

## Grow in Christlikeness (3): Purity

### Ephesians 5:3-5 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> But **sexual immorality** or **any impurity** or **greed** must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints; <sup>4</sup> and *there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or **vulgar joking***, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. <sup>5</sup> For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

### 1 Peter 2:11 (NASB)

"Beloved, I urge you as foreigners and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.

## Introduction

Let me begin my sermon with a parable Jesus told. There was a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. Everything was ready, and he sent messengers to call the invited guests. But they refused to come. Some ignored the call, others made excuses, and some even mistreated the messengers. So, the king opened his invitation to anyone on the streets and marketplaces—both good and bad—to fill the banquet hall.

Yet, when one guest entered without proper wedding clothes, the king said, "*Friend, how did you get in here without wedding clothes?*" The man was speechless, and he was cast out. Then Jesus said, "*For many are called, but few are chosen*" (Matthew 22:1–14).

The lesson is clear: Many are invited into God's kingdom, but only those who come clothed in righteousness will enter.

## Content

This ties perfectly with our passage today. Paul writes in **Ephesians 5:3–5**: <sup>3</sup> But **sexual immorality** or **any impurity** or **greed** must not even be mentioned among you, as is proper among saints; <sup>4</sup> and *there must be no filthiness or foolish talk, or **vulgar joking***, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. <sup>5</sup> For this you know with certainty, that no sexually immoral

*or impure or greedy person, which amounts to an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.*

God calls us to live pure lives—free from sexual immorality, any impurity, and greed—so that we may walk as His holy people. Let’s go over one by one.

## **1. Guard against Sexual Immorality**

Paul begins with sexual immorality, a word in Greek, *porneia*, from which we get “pornography.” It covers all sexual sin outside of God’s design for marriage between one man and one woman.

In Paul’s day, cities like Corinth and Ephesus were filled with sexual sin. Temples were dedicated to prostitution. Immorality was celebrated. Our world today isn’t much different. Turn on the TV, scroll through your phone, and it’s everywhere.

Some years ago, Rockdale County High School in Georgia made headlines because of an outbreak of syphilis among teenagers. Over 50 students were infected. When they were interviewed, many admitted they didn’t care about consequences—they wanted pleasure without responsibility. The community was shocked. But that story simply reveals what happens when God’s design is ignored.

Paul warns us: “*The sexually immoral will not inherit the kingdom of God*” (1 Corinthians 6:9). Sexual sin deceives, enslaves, destroys, even kills, not just individuals but their relationships. But the good news is this—Christ redeems and frees us. Paul also says in that same passage, “*Such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*” (1 Corinthians 6:11).

So, how do we guard against sexual sin? By having the fear of the Lord. Remember what Joseph did (Genesis 39)? When Potiphar’s wife (his master’s wife) grabbed him, he ran. That’s the model for us: don’t flirt with temptation, don’t linger — flee. Don’t debate with it—run from it.

## **2. Walk Free from Impurity**

Paul then says, “*impurity must not even be mentioned among you.*” This word covers moral uncleanness—filthy and unclean thoughts, words, or habits.

Sometimes, impurity doesn't look as obvious as sexual sin. It can creep into our conversations, our jokes, our entertainment choices, even the things we laugh at. Paul adds: *"no filthiness, foolish talk, or vulgar joking... but rather thanksgiving."*

Let me illustrate: If you were thirsty and I gave you a glass of pure, clean water, you'd drink it gladly. But what if I added just a few drops of sewage? Would you drink it then? Of course not. Yet, that's what impurity does to our lives — it pollutes us inside and out. It defiles what God designed to be pure — that is us.

Instead of dirty talk, Scripture says, fill your mouth with thanksgiving. Instead of crude jokes, let gratitude flow. Purity isn't just about saying "no" to sin—it's about saying "yes" to a thankful heart.

Philippians 4:8 gives us a guide: *"Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable—think about these things."*

Parents teach their children with a simple song: *"Oh, be careful little eyes what you see... be careful little ears what you hear."* Folks, that's not just for children—it's for us all.

### **3. Reject Greed**

Finally, Paul warns us here against greed. Greed is the desire for more than what you need—more money, more possessions, more power, and more recognition. At its core, greed is idolatry, the Bible says, because it replaces trust in God with trust in stuff.

We often think, "If I just had this one more thing, then I'd be happy." That's greed whispering to us. The truth is, we're never satisfied until Christ becomes enough.

Scripture says in 1 Timothy 6:6: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* Contentment doesn't come from what's in your wallet, but from who is in your heart.

The cure for greed is contentment. The more we thank God for what we already have, the less room greed has to grow. Another cure is generosity. When we give, we declare: *"My trust is in God, not in my possessions."*

### **Conclusion: Living Ready for the Wedding Feast**

Paul closes with a sobering reminder: *"No immoral, impure, or greedy person has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."*

This verse isn't to discourage us but to wake us up. Without purity, we cannot inherit God's kingdom. But here is the good news: in Christ, we are washed, sanctified, and justified. Through Him, we are clothed in righteousness, ready for the wedding banquet of the Lamb.

So, what must we do for the life of purity?

- Guard your heart and mind: flee temptation.
- Replace filth, words and thoughts, with thanksgiving.
- Practice contentment and generosity.
- Stay accountable with other believers.
- Clothe yourself with Christ every day.

Ephesians 4:2 says: *“Live a life worthy of God’s calling, with all humility and gentleness.”*

The wedding feast is ready. Let us live pure, clothed in Christ, prepared to meet the Bridegroom.

### **Closing Prayer**

“Lord, we confess we often fall short in purity. We’ve allowed sin to creep into our thoughts, words, and desires. But we thank You that through Jesus we are washed and made new. Help us flee temptation, fill our hearts with gratitude, and walk in contentment. Clothe us with Your righteousness, so we may be ready for Your Kingdom. In Jesus’ name, Amen.”