Daughters of Christ in the Image of Christ

- Purity is Highly Valued
- How to Live Pure in an Impure society
- Identity and Character Building
- You shall be free indeed

Purity is Highly Valued

Objective

- Teach children about the importance of living a life of purity.
- Learn about why our bodies are holy.

Memory Verse

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

Introduction

- Today we are going to talk about living a life of purity. We will also review why our bodies are considered holy.

Lesson Outline/Activity

First, let’s talk about why purity is so important.

- Purity is actually God’s will for us.
  - God is pure, holy and righteous.
  - As Christians, we should strive to live in a way that is pleasing to God.
  - Christ is our example in the way we should live.
- In 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4, we read “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor”.
  - In this verse, the word “vessel” refers to our bodies.
  - St. Paul is teaching us that we should live differently than others – we should be dedicated to God and set apart.
- Both Samson and Joseph are examples of men from the Bible who tried to live pure lives.
  - Samson took a vow of purity and dedicated himself to following God. He stayed away from drinking and promised not to become involved in relationships with women. He grew his hair as a symbol of his promise to God. When he was tempted and eventually sinned with a woman named Delilah, he lost the physical strength God had given him.
- Another Biblical example of purity is Joseph. While he was working for Potiphar, an official of Pharaoh in Egypt, Potiphar’s wife tempted him when they were alone. Joseph literally ran away from her so that she could not pursue him, and he wouldn’t fall into sin with her.
- Our memory verse encourages us to pursue holiness. Being holy means living in a pure way.

Ephesians 5:3 specifically states that Christians should avoid any sexual immorality, greed or any other impurity because these behaviors are not proper for Christ-followers.

- **Let's talk about an example of purity in the world. I know you probably haven't yet bought a diamond for someone, right?**
  - A. Diamonds are very expensive and valuable, aren't they?
  - B. Why do you think this is? They are rare stones and are also known to be one of the strongest of all stones. Did you know that you could cut using a diamond? So, are all diamonds the same price? No. Actually, diamonds are judged on various characteristics, such as their size and the way, they are cut. These are called color, carat, cut, and clarity.
  - C. The most important characteristic is clarity, which refers to the the purity of the diamond. Diamonds are rated by the number of impurities they have. When people purchase a diamond, they look at it carefully under a microscope. Most diamonds look sparkly with your eyes, but they have several impurities which can be easily seen under the microscope. These diamonds will cost less than a diamond that has very few impurities. These purer diamonds are very expensive because they are valuable and rare.
  - So, we can see from the diamond that purity is something highly valued. As humans, we are much more precious to God than diamonds. And our bodies should be protected and kept pure and holy.
  - Let's think about the diamond example again. If you owned one of those very rare and expensive diamonds, would you wear it while you were gardening or painting? Or would you take it off and keep it clean so you could protect it? It would be wise to take very good care of that diamond to preserve its beauty. We should be doing the same thing with our bodies.
  - Let's talk about some of the ways our bodies are holy. We can read about the purity of the body in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. It says "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? … Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which is God's".
  - Our bodies have been created in His likeness and His image. Jesus took flesh like ours when He came to earth. We as Christ-followers are members of Christ's body. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We were bought by the precious blood of Christ. We interact with God through the sacraments. Because of all these reasons, we need to glorify God throughout our lives by keeping our bodies holy and pure. We are responsible for making wise choices about what we see, what we hear, what we do, what we say and where we go.

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.

Identity and Character Building

Objective
To get a sense of who we are: American, Christian, Orthodox and/or Children of God. To help develop our identity, values, and beliefs

Memory Verse
"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him." (1 John 3:1).

Introduction

We encounter a type of identity struggle. This really has less to do with culture and so much more to do with values. In order to get a sense of who we are American, Christian, Orthodox, and Children of God, we should be more aware of what makes us different from others and that we are children of the highest God.

Lesson Outlines

How best would you identify yourself (Choose only one answer)?

1. American.
2. Orthodox Christian.
3. Child of God.
4. Child of your family.

1. Why this topic?

The development of identity is one of the main goals of adolescence.

2. What is Adolescence?

- It is the age after puberty, where you developmental, physical and psychological changes.
- These changes transition you from childhood to adulthood.
- It is a wonderful and very precious time of your life.
- However, it could be difficult for you and your family.
- It is important to have guidance from a trustworthy source of information during this period.

3. Identity

It is simply your sense of who you are. It mainly consists of three categories:

- Your Loyalty.
- Your set of values and beliefs.
- Your career.

A. Your Loyalty

What are you (mostly) proud to belong to?

- Country of birth
- Family
- Religion
- Church
- God

Quiz How best would you identify yourself (Choose only one answer)?

A. American.

B. Orthodox Christian

C. Child of God

D. Child of your family

- God loved you and called you to be His child
- In the baptistery, you were born again from Him
- As a child of God, you have His Spirit
- You share His nature
- You enjoy His features
- You are a FREE person.
- And you will inherit His kingdom

1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore, the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Romans 8:16 -17 and 21 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. John 1:1, 11-13 In the beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The answer to the Quiz

All these options are proper identities for us.

- However, which one should we feel most proud of?
- Which one is more important?
- Which identity do you assume will lead you to earthly and heavenly happiness?
- It is certainly the identity of being: The Child of God.
- Let me share with you a quote that someone who had a really tough life said: “You know …, although my life has been very tough, I have a gift that many people don't have…I have been adopted by God to be His child and I think that's enough to keep me happy despite anything that happens in life.”

Conclusion

- We are different because of God’s great love for us and most important is being Children of God.

Application

What are some differences that we see in those around us, at school, at church, on TV? Do we want to be more like others around us or do we want to be the spark that makes others want to be like us and makes others questions their own actions and behaviors?

You shall be free indeed

Objective

- To gain a working knowledge of addiction, to be able to recognize types of addictions among ourselves and our friends and to be able to have the tools to empower us to take necessary steps to get help including spiritual and professional medical help when needed.
- To recognize that addiction is both a sin and a disease that resembles a tornado that circles around the entire person from every aspect and destroys him. Hence the best way to deal with addiction is to never fall into it.

Memory Verse

"Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19)

Introduction

- If I asked you to name some addictions, what would you say? No doubt you would mention drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, pornography, sex and food. what about these things make then 'addiction"? The habitual and progressive nature of the problem you cannot stop even when you it is harming you. So, we label these problems " addictions." In this lesson, we will not spend much
  on the type of addictions, as much as identifying the source of the problem and what the Bible teaches us about leaving our addictions behind.

Lesson Outlines

- Often addictions start with habits that begin at an early age. Our goal should be to empower the students to know addiction in its many forms and the everlasting effects of addictions not only on the individual student but among
  the student's friends and family.
- Addictions occur in many forms. The old traditional forms are addictions to substances such as nicotine, alcohol or drugs. The newer forms are behavioral addictions such as electronics, sexting, gambling, pornography, social sites (i.e. Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat) etc.
- Of particular importance are the cyber track or footprint that many of addictions can leave behind, the spiritual damage, the social stigma, the image and the lasting effects that can haunt one in their college entrance applications or graduate school potential
- Marijuana is a gateway drug that opens the door to a lifestyle of addiction. Even though it is approved as a medicine and in some states even for recreation, however, it has been proven by all the experts in addiction to

being addictive and has its negative impact on youth
- Addiction to substances such as nicotine, alcohol, and drugs can cause numerous physical and mental disorders. Behavioral addictions such as gambling and porn addictions can damage people socially, psychologically
and spiritually.
- Read Mark 7:14-15. Think again about what we usually consider to be addictions. How many of those are things "outside a man's (Tobacco alcohol, drugs, food, and pornography - to name some.)
- How can Jesus say that none of those things make a person "unclean?"
- Read Mark 7:17. Well, well! The disciples had the same reaction as you did how did that happen?
- Read Mark 7:18-19. Is Jesus calling you stupid because you thought what He was saying was wrong? (He says we are a little slow to grasp the truth. That must mean the truth is obvious once we think about it.)
- What is Jesus' logic for saying that things "outside" our t body do not make us unclean? (Jesus says the things we drink, eat, ingest, smoke, et.. are processed and expelled from the body.)
- Read Mark 7:20-23. What is the true nature of addiction? What is the true source of addiction? (Our mind, our thoughts and our desires are at the heart of our addictions. Science has found, for example, that nicotine is one of the causes of addiction to smoking. No doubt there are physical components to addiction. But Jesus says that the real source of addiction is how we think. Our attitude towards these things.)

Treatment/Cure:

- Some addiction cases that develop physical dependence causing tolerance and withdrawal need professional medical treatment by a specialized addictionologist.

However, the spiritual cure is always necessary, and we will discuss it here:

- Read James 1:13-15. How does the Bible say that we slip into addiction? (It starts with our own evil desires. After we let that desire mature in our mind; "it gives birth to sin." Sin grows," full-grown"" and we find ourselves in a life-threatening situation.) What does this suggest to you about the cure? Read (Galatians 5:19-21). Are any addictions mentioned here? (Yes)
- Read Galatians 5:22-25. We have decided that the root of addiction is our mind, our thoughts, our heart. What steps should we take to attack the root of our addiction? (The Holy Spirit gives us different fruit. We must ask the Holy Spirit to rule our mind, our thoughts and our heart.)
- When the text refers to having "crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires," is that referring to any action on our part? ("Crucified" reminds us that Jesus defeated sin. We must choose to accept Jesus' sacrifice. Thus, at a minimum, we must yield to the working of the Holy Spirit.)
- What is the Bible telling us to do when it says to "keep in step with the Spirit?" (This clearly tells us that we must assert some effort to have the Spirit reign in our minds. We

need to look for the standard set by God and
walk towards it.)

- Can you see how this agrees with James' warning against letting sinful desires grow in our mind? Read Romans 6: 8-13. What practical steps can we take to "offer " ourselves to God instead of sin?
- If you make an "offer" to buy something, what steps have you taken? (You have gathered the money and taken the steps necessary to make the purchase). How would this translate into making an offer to the Holy Spirit or making an offer to your addictions? (We make logical preparations to obey rather than disobey.)
- Think about your addictions. Read Romans 13:14. What practical advice are we given about how to live a Spirit-led life? The Bible tells us don't think about how you can be involved in your addiction. Turn your thoughts away from the addiction and towards what Jesus has done for you.
- Will taking these practical steps to live in the Spirit and not the flesh be easy? Read (Galatians 5:16-18). No. The Bible tells us that a war is going on in our minds. Sometimes we do what we do not want to do. That does not change our battle plan.
- Friend, will you, right now, ask the Holy Spirit to come into your mind, your thoughts and your heart to help you live a life pleasing to God? will you determine to take those practical steps to walk away from your addictions and be led by the Holy Spirit?

Conclusion

- The Lord has given us His spirit to overcome and remain powerful to resist the devil and flee from him. Should one fall into addictions of any kind there are spiritual tools as well as documented and effective processes that can be used to help overcome addictions.