

Jason Upchurch - Flee the Immoral Woman

This morning we need to have a serious look into what the Word of God says about sexual immorality.

When Jesus calls us into his Kingdom he calls us to a life of purity and holiness. Not just on the outside, but on the inside as well.

Paul says in **Tit. 1:1** says that he is an apostle for the sake of the faith of God's elect and their knowledge of the truth, which accords with godliness.

God wants us pure in our heart and with what we do in secret.

1 Thess 4:3: For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality and that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor not in the passion of lust like the gentiles who don't know God.

Sexual immorality is an ever present danger for all of us. We'll see it in chapter 5 of Ephesians but I feel compelled to stop now and address it because it weighs on me. My job as your pastor is to present you complete and fully mature in Christ. And to do that we need to be pure sexually as well.

I would even say pure **especially** in regards to sexual morality.

God has ordained the sexual union within covenant marriage as a really good thing, for his glory, for our enjoyment, for having kids, and I think as a little taste of the joy and pleasure in heaven to come. I think many Christian spouses fail to enjoy the goodness of the sexual relationship God has given us, or they fail to give that to their spouse. I also think many Christian parents fail to talk openly about this with their kids - especially about the goodness of intimacy in marriage.

In the Christian home there shouldn't be the "birds and the bees talk" and that's it. You should be talking about this as often as it comes up in your family devotions. I remember reading through Genesis with our kids several years ago. Do you know how often the issue of sexual intimacy comes up in Genesis? It's on every page. So we talk about it on a level they can understand.

But because it is so good, it's something that Satan wants to corrupt and destroy. And so sexual immorality is almost as old as time.

Last year it was uncovered that prominent preacher Steve Lawson had a secret romantic relationship with a woman 50 years younger than him and committed adultery disqualifying himself for ministry. A couple months ago 2 pastors from a solid reformed church plant here in Spokane confessed to addiction to pornography and now the church hangs by a thread. Listen, this is crazy: they were addicted to porn when they were already in ministry and looking to expand the ministry. The amount of self-deception there is stunning.

People I know have lost jobs, marriages are destroyed, engagements called off, by all kinds of sexual immorality. A prominent Christian music artist was credibly accused of gross immorality.

Sexual immorality can takes many forms.

Adultery is immorality for those who are married. A wife or a husband caught up in a sexual sin. But it could also be a romantic relationship that should only be reserved for a husband and a wife. Both men and women need to be very guarded in your texting and messaging habits, who you're spending time with. Does your spouse have access to your text messages and chats online? He should. You shouldn't be deleting anything and regularly give them access

Sexual immorality - used to be called fornication - which is sexual immorality committed by someone who is not married. It's not less worse, it's just a specific word to indicate we're talking about non-marital sin.

Homosexuality has become celebrated in our culture which has led to gender confusion on every level. To be honest I think many people are getting to the point of exhaustion - June is so-called Pride month and it's really becoming less celebrated by companies. Homosexuality is especially sinful because it violates nature and the people involved in that know it. The sin itself is a form of judgment according to Romans 1.

But my chief concern this morning is pornography. Or porn. Pornography is from the Greek word pornea meaning sexual immorality. Graphos meaning image. So images of sexual immorality and usually used for the purpose of self-gratification.

Porn is an epidemic that is poisoning men (women too), exploiting women, driving human trafficking, and destroying society. It should be made completely illegal. The idea that porn is free speech is laughable and shameful.

It's really the secret cancer that is killing us. And most of the time people have access to it in their pocket.

And you have to be on guard every second you're on your phone because Meta and X and Insta will randomly throw images your way whether you want them to or not.

Ironically porn gives way to impotency in real life because spouses can't compete with online images.

Porn can also turn you homosexual. Because porn is transgressive, it becomes boring and usually requires crazier and crazier images to elicit the same effect. And those images become darker and darker.

God is not surprised by any of this and 3,000 years ago warned us about this danger. Solomon calls us to beware of the forbidden woman. The forbidden woman is the adulteress, the prostitute, the woman who leads men astray.

And in light of the dangers of sexual sin I want us to look at this this morning.

Big Point: Stay away from the forbidden woman. Whether that's porn, or the woman at the office or whoever might tempt you away from purity: Stay far away. How do we do that? 3 ways.

1) Treasure the Commands of God. Read 1-5

What is Solomon saying here? Keep God's commands, love them. Treasure them. He says it 8 times: keep the commands and love them.

Treasure is an interesting word. What does he mean to treasure here? The word means to hide something for safekeeping. Some of you guys have large safes in your home. What do you put in there? You put all the most important things in your life in there. Guns, jewelry, legal documents, passports. Your most treasured possessions are in the safest spot so that they are preserved.

That's what Solomon is saying. You need to treasure these commands like bars of gold. Put them in a fortress so that they are pristine and pure and never harmed.

One of the things I do when guys come to me and confess struggling with porn is to have them memorize Bible verses. Memorize passages that they can call to mind in midst of the battle.

1 Cor. 6:18: Flee from sexual immorality.

1 Cor. 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to man.

Psalm 19:13-14: Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins - intentional sins - let them not have dominion over me! Then I shall be blameless and innocent of great transgression. Let the words of my mouth and the mediation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O Lord my rock and my redeemer.

Prov 7:27: Her house is the way to Sheol going down to the chambers of death.

For 2 years in high school I car pooled with a friend to running start. And I knew she was promiscuous. She died of cervical cancer about 10 years ago in her early 30s. It was a type of cancer you get from sexual sin.

Why memorize passages?

Psalm 119:11: I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

John 17:17: sanctify them in the truth, your word is truth.

One of the best ways to guard yourself from a particular sin is to memorize passages about it. Do you fear man? Are you covetous - never content with what you have? Are you tempted to steal or lie or cheat? Do you lack self-control? Memorize passages against those sins. It's hard to sin when a flood of Bible verses comes into your mind when you're tempted.

And treasure those commands.

See, when we sin what we're doing is saying that God's commands are not all that valuable to us. They're not important. We could take them or leave them. Rather than put them in the safe, we'd leave them on the front lawn and if they get taken, they get taken. We don't really care about them.

When we sin what we're really doing is saying we would trade those commands if we could. We're like Esau who trades his whole birthright - his whole inheritance - for a bowl of soup.

Solomon says make sure the commands of God are your highest treasure. They are the apple of your eye. Put it a different way, if you had the option of having gold and diamonds and Berkshire Hathaway stock or the commands of God, you would take the commands of God every day of the week and twice on Sundays.

See, here's the deal. When people look at porn - or run off with another man or sleep with the secretary - what they're doing is treasuring something above Jesus. When we sin it's a battle of what we value the most.

Imagine a young man was struggling with porn and I said: look, I'll give you a \$1 million dollars for every day you don't look at porn. Do you think he could do that?

Yeah. He'd find radical ways to get porn out of their life. What if I only offered \$100,000? Or \$10,000 a day to not look at porn. He'd do it. Why? Because they treasure the money more than the sin. The issue is what do you value the most?

God is telling us to treasure his commands more than the sin. When you're in that moment when you're tempted to look - just ask yourself: If God offered me \$1 million not to look, would I stop? If he offered me a \$1 million to get rid of my smart phone and stop self-gratification - would I do it?

Look at Proverbs 3:13-18 Read

Obeying the commands of God is better than gold and jewels and millions of dollars. Solomon - the richest man to ever live - says the commands are more precious. But we have to trust that that is true by faith.

Why treasure the commands of God? They're more valuable, but look at **Read 7:2**

Guard the commands, treasure the commands and live.

Love God's laws in order to stay away from the forbidden woman. That's why Solomon is saying all these things.

The Bible is filled with many commands. It's also filled with prohibitions. God tells us what to do and what not to do. Keeping these commands doesn't save us, but they are the means by which we prosper and flourish in life.

And it goes without saying but these commands are not optional. These are not suggestions, these are commands.

So we live and here's the second reason. **Read 4-5**

Keeping the commands of God will keep us from sexual sin. If we just loved the commands of God, if we kept them as secure as we keep our passport or our SSN or our guns, we wouldn't ever sin. The reason we sin is because we treasure something more than we treasure God's Word.

Psalm 119:11: I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

That word "store" is the same word for treasure. When we treasure God's word, when we hide it in our heart, we don't sin against God.

Solomon goes further and says love God's word like you love your wife. **Read 4**

In the OT, "saying you are my sister" or "you are my intimate friend" was what you said to your wife. It's not a weird, incestuous thing. When you're a child often your best friend is your sister. When you're an adult your best friend should be your spouse, who is also your intimate friend.

And the contrast here is stark: either you'll be linked to God's commands, or you'll be linked to the forbidden woman. **Read 4-5**

You're either going to love God's commands or you're going to love sin. It's that stark.

Now, let me just make a practical point here before we move on. Fathers you need to be talking to your children about sex. And you need to be talking to them regularly. Both about the glories of the sexual union in marriage and the dangers of sexual immorality.

And especially for sons warning them against porn once when they're 14 isn't enough. One time a year is not enough. This needs to be a regular part of your conversation. Dads I am specifically talking to you. Notice the first 2 words here: My son.

Solomon is not shy to talk to his son about sex. For good and for evil. **Read 5:1-23, 6:20-29**

In the home - in the family - is where vital training takes place. It's not my job as your pastor to be the primary teacher of your kids with regard to purity. It's not the school's job. And, gentlemen, it's not primarily your wife's job. It's your home that you lead. And you will be held accountable for.

My son, my son, my son. This is from a father to a son. Should moms teach their kids? Of course. Should it include daughters? Of course it should.

But the primary relationship throughout Proverbs is from a father to his son.

Eph 6:4 puts the parenting responsibility squarely on the father as the head.

This is on you. How do you do this? Just grab the bull by the horns and pull them aside and have regular conversations. Or read Proverbs for your family devotions. If you just read through Proverbs for family devotions once a year you'd hit about every ethical topic possible.

The way we avoid death is to treasure the commands of God.

2) Be Ready for Temptation.

Alright, Solomon gives us a little parable here of this young dumb kid. And I think we can learn a lot from the story. **Read 6-20**

So much we could say here but let me make some observations that I think are relevant.

A) You need to know that temptation is coming. This kid - this young man - is walking around and he has no idea that temptation is on its way. Solomon says he lacks sense, and he's simple - that means dumb and foolish. He should have known this was coming.

1 Pet 5:8: Be sober minded, be watchful! Your adversary the devil prowls around like a what? Roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Gentleman, if you are not on guard for sexual temptation 24/7 you are foolish. If you jump on Facebook and don't think you're going to see inappropriate stuff, you're foolish. If you jump on Instagram and don't think you're going to see scantily clad women you're foolish. It's called Instaporn for a reason.

Every couple of weeks the Facebook algorithm decides I must really want to see women in scantily clad stuff. So I have to carefully hit the X button like 20 times. Then it decides maybe I'm gay and sends me all these pictures of bodybuilders and I have to hit the X button like 20 times. Then I think the algo is confused and it sends me dog videos and baseball videos.

What comes through your feed and timeline is all intentional. And although this is primarily aimed at men, ladies you need to be aware of the same thing.

Sexual temptation will be coming your way. The question is not if but what? When.

Tim Challies, a reformed blogger, once asked the question: If you were Satan, how would you tempt you? Where and when are you weakest? And what are you doing to keep yourself from that temptation.

This guy is wandering around the town near this adulteress's house in the evening, at night. What is he thinking?

What are you doing on your phone at night? What are you doing on your phone when you by yourself? Are you hiding messages from your spouse? Are you posting pictures you shouldn't be posting? Sharing pictures you shouldn't be sharing?

Do you have someone to keep you accountable? And not just that they have to ask you questions, but that you go confess proactively when you sin? And not someone who has the same struggle as you, but someone who will get in your business a little?

You need to know that temptation is coming.

B) Watch out for what women wear. **Read 10**

The woman is proactive. She coming, and she's coming full court press. She's dressed like a prostitute.

What does that mean? She not leaving anything to the imagination. She's very suggestive.

Which means a few things. Men, you need to be on guard against more than just hard-core porn. Anything that you're looking at that stirs up lust in your heart you need to guard against.

If going to the pool causes you to stumble, you need to stop. Looking at ads that show scantily clad women, or women who giving away the farm. You need to guard yourself against all temptations.

Ladies, on the other side, this also means you need to realize that what you wear has a huge effect on men, whether you know it or not. Your clothing can either be helpful for your brothers, or potentially a stumbling block.

The type of shorts you wear, what you wear to the beach or pool, tight pants, yoga pants. Did you know that they actually have yoga pants with wedgies built in? That's not a comfort issue - they're building extra temptation. Low cut tops, tops that show your mid drift.

I remember one time I was trying on shorts 20 years ago at Target and Jodee was sitting in the chair to see how they looked. And as I came out a gal came out of the women's fitting room to show her guy the bathing suit she was trying on. And she was like hiding because she didn't want anyone to see her in the bathing suit. And I was thinking: why is it okay for a woman to wear basically underwear when it's 90 degrees and there's a small pool around, but it's not okay to wear that in the middle of Target?

It's because we've trained that immodesty is okay in certain situations.

You ever wonder why women's beach volleyball players wear bikinis and men wear shorts? Why is that? Why can't they wear what the men wear?

There are some ladies who want to say "Well, if it's a problem don't look." No, God calls us all to modesty. Why? Because he knows that our bodies should usually be covered except in the marriage bed.

Fathers you need to teach your daughters what is and is not appropriate. And husbands you need to have honest conversations with your wife.

The first thing this foolish man is caught by with this woman is what she's wearing.

C) Watch out for what women say. **Read 11-15**

Notice what she says and how she says it. She's loud. Godly women are usually not loud. They're peaceful and quiet.

1 Pet 3:4: says that women are to be adorned with imperishable beauty of gentle and quiet spirit, which in God's sight is very precious.

She's also religious, isn't she? She had to offer sacrifices and pay vows. She went to church and read her Bible this morning. She had her quiet time before she came out to meet him.

Isn't that nice? Notice how suggestive she is. **Read 16-21**

Words are often the way women entice men into sexual sin. Men you need to be very very careful about what you talk about with ladies who are not your wife. Your conversations need to be very guarded. "But she's a Christian" That's exactly what the forbidden woman is claiming right here, isn't it?

It's crazy what temptation does to our brains. You have to be ready for words that will entice you.

There was a video a while back of a young man working at a fast food place - he was maybe 19-20 and a chick with an Only Fans account came in and full court press propositioned him. She wanted to record them for her channel or whatever. And he just stood there and said "I'm a Christian man, I don't do that." He said it over and over because she persisted. **Read 5:3-4**

It's the words we have to be on alert for. Whether that's texting, or advertising, or just talking with the opposite sex.

Side: a lot of people will ask, "Don't women need to be on guard for men who are exploiting them?" And the answer is "Of course!" This is a two way street.

But it's interesting that in the Proverbs it's usually the woman who entices the man, not the other way around. I think that's worth noting. There are some sins that are more prevalent among men than women. And vice versa. We can't just flatten this out.

So we need to love the commands of God. We need to be ready for temptation. Here's the last way we guard ourselves:

3) Know the Outcome. Read 22-27

The outcome is carnage and death. The young man doesn't think it'll happen until it's too late.

What these animals didn't realize was that they were being hunted. Beloved you are being hunted by the enemy. And if you're not careful it will cost you your life.

The forbidden woman has destroyed many many men. She's like the Navy Seal of sin. If you're not careful and vigilant it will cost you your life.

What do you do from here?

- 1) If you're in this sin, stop. Put away every temptation, confess to God.
- 2) Get help. Not from someone else who's struggling with this sin also. But someone who can love you, encourage you, warn you. If you're struggling come to me or one of the elders, whatever it takes.
- 3) Rest in Jesus. The good news of the gospel is that Jesus cleanses us from all our sin. He cleanses us from unrighteousness. Sometimes we have to deal with the effects of our sin and the fallout of our sin. But we rejoice that through faith in Jesus we are cleansed.

1 Cor. 6:11: And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. (1 Corinthians 6:11, ESV)

Pray