

Maintaining the Biblical Standard of Purity in Today's Culture

Introduction

Thoughts on 1 Peter 2:9-11 “(I.) But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, (II.) that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. (III.) Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

I. Who I am in Christ.

II. God's purpose for my life.

III. The spiritual battle.

I. Who I am in Christ

A. Before becoming a Christian:

Ephesians 2:1-3 I was dead in my trespasses and sins.

1 Corinthians 15:22 I was “in Adam” and spiritually dead.

Romans 6:6 I was a “slave to sin”

Romans 8:7-9 I was **in** the flesh, “hostile toward God... (the flesh) does not subject itself to the Law of God, for it is not even able to do so”

B. After trusting Christ:

Ephesians 2:4-7 I am “alive together with Christ and raised up with Him”

Romans 8:9-10 I am “**in** the Spirit...if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in (me)...if Christ is in (me)”

2 Corinthians 5:17 I am “a new creation; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new” (KJV)

2 Peter 1:4 I am a partaker “of the divine nature”

Titus 2:14 I am no longer hostile toward God, but “zealous for good deeds”

A non-Christian is in bondage to sin, unable to say no to sin, a slave to sin; but after becoming a Christian that is changed. Because of the indwelling of Christ, the Christian **has** the capacity and the power to say no to sin.

Titus 2:11-12 (The New Berkeley Version) “For the saving grace of God has appeared for all people, training us to renounce godlessness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present world”.

As explained by Neil Anderson in Victory Over Darkness, “Paul also equates the idea of being ‘in the flesh’ with being ‘in Adam’ ... (1 Cor. 15:22)... Christians are no longer **in** the flesh but ... the **characteristics** of the flesh remain in believers, they have a choice. They can walk (or live) according to the flesh (see Gal.5:19-21) or they can walk (or live) according to the Spirit” (Gal.5:16-18).

II. God’s Purpose for My Life

Proclaiming the excellencies of Him who has called me out of darkness into His marvelous light is the **result** of my living out His purpose for my life.

As explained by John Piper in Desiring God, “The chief end of man is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever... God is not worshiped where He is not treasured and enjoyed. Praise is not an alternative to joy, but the expression of joy. Not to enjoy God is to dishonor Him. To say to Him that something else satisfies you more is the opposite of worship. It is sacrilege... The deepest and most enduring happiness is found only in God. Not from God, but in God.” (Pages 18, 22 and 28)

Psalm 37:4 “Delight thyself in the Lord...

Psalm 16:11 “In Thy presence is fullness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (KJV)

“What does it mean to glorify God? It does not mean to make Him more glorious. It means to acknowledge His glory, to value it above all things, and to make it known. It implies heartfelt gratitude... It also implies trust.” (Page 56)

“All sin comes from not putting supreme value on the glory of God—this is the very essence of sin.” (Page 57)

“When David committed adultery with Bathsheba, and even had her husband killed, what did God say to him through the prophet Nathan?... ‘You have despised Me’, 2 Samuel 12:10,” (Page 58)

“Faith has in it this element of valuing, embracing, prizing, relishing Christ. It is like a man who finds a treasure hidden in a field and ‘from joy’ sells all his treasures to have that field.(Matthew 13:44).” (Page 90)

1 Corinthians 10:31 “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (KJV)

In our passage, Peter points to gratitude for what God has done in our lives as a reason to proclaim His excellencies, (“for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy”). Continually being overwhelmed with gratitude for what the Lord has done in our lives when He drew us to Himself is a starting point. The believer is to grow in his treasuring and valuing and enjoying Christ above anything else that might compete for his affection.

Romans 12:1-2, "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship, and do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind..." (NASB).

Worship doesn't happen just on Sunday in a service, but it is to happen in our daily lives, moment by moment, as we choose to value and treasure Jesus Christ above anything else that would try to make itself attractive to us.

III. Spiritual Warfare

- A. Peter addresses one aspect of the war going on in every Christian's life, that fleshly lusts "wage war" against the soul.

Galatians 6:7-8, "the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption".

Corruption results in loss. When meat spoils, or is corrupted, it loses its flavor, its healthfulness, its color, etc... When the believer yields to temptations of fleshly lusts, he doesn't lose his salvation, but he loses the joy, the peace, the satisfaction, etc... of his salvation.

After David had sinned with Bathsheba, he prayed in Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of my salvation..." So, fleshly lusts wage war against the soul in the sense that we trade joy, peace, satisfaction for guilt, sorrow, alienation, and the dissatisfaction of being out of fellowship with the Lord.

Psalm 107:9 says, "For He satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness." (KJV)

- B. Paul addresses another aspect of the battle.

Ephesians 6:10-12 emphasizes that we are dealing with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. The word in the King James is "wrestle" which emphasizes that this is a personal battle, ie. hand-to-hand combat; and we need to prepare ourselves for the fight so we can "stand firm".

1 Peter 5:8 addresses this when Peter compares Satan to a roaring lion roaming around seeking someone to devour and says we are to be sober and vigilant.

So the message is that we are to be intentional about being prepared for engaging in spiritual warfare so we can "stand firm"

1 Tim. 4:7-8, "Train yourself for godliness, because while physical training is of a little benefit, godliness is beneficial in every way; it holds promise for this present and for the future life." (The New Berkeley Version)

IV. Walking by the Spirit

The foundation for winning the battle is found in Galatians 5:16 where Paul exhorts, "walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh" (NASB). This is the same idea as "walking in the light" in I John 1, and putting "on the new self" in Ephesians 4:22-24. There are at least three important aspects of learning to walk by the Spirit:

- A. Learn to live in submission to and dependence on the Lord.
 - James 4:6-7 "God...gives grace to the humble, submit therefore to God, resist the devil, and he will flee from you"
 - 2 Cor. 3:5 "not that we are sufficient in ourselves"
 - 1 Cor. 15:57 "How we thank God for all of this. It is He who makes us victorious through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Living Bible)
- B. Learn to say "no" to temptation.
 - 1 Cor. 10:13
- C. Learn to quickly confess (agree with, concede) when I stumble, and get back into fellowship with the Lord.
 - 1 John 1:9 Ps. 130:3-4 Proverbs 28:13

V. Practical Principles

These are some practical principles that will help us gain and maintain the victory in the area of purity as we make the right choices moment by moment.

Guard what comes in through the "eyegate".

Matt. 5:29, Ps. 119:37, Prov. 4:25-27 2 Tim. 3:16, Ps. 119:9-11

Guard your thought life.

Ps. 101:3-4, Phil. 4:8, Josh 1:8, 2 Cor. 10:5

Be careful with whom you associate

Prov. 16:29, Prov. 13:20 1 Cor. 15:33 Ecc. 4:9-10 2 Tim. 2:22 Prov. 27:17

Be careful about where you go

Prov. 4:14-15 Prov. 4:25-27

Resist beginnings

Romans 13:14 Ephesians 5:3

Application:

Realize who I am in Christ, and appropriate His grace and power daily.
Realign myself with God's purpose for my life to treasure Him above anything else.
Resolve to stand firm in the spiritual battle.