



*Some have said that unless one knows God, and fears God, one cannot really love another person. Indeed, love is of God. As children of God, we should practice love in all that we do. In emotional affairs, we must not be carried away by emotions of the moment. We should always watch and pray and not allow infatuations to develop. Remember that relying on the flesh leads to death, but relying on the Holy Spirit and putting to death the flesh will lead to life (Rom 8:13). We need to see things in a long-term perspective and observe the teachings of God. That way, we will not hurt others or ourselves, for that is part of practicing God's love on earth. May God guide everyone so that we will always seek His guidance.*

## Lesson 4

# Why Stay Pure?

### Listed Scriptures

Deut 7:6-14; Ps 119:11; Job 31:1; 1 Cor 6:19, 20; 1 Cor 6:9, 10, 10:12; Jas 4:7; Gal 5:15, 16; 2 Tim 2:22

### Lesson Aim

- 1) To move students to be determined to stay pure with the help of the Holy Spirit.
- 2) To encourage the students to sign a pledge of purity.

### Memory Verse

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." (Heb 12:14)

### Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Proverbs 10-12

## B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth" (Deut 7:6). From the very early stages of creation, God chose Abraham and his descendents to be a special people unto Him.

This exclusivity comes with a price and responsibility. This special people of God have to be separated from the rest of the nations. They belong to God, and therefore, they have to abide by God's commandments. This is so that they may have blessings as well as glorify God.

Today, we are the special people that belong to God. "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham ... There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:7, 28, 29). In the same way, we have to keep

ourselves pure and separated from the evil that is in today's world. What does it mean to be pure? Purity is required of us in every way – our thoughts, our speech and our actions. In particular, there is a lot more interaction between members of the opposite sex today than centuries ago. All around us, sexual promiscuity is prevalent. To non-believers, sexual relationships with different partners are not wrong. However, for us believers, we must know that we have to preserve our purity for the one who we marry.

## W A R M U P



The memory verse today tells us that without holiness, we cannot see the Lord. What do you think it means to “see the Lord”? To see the Lord can mean both seeing Him in this life as well as after we die, in heaven. The Bible has in many instances that indicate that if we are not clean or pure, the Lord will turn His face away from us. He will not answer our prayers or accept our offerings and services unto Him. Of course, if we are impure and full of iniquity, we will not be able to enter into His heavenly kingdom.

Today, we will look more closely at this topic of purity. May our Lord guide us to put purity among our first priorities in the way we lead our lives.



### Part 1

### *Be Separate From the World*

We live in a very corrupt world today. We may not see all of the evil that is happening around us, partly because a lot of evil that is done is done secretly. Perhaps, in our immediate circle of friends and relatives, we do not see this phenomenon; but there are many perverse and immoral things that go on in the world today. 2 Timothy 3:1–5 tells us that in the last days, many people will be “unholy ... without self-control...lovers of pleasure.”

One area where young people find it hardest to stay pure is sexual relationships. Pre-marital sex is so common today that sometimes, it even seems like an embarrassment to admit to our friends that we are virgins! With married people, extra-marital affairs are commonplace. One-night-stands are not big deals. As God's children, do we realize that we have a very special position on earth today? Do we realize that we are a separate people, different from the rest of the world? Hence, in our moral standards, we have to be separate from the rest of the world too.

### a. Noah (Gen 6:1–8)

In the earliest times, when God first destroyed the world by the flood, it was because the sins of the people at that time were too great. But, before destroying the world, He chose Noah. Noah found grace in the eyes of God because he was a righteous man. Through Noah, God wanted to save the rest of the people, if only they would repent and get into the ark!

### b. Abraham (Gen 12:1–3)

Abraham was chosen not because God loved him especially and wanted to save only him. God told him that through him, all nations would be blessed. God expected Abraham to lead a life guided by His laws and Abraham indeed followed God faithfully.

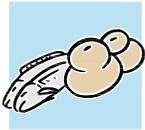
### c. The Israelite Nation (Ex 8:22, 23; Deut 7:6–14; cf 1 Pet 2:9)

When God plagued the Egyptians, there was a clear separation between the Israelite land of Goshen and the land where the Egyptians dwelled. God made it clear that the Israelite nation belonged to Him and so, from the 4th plague on, the Israelites were not affected. This special status as God's people was explained to the Israelites most clearly in Deuteronomy 7:6–14; the Israelites were chosen not because they were special. They were special only because they were chosen. To be chosen means they have to be separate. Their lifestyle and moral standards have to fit in with God's. They are not to be like any other nations around them.

Later on in the history of the Israelite nation, we see that God's abidance was with them whenever they kept the words of God, and God's grace departed when they sinned against Him and went after the ways of foreign gods.

### d. Chosen People Under the New Testament (1 Cor 6:19, 20; 1 Cor 6:9, 10)

We have seen how God chose the Israelite nation to be a special people to Him, leading a life separate from the rest of the nations. In the same way, we are called today to lead life as a separate people. Therefore we must never compromise our standards of purity. The moral standards of the world have changed throughout history. But the word of God never changes. We should always remember our special status and keep ourselves untainted by the world! No matter how the standards of the world change, no matter what our friends do or encourage us to do, we must hold fast to God's laws.



## Part 2

### Guidelines For Shunning Impurity

The Bible gives us a lot of encouragement about how we can stay pure and shun impurity. The following verses are but a small selection. For each of them, write how we can keep pure by abiding by these words of God.

#### **Ps 119:11- "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You."**

(It is important for us to be sure of God's teachings – what we can do, and what we cannot do. To hold God's words in our hearts is very important. That means we constantly have God's laws in our minds, even when we do not have the physical Bible in our hands. In times when we face temptations or when we are not sure what to do, it is the words of God that preserve us, if we choose to obey His teachings. We should not underestimate the importance of memorizing memory verses during class. As we read the Bible daily, we should also make it a point to keep God's word in our minds.)

#### **Job 31:1- "I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?"**

(Many successful stories are the result of determination and resolution. As far as keeping God's commandments is concerned, determination counts a lot too. We have to resolve to hold fast to God's laws, no matter how our environment changes. One way to stay resolved is to shield our eyes from evil things. The lust of the eyes is often the gateway to the lust of the flesh. "See no evil" may be the best way to run away from evil. As with Job, we should make a covenant with ourselves not to allow ourselves to be tempted.)

#### **1 Corinthians 10:12- "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall."**

(Be watchful. This is almost like a perpetual message. Yet we know that many people still fall into temptation and ultimately sin against God. It has been said that those who drown are those who know how to swim. The rationale is that those who do not know how to swim often simply avoid being in the water. It is those who know how to swim who overestimate their abilities to withstand the waves, and they drown when the waters prove too strong for them. It is the same with temptations. The moment we think we're strong enough, we fall. Let us never overestimate our abilities to withstand temptations. As the Bible encourages, we should "work

out [our] salvation with fear and trembling." Phil 2:12)

#### **James 4:7- "Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you."**

(Joseph was determined to hold fast to God's teachings. When enticed and tempted by the wife of his master, Joseph did not flinch. In fact, he resolutely told her, "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen 39:9). Then he simply fled! He ran away, even without taking back his cloak from the temptress. Today, we need to do the same.)

#### **Galatians 5:16, 17- "Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish."**

(In terms of moral standards, there is no middle ground. You are either of God or not of God. You are either of the Holy Spirit or you are fulfilling the lusts of your flesh. One way to keep ourselves pure is to obey the Holy Spirit. How do we know if we're obeying the Holy Spirit? We know that the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God. If we hold on to the commandments of God, we are obeying the Holy Spirit.)

#### **2 Timothy 2:22- "Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."**

(In our life of faith, we need to have friends in the Lord and support one another. As Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 says, "Two are better than one ... and a threefold cord is not quickly broken." In history, we have examples like Daniel and his friends. The disciples of Jesus Christ often worked in groups or pairs. Even apostle Paul had companions in his missionary work, with people such as Barnabas and Timothy accompanying him at different times. When we have good friends in the Lord, we can share our problems and weaknesses and friends can help look out for us.)

### C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1

In Deuteronomy 7:6-14, God told the Israelites that they were a special, chosen race and that they would be blessed. But this promise is conditional. What did the Israelites have to do in order to receive the promise of blessings?

- 2 In 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, who are the people that are highlighted as those who cannot inherit the kingdom of God?
- 3 What reason did the psalmist give for having God's word "hidden" in his heart (Ps 119:11)?
- 4 What pact (resolution) did Job make with his eyes (Job 31:1)?
- 5 What is the simple advice James gives regarding fighting temptations/evil in James 4:7?

## L I F E   A P P L I C A T I O N



### *Give No Opportunity to Sin*

#### **Part A-Keeping ourselves pure**

Many things are often easier said than done. The same goes for keeping ourselves pure. When we are not faced with the temptation, of course it is easy to stay pure. But when physically confronted with the opportunity to sin, we often find out (too late) that the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. Hence, it is important that we give no place to the devil or to ourselves to commit sin. Before we are even faced with the situation, we need to be prepared for possible scenarios where temptation can be so great that we fall.

Presented here are a few words of wisdom from brothers and sisters who kept themselves pure while they were dating. Read what they have to say, and then discuss other practical ways we can avoid committing sins of impurity.

#### **Case 1**

"I was glad that K. and I were in a long-distance relationship before we got married. Being physically apart meant that we did not face the temptation to get too close physically." – Sister L.

#### **Case 2**

"I was always under the impression that it's the guys who make the "first move". So, I resolved not to be alone with my girlfriend in an enclosed space. We made it a point that all our dates had to be in public places." – Brother T.

#### **Case 3**

"I guess you can consider me "old-fashioned" but I never even held her hands

until after we were married. Our dates consisted of very clean activities like watching TV with my family members, eating at restaurants or hanging out with a whole bunch of church youths. We never dated "in private" – we were always in public spaces. "Public activities" did not stop us from getting to know each other better. In fact, the best way to know a person is how she behaves with other people." – Brother C.

#### **Case 4**

"Guys, I have been told, are weak visually. I make sure that I am always dressed modestly so I do not give way to the devil to create any form of temptation for any brother." – Sister A.

#### **Case 5**

"I believe that keeping pure is a matter of self-respect. I respect myself enough to know that I want to keep God's word and be a pure bride to my husband when we get married. I expect the same of my future husband. Hence, I made a rule in my life that I will not engage in pre-marital sex, no matter how sure I am that I will be marrying the guy I'm dating." – Sister S.

#### **Part B- Relationships are for nurturing, not for plunging into!**

A lot of times, when two people feel very attracted to each other, there is plenty of motivation to want to get to know each other in as short a time as possible. But strong relationships are never built up in short time-spans. What often results is that the initial passions dies, leaving behind many mixed feelings.

Here is a true story that happened to a brother and sister in church. May this testimony be food for thought as well as a reminder for youths in church to be watchful about their feelings and to exercise self-control in relationships.

#### ***A Testimony***

*A sister came to me when I visited a certain church. As I turned to her, tears welled up in her eyes. It was clear that she was sensitive but tortured. She sobbed as she told me the following story.*

*Years before she and a brother met at a NYTS. They were both very good workers for the church and both have extraordinary gifts from God. During the NYTS, they got to know each other very well and after that, they started dating each other. They dove headfirst into an emotionally intimate relationship. They were not the shy types. The brother also confessed that he was attracted to her. She admitted that the feeling was mutual.*

What followed the flirtatious exchange was a marathon tour of each other's personal lives. Impatience put them on the fast track. "We were instantly connected," she remembers. Everything came out in that first conversation. She poured out her life, telling him about her struggles as a Christian and at school. He did the same. Though they had known each other only a brief time, their conversation instantly threw their relationship into high gear. They felt close, even though they hadn't taken the time to nurture a friendship or get a reality check on each other's character. Even worse was that a few weeks after, they began having very close physical involvement. The rush of romance was intoxicating; but eventually, as with all highs, the fervor leveled off—illusion gave way to reality. Their relationship ended bitterly. That left them burdened with a sense of guilt and hypocrisy. She said, "Everyone at church thinks of me as an excellent sister beaming in innocence. But do you know what goes through my head every time I come to church? I am a hypocrite. I need God's forgiveness."

Today, they both deeply regret that they shared too much of their hearts with each other.

Question for discussion: Why is it best not to pursue a romantic relationship before we are ready to commit to marriage?

#### Part C—"My Creed of Purity"

We live in a world where there's much talk about achievement. Achievement in school, achievement in sports, achievement in the family, and even achievement in church. We are always reminded that we have to have a "to do" list. If we want to get somewhere in life, we must be achievement oriented; we need to have personal mission statements. Or, perhaps a vision or a list of goals.

Have we ever thought about what we want to achieve for God?

About a century ago, a young man drafted a list of what he wanted to be/to do. Although it may not look like a list we would make today, his list has endured through the century and continues to inspire many Christians today.

*I would be true, for there are those who trust me;  
I would be pure, for there are those who care;  
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;  
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.*

*I would be friend, of all the foe, the friendless;  
I would be giving, and forget the gift;  
I would be humble, for I know my weakness;  
I would look up, and laugh and love and lift.*

Does this sound familiar to you? Yes, this is part of a well-known hymn which is also in our church hymnal (hymn 396). The writer of these "I would's" wrote them as a resolution for himself to hold fast to the Christian principles that were taught to him as he was growing up. Right after graduating from Princeton, Howard Arnold Walter sailed to Japan to teach English at Waseda University for one year. From Tokyo, he mailed his mother this two—stanza poem. When Walter returned to the States, he went to the seminary and subsequently sailed to India as a YMCA staff member. There, still a young man, he died of influenza in 1918.

Throughout history, there have been young Christians who made resolutions to hold fast to God's teachings. Today, we also need to make resolutions and make sure we follow these resolutions throughout our lives, no matter what happens. Having read the story of Walter, let us now attempt to come up with our own creed to stay pure for the Lord.

Working either singly or in pairs, draft a "Creed of Purity" similar to the one that Walter drafted for himself. In your creed, make sure to include the reasons why you want to stay pure. You may also include details about how you can avoid tainting yourself so as to stay pure. Think seriously, but be creative and sincere! After you've completed your creed, share it with the rest of the class.

## R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



*Sing hymn 401. Purity and holiness need to be consciously pursued and worked upon. It is an exercise in discipline everyday of our lives – in our thoughts, speech, and conduct.*

*Let us read 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. Our bodies are the physical temples of God. God's Holy Spirit wants to dwell in us. We must not do things that contaminate and bring this body to shame. We can always turn to our Lord Jesus for His preservation and help. May we remain pure and holy until He comes and receives us into His eternal kingdom!*