my heart. Ezekiel tells us, “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh.” (Ezekiel 11:19) “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall

keep my judgments, and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26, 27) In Deuteronomy it says of the heart, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” (Deuteronomy 5:29) This was God’s cry.

God still desires for us to experience a new and clean heart. There is a teaching that as long as the heart is right that is all that matters. Is this right? No, not entirely. Yes, the heart must be right, but fruits must follow. It is not exactly all that matters.

There are three subtopics to consider the need for purity. 1) In the home, 2) in the church, 3) in society. The dictionary definition for purity does not expound very much, on the word ‘purity.’ It is mentioned as, “the condition of being pure.” If we look at the word “pure,” there is quite a list of meanings or quite a definition of the word “pure.” The connotation that we will focus on is, “free from what vitiates, weakens or pollutes.” Vitate would refer

to moral issues. “Containing nothing that does not properly belong . . . free from moral fault or guilt.” There are various areas of purity. We would like to look at several of them. As we consider ourselves in this life, we find ourselves amongst a society, and we consider functioning together as a church. There is a need for purity. We must have a burden or a vision of purity, because God wants a pure heart.

I thought of the verse in Matthew 5:8 where Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” Do we want to see God? We will see God, but it tells us, “Blessed are the pure in heart.” Thus, it does matter whether the heart is pure or not, and this is where it starts and, where it must start. We have no power of ourselves to be pure on our own strength. First of all the heart must be pure. As we look around us, not only out into the world, but as we live and function together as churches, we recognize that there is a need for purity in our day. I trust, and am thankful that it is not as it is in the world.

If we observe the world, we find ourselves living amongst a society that largely has very little regard and respect for purity. In the warmer time of year, undress is very prominent, such that

increasingly we find ourselves living amongst a society that has little regard for purity, or shame of undress. Certainly there is a need to speak about purity to us, so that we will be encouraged and our convictions can grow in those areas of our life. As we simply observe each other or look at each other, we cannot see if there is an impure thought. We cannot see each other’s thoughts. God knows our thoughts and hearts. This is why we need to provoke each other to purity, and encourage each other to have right thoughts, in the things that we talk about, or that we look at and read and that they would provoke us to purity. There is certainly a need for purity in our day, especially as the society around us and the ungodliness increases. I do not want to focus a lot on the negative side of society. The thrust of this message would be to encourage us to purity and deepen our conviction of purity and modesty.

As we live in this society of impurity, immorality and undress we maybe tend to become somewhat used and kind of hardened to that. God help us to never get used to that. May it always be an abomination to us as it is to Him. It is my prayer for God to help me abhor this as He abhors it. This is the only way that we will

stay clear and be victorious. As we think of Christian people, we might think, “Why should God’s people be plagued with this moral impurity?” We know this is a problem. It is a sin that has plagued mankind since the fall of man. We can look into the Old and New Testaments and see that it was prominent there. Up and through into our day, it is prominent in society. It should not enter into the Church, but somehow it does. The Devil is no respecter of persons or churches, or of any one of us. He will try his best to make us stumble. He will try to pollute a person or a church with these things. Yes, it is pollution. Anything that is impure or that defiles, is pollution. We must know what the Bible says about such actions and be convinced that there are consequences to face if they are not repented from. It is my burden that we are convinced that we cannot go on in impurity or delight in such things and not face the consequences.

In Galatians 5 we can see what the Bible has to say about some of these sins. Galatians 5:16–21 lists some things that are very specifically spelled out, “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit

against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” (16–18) (I want to pause briefly here). It tells us about a battle. We do not have to fall. We do not have to be overtaken with this sin of impurity or immorality. It says, “Walk in the Spirit,” and we will not do those things. Again it comes back to our heart. If we “Walk in the Spirit,” (the Holy Spirit) it says we will “not fulfil the lust(s) of the flesh.” Then it speaks about the battle. The flesh, our humanity, fights against the Spirit. That is the battle. We know it is not a literal battle, but it speaks about the Spirit. Our flesh lusts against the Spirit — the Holy Spirit.

Our flesh is largely motivated by a spirit as well — the evil spirit the Devil. The Devil is the one who tries to stir that lust within our flesh, and this creates the battle. The Holy Spirit is there trying to convict us, speak to us, and to keep us. As we walk in the Spirit we will be victorious. I do not want anyone to think that, “There is no hope for me,” because there is. The Bible is clear that if we “Walk in the Spirit,” stay close to God, and if we want victory, God is there to help us. The flesh and the Spirit

are “contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” Our flesh sometimes does get the upper hand and we fail and fall. Verse 18 says “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” If we fail and fall, the Spirit is there to convict us and to help us back up. We can depend on that.

Verse 19, “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.” The works of the flesh and all moral sins are expounded here. Uncleanness here has the meaning of any kind of moral impurity. It covers it all. Then it continues, “Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” These are the consequences of such sins and actions. There will be no inheritance in the kingdom of God. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matthew 5:8) If we are not pure in heart, our life and actions will not be pure, and we will not see God in eternity. Yes, we will see God at judgment. However, speaking of being with God in

eternity, the consequences are very serious. The consequences are eternal.

Colossians 3:5, 6 gives somewhat the same thought, “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth.” This is our body. It says mortify, which has the thought of crucifying or putting to death. “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things’ sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.” The wrath of God is expounded or dispelled to those who fall under such sins and do not repent. There are serious eternal consequences. I trust that there is no one who reads this who is willing to face the consequences of eternity by being overtaken or guilty of such things. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” That verse kept returning to me, time and again as I studied and pondered for this message.

To be free from impure thoughts and actions, we must want to be free from them. Then we beseech God for strength. That is where it comes in. Thus, it still is a heart matter. We must come to the point of asking God for help, when we are tempted in

a weakness that we have, or in something that we struggle with. I know humanity well enough that we are not entirely free from that. First of all we must want to be done with it. We must desperately want to be free from that. Then we must ask God to help us. We can ask God to help us grow in our conviction, and our desire to want to be free from that. However, if there is still any desire and that desire is not completely crucified, the Bible tells us we must mortify our flesh. We must come to where we are done with it and we do not want it anymore before we can have complete victory. We know the flesh, and we may have to do it again and again, because the flesh, the Devil, stirs our flesh and the lust within our flesh, and at times we find ourselves slipping back a little bit. We must stay on guard. We must walk in the Spirit. We must realize that God abhors immorality, impure thoughts and impure lives. We might think then, “Who can stand?”

In Psalm 24:3–5 we read, “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?” There are two questions. As we consider an Almighty, Holy God, we might wonder, “How can I get there?” Maybe we wonder, if we are struggling with something, “How

can I get there?” “How can I come before a holy God?” “How can I stand there?” Verse 4 tells us, “He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” Clean hands are hands that are undefiled and pure. It is a pure heart. We are free and forgiven. I would rather say that we are forgiven from impurities. Then we have the promise in verse 5. “He shall.” It does not tell us that maybe we will, but it says, “He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.” This tells us that we can depend on victory. We can depend on overcoming these things which we struggle with or cause us to trip or stumble. It takes a blood washed, pure heart to be victorious over immoral thoughts and actions.

These things always start in our minds, and the deeper we become involved, the more our thoughts will be in such avenues. Maybe, we get there subconsciously and do not realize it. Let us read 1 Peter 1:13–21. “Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind.” We must gather our mind together and want to keep it

clear. It is our decision. Yet, we need the grace and the strength of the Holy Spirit. “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.” (verse 15) In every walk of our life be holy. We must gather up the loins of our mind, keep our thoughts together and channel them in a right direction. Let us remember that we are called to holiness, and when we are tempted with such thoughts, may we be quick to give heed to the Spirit, of what Jesus has done for us. He points us to Jesus Christ. What were we redeemed with? “The precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Christ was not tainted with impurity. Even more so, God wants the best for us. God will not hold back any good thing from us by telling us to live holy, and to have a pure heart.

*The need for purity in the home.* I would like to make an application especially to fathers. In 1 Timothy 5:22 we read, “Keep thyself pure.” Husbands, this is not simply a suggestion. This is a command. We are called to a very high level, or the highest level of purity, especially in our moral life as husbands. As we have taken a wife, we are not free to be gazing around. We need to take this verse seriously. I am thankful that I did not have

to try to come up with some of my own thoughts and share with you what my thoughts are on the subject. I am thankful that we can turn to the Word of God and that it stands. 1 Corinthians 6:13–7:3 gives us some very clear direction; “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.” We see how God intended it and how He created it. The body is not for fornication, immorality or impurity. It is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Both are for each other. “And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.” As I think of the things that humanity struggles with at times, God has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. He wants to raise us up out of impurity, and out of the things that we struggle with. God wants to raise us up above that and to set us on that level of holiness.

“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.” This is speaking directly to husbands and to young men. We as husbands are not free to be looking around at all. It tells us in 7:2 “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have

his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” “Keep thyself pure,” brethren. To all of us, married and unmarried brethren, keep yourselves pure. The Scripture asks the question, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of [God].” This is another thought that we need to cultivate as we go through life, and face temptations and struggles. Our body is not our own. It is for God. It should be for the honour and glory of God. It says, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?” We do not want to defile that. God help us! God expects husbands to keep themselves in all fidelity through faithfulness and loyalty to your wife, family and the Church. In order for your wife and children to flourish we must keep ourselves morally pure. God expects that of us. May we be convinced of that. God expects that of each one of us.

Yes, these things are in the world. The Devil comes to us. There is not a sin in the world which the Devil has not come and taunted the Church with. The burden on my heart is that we can gain more victory on these grounds. At times we learn, or we hear that a brother falls here and there because of this very thing. He did not keep himself pure. May we grow in

our convictions. May we abhor this thing as God abhors it. May this thing of impurity be ‘gross’ to us. May we seek for purity and holiness in our own life first of all, then in the life of our family. Fathers, we must set the example for our children and family. Someone is following us. The example that we set is most likely what our children will follow. Instruct your sons when they come to adolescent age. Keep ‘tab’ on them. It is a father’s responsibility to instruct our sons. When they get to that age when their body starts maturing. Likewise mothers same to your daughters. Instruct your daughters. As parents we have an opportunity and obligation to teach our children in the ways of purity, in the things that they need to know. They will find out one way or another. May we take the responsibility and the privilege of teaching our children the things that they will learn so that they are taught right and in a godly way.

Boys and girls need to be taught reserve from little up. We know that little boys and girls play together. There is nothing wrong with that. However, as parents, we need to, from little childhood up, teach them what is right and what is wrong, what is proper and what is improper. We

need to ensure that it is carried out closely. We must monitor their playing. We as parents, have a great responsibility in that. Maybe at times this responsibility comes upon the mothers a little more than on the fathers, because they are around the children more often. We must put a premium on keeping ourselves pure. We must remember that our body is the temple of God. God wants that. God wants His Spirit to fill our body and to be in our body.

Again, we must have a pure heart. It begins in the heart. We must first of all have a pure heart. We must have a heart full of desire for purity. We must all be careful what we look at and read. What we think of and what we pursue is largely by what we see with our eyes. Thus, we need exercise diligence in regard to what we look at, and what we read. If it is questionable, if we know that it is something that we are having a struggle with, we had better take heed, and recognize it for the sin that it is and flee from it. Fathers, we must be careful with the relationship that we have with our teenage daughters. We need to realize that our little girls grow up to be young women. Something that has come to plague the Church at times is when there have been

unhealthy relationships between fathers and their daughters. It has marred souls for life. Brethren it should not be once named amongst us.

We need to have a relationship with our children, but there comes a time when as fathers, we must show and practice reserve to our daughters. How else will they learn? Mothers need to teach their daughters the proper way to conduct themselves around men and brethren. Teach them that reserve that they need to exercise by your example and teaching. Fathers, we must realize that those little girls grow up to be young women, and they need to be respected as such. Ideally, the girl's relationship should be closer with her mother than with her father. In the same way fathers, we need to have a relationship with our sons that we both cherish. It is improper for a father to counsel alone with his daughter. The mother should be along. We need to have a relationship as fathers with our daughters, but when they get to the age of young women, we need to be careful. If they need counsel certainly their mother needs to be along.

*The need for purity in the Church.* Ephesians 5:25–27 teaches us that God wants a pure church. “Husbands, love your

wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” How did Christ love the Church? He gave Himself. He gave His life. He shed His blood. “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” This is what Jesus is looking for and He expects of His Church. “Holy and without blemish . . . [without] spot, or wrinkle.” He expects a pure Church without sin — a Church that deals with sin. 1 Corinthians 5 gives very specific direction of how to handle sin in the Church. We know sin in the Church defiles a church. Then, if it is not dealt with, the church is impure — it is no longer pure.

When receiving people into the church, we must always be conscious and sensitive for the purity of the Church. We do not want to lose the vision of helping people, but at the same time, we never want to disregard the purity of the church. We cannot take someone into the church if there is a question about their life. If for nothing else, for the sake of purity in the church. All must be clear and ‘above board’ before we receive people into the

church.

We know also that there are things that try to creep into the church. Let us keep that perspective of purity and holiness in the church. Let us not accept those things that would defile, and analyze those things. What will they do in the future? All members must guard the purity of the church. It is not only for the ministry. The ministry have a part in that, but each brother and sister also has a large part in that. We have a responsibility to each other and to the church in our own life first of all, and then also in others. There needs to be a proper reserve between brethren and sisters in the church. I appreciate our practices in our churches such that there is a reserve. After services the sisters for the most part stay over on one side and the brethren on the other. There is not a mingling back and forth. This does not say that it is absolutely not permitted for a brother to speak a sister. That is not what I am saying. However, if we do, we need to be respectful and keep it very brief.

Brethren do not entreat a sister in a way that you would not a brother to entreat your wife. We must remember the golden rule. Be very respectful. Mothers, be an example of sobriety and reserve to your daughters and

other young sisters. Titus 2:1–5 applies to brethren as well. “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.” I have a picture of a humble person. It is a person walking in God’s order. May this be our experience in the church as we work together. Fathers and older brethren need to be an example to the younger ones, so that they have a godly example to follow. Older sisters need to be an example to the younger ones, teaching and encouraging one another.

*The need for purity in society.* We may think that we do not have much of an effect or bearing on society. Certainly we have. In 1 Timothy 4:12 we read, “Let no man despise thy youth.” This verse is referred to with regard to youth sometimes. However, I want to apply it to each one of us as we relate to society. As we

find ourselves getting out into society, “Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” The Bible tells us we are to be an example to those around us. We are to be an example to each other, but especially I think of society. We are to be an example in society of purity. In 2 Timothy 2:15 we read, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Is our conduct in society, or among society approved by God? We need to ask ourselves that question, as we go about our business, as we rub shoulders with, we might say, society. Is our conduct acceptable to God? Are we a true light to the world?

I think of the example of Joseph, when he was in Potipher’s house. He was tempted to impurity very strongly. When Joseph was tempted by Potipher’s wife in Genesis 39:9b Joseph answered her this way, “how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” First of all, our accountability is with God. We need to ask ourselves this when we are tempted or when temptation arises. The Devil is no respecter of persons with regard to whom he will tempt. We must flee those



## **From the Previous Issue:**

### **Ascension — Made Into an Acrostic**

From a message by Leon H. Martin

Thursday, May 09, 2002

Richland Mennonite Church

### **FIFTY FUNDAMENTAL FACTS**

#### **12. The redemption of fallen man is possible alone through the atoning merits of the blood of Jesus Christ.**

Men have tried reformation, but that can at best affect the moral life. The social gospel can at best clean up the outside. Wealth enables one to be “clothed with purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day,” but it can never carry them “by the angels into Abraham’s bosom.” Even the giving of “our bodies to be burned” (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) will avail us nothing when it comes to the salvation of the soul. Paul’s testimony is that “Without the shedding of blood there is no remission” (Hebrews 9:22); while Peter solemnly informs us that we were “not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold . . . but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18, 19). The testimony of Christ Himself is that “no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6); while Peter declares that “there is none other name under heaven

given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

The gist of all this testimony may be expressed in these words: Salvation is impossible when undertaken through our own efforts or our own righteousness. Salvation is easy, provided we surrender ourselves to God, accept Christ as the Saviour of our souls and ransom for our sins, and let God have His full way with us.

#### **13. The Redemption through Christ is for all people in all ages.**

The idea that some people are born to be saved while others, are born, to be lost has no foundation in Scripture. “God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:9). He is “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (1 Peter 3:9). So great is His love for the sinful world that He “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”

# The Pulpit Exchange



(John 3:16). “As by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life” (Romans 5:18). “God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him” (Acts 10:34, 35). From these and other scriptures it is clear that the redemption through Christ is uni-

versal and complete; and that the responsibility for any souls being lost rests wholly upon man, not upon God. “The whole world lieth in wickedness:” (1) because sinners will not accept God’s provisions for their eternal salvation; (2) because of the indifference of Christian professors who fail to let their light shine and to do what they can in obeying the command of God to “preach the gospel to every creature.”

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