How to Live Pure in an Impure society

Objective

- Equip youth to live in purity in a sexualized society.

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

Introduction

- These days it is challenging to live a life of purity.
- It seems like everywhere you turn, there are images or videos or song lyrics, which are inappropriate.
- There are many ways to be exposed to impure music, movies, TV shows, pictures, and videos.
- As Christ-followers, we need to choose not to watch certain shows or movies, listen to certain music and stay away from certain books.
- When everyone else around us is making other choices, it can be really hard to say no.

Lesson outline

- How can we have the strength to be different and be pure?
- Let's go over ten ways we can live purely in this society, which focuses on sex.
- Each point of the ten points starts with the letter "R" to help us memorize them.
  1. Receive the grace of God.
  2. Remove ourselves from sin.
  3. Renew our minds.
  4. Revise our choices.
  5. Repent and confess.
  6. Repeated communion.
  7. Rehearse the word of God.
  8. Remain a disciple.
  9. Remember our weakness.
  10. Represent God.

Let's go over each of these during the remainder of our lesson today.

1. Receive the grace of God.
   - How can we do that?

- We must pray and ask God for His wisdom and power.
- If we seek Him, He will give us the ability to make good choices.
- Prayer is the key to purity.
- Purity is given through God's grace to us if we truly want it.

2. Remove ourselves from sin.
   - The Bible gives us several examples of people who did just that.
   - For example, Lot, his wife, and their two daughters lived in the city of Sodom.
   - This city, as well as the city of Gomorrah, was filled with wickedness and evil.
   - However, because Lot and his family were righteous even though there was much temptation all around them,
   - God decided to spare their lives and warned them to leave the city before He destroyed it.
   - David was a man of God, who bravely killed Goliath when he was young.
   - When he grew older, David fell into sin when he began a relationship with Bathsheba who was a married woman.
   - As a result of his sin, he suffered many consequences of his decision.
   - So, what should we do if we find ourselves in a situation where we are tempted? The Bible teaches us the concept of escaping from the story of Lot.
   - Genesis 19:17 tells us what to do escape the current situation, do not look behind you, and
     get away from further temptation.
   - This is good advice for us even today. We must escape people, places and things, which will drag us down and cause us to lose our purity.
   - We should flee from sin as we would flee from a snake! Do you know how scary it would be to come across a poisonous snake? We would all want to run away from it as fast as we can so that we are not bitten.
   - As soon as we realize that we are not in a good situation, we need to escape quickly. There are times we know ahead of time that we should not get involved in certain situations and other times where we suddenly are aware of the temptations around us.
   - We need to avoid putting ourselves in circumstances where our surroundings or other people may tempt us. If we find ourselves in a position we did not expect, it is not too late - make a choice and leave.
     Sin will leave a scar that persists for a long time. Many times, we don't think certain decisions are a big deal. We tell ourselves that listening to this music or watching this video won't do us any harm.
   - Maybe we do not see the actual effect these things are having on our hearts and minds right away. But all these choices do affect us.
   - Slowly, we become used to them and they don't seem to bother us anymore. Soon, we begin to use bad language or have certain images in our heads. The sins of impurity last a long time and can harm us deeply in many ways.
   - We should flee from reminders of sin (people, places and things). We need to stay away from friends who lead us into situations, which we know could turn out badly. We must choose not to go to places where we will be tempted. And we need to consistently make good choices about what we are exposed to.
3. Renew our mind

- Besides removing ourselves from sin, we must also renew our minds. How can we do this?
- The Bible tells us in Luke 6:45 that whatever is in our heart will come out - if it is evil, then bad behavior will come out; if it is good, then good will come out. How do our behaviors start? They actually begin through our senses - our sight, hearing and touching - the things we are exposed to. Soon, these become part of our mind and our heart.
- The sights and sounds we are exposed to can become part of the way we think. And finally, these thoughts become the way we act or behave.
- James 1:14-15 tells us that we are tempted when we are drawn away by our desires, which are in our heart and mind. Eventually, we act on these desires and they can lead us down a path away from the way God wants us to live.
- Romans 12:2 tells us that in order to transform our sinful behaviors into holy ones, we need to renew our minds and hearts. How do we get to the mind? Remember, the pathway of behavior goes from our senses to our mind to our body. So, we must sanctify our senses.
- We can do this by continuously making wise choices to what we see and hear, as well as where we go and what we do.
- Let's talk specifically about our senses. Luke 11:34 and Matthew 18:9 tell us that our eyes are very important to keep ourselves pure. In Proverbs 1:34, we read that through our hearing, we listen to God's word and are secure.
- James 3:6 warns us that our words can harm people and make us impure by the language we use. And Matthew 18:8 again mentions that the things we do can be destructive and harmful and can lead us away from God.

4. Revise our choices
    - What do we do when we notice that we are slowly moving away from God's commands? Do we just give up and say, "Forget it? It's too hard to live righteously?" No, we need to revise ourselves. What does that mean? It means that we should examine our actions and behaviors and if we find something that needs correcting, we need to take steps to make different choices.
    - Ephesians 5:15-17 encourages us to be wise and cautious in our choices. And 1 Corinthians 11:31 says that we should judge ourselves and correct our actions so that others don't need to judge us.
5. Repent and confess
    - God knows that we are human and that we will make mistakes.
    - He is gracious to forgive us if we confess and repent. But repentance doesn't just mean saying that you are sorry.
    - It means that you realize what you did wrong and want to turn away from that behavior, stop doing it, and turn your ways towards God.
    - The Bible gives us many verses referring to both confession and repentance. Repentance deletes our sins.
    - We should never give up fighting to live pure lives, even when we've made a bad choice. God sees our hearts and knows when we are truly sorry for our actions. Remember, the sinful woman, the Samaritan woman, and the tax collector are all examples from the Bible of people whose sins were forgiven and forgotten by God.

- The church provides us with the sacrament of repentance and confession. In fact, we are to practice a life of repentance.
- In the litany of the Compline prayer of the Agpeya, we practice ongoing renewal. We are told in 2 Corinthians 3:18 that continued repentance changes us from glory to glory.
- Being consistent in repentance and confession give us strength against Satan. And Micah the prophet states, "Do not rejoice over me, my enemy; When I fall, I will arise; When I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me." (Micah 7:8).
- This verse encourages us to get up when we fall and keep striving for righteousness. St. Paul teaches us that we should keep pushing ourselves toward the goal of being like Christ. He tells us not to dwell on our past mistakes but keep reaching forward. (Philippians 3:13)

6. Repeated communion
   - Just as we should practice confession regularly, we also should partake in communion as often as possible.
   - God gave us His holy body and blood so that we could be united with Him and conquer Satan with His help.
   - God knows that we cannot consistently live righteously on our own but gives us His strength so that we can grow and make better choices.
7. Rehearse word of God
   - Another tool we have in living purely is the Word of God.
   - Through reading the Bible and rehearsing scripture, we will be able to know the difference between right and wrong and will be able to notice warning signs of temptation.
   - The Bible describes the Word of God as "fire", "water" and a "hammer" which purifies, cleanses and straightens the heart.
   - Psalm 119:9 says "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word." This means that we will know how to live pure lives by knowing God's Word.
   - Psalm 119:11 encourages us to memorize verses or "hide God's Word in our heart" so that we do not sin.
   - Psalm 119:16 says "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path". God's Word will show us the right way to live. So, we can see that the Bible is the standard we should use when making decisions and choices. Reading and memorizing the Bible is very important.
8. Remain a disciple
   - We all know that Jesus had disciples, right? We too are supposed to be disciples.
   - This means that we are to continue learning throughout our lives.
   - We can grow through Sunday school, sermons or reading the Bible and praying.
   - God, Himself can speak to us through the Bible verses we read or through prayer.
   - We must take time to be still so that we can hear Him. If we are very busy and fill all our free time with friends or playing on the computer, we will not be able to hear Him.
9. Remember our weakness
   - Do you know what humility means? It means that we realize our mistakes and know that we are sinners. It also means that we know that we are children of God.

- Humility and purity are related. If we are full of arrogance and pride, we will easily fall into sin.
- The more we humble ourselves, the more God gives us the grace of purity. If we remember our weaknesses and ask Him for help, God will provide us with the strength and wisdom to make good choices.

10. Represent God through service
    - Finally, we are called to represent God to others through service. Serving others allows us to move beyond ourselves to help others who may be hurting or suffering.
    - God wants us to use the time, energy and gifts He gave us not only for our own benefit but also for the benefit of others. Jesus reached out to those who were struggling and we are to do the same.
    - The Samaritan woman turned away from her sin and became an evangelist. Did you know that many people who were addicted to alcohol or drugs help other addicts once they have received treatment? They are often the best people to help others who are struggling because they truly understand the challenges of addiction. Often times, people have time and energy on their hands.
    - They are bored and feel like they have nothing useful to do. If we are not careful, we can fill this time with useless things, which can bring us down.
    - A better choice would be to use our time and energy for things of value, like helping others. People who have dedicated their lives to serving God often use their time and even their sexual energy to pray, praise, work and serve.

Conclusion

- Finally, we reviewed ten specific ways we can live purely in a sexualized society.
- They include receiving the grace of God, removing myself from sin, renewing my mind, revising myself, repenting and confessing, repeated communion, rehearsing the Word of God, remaining a disciple, remembering my weakness and representing God.

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