

1. Walking in God's Love Means Rejecting Sin

- a. These things should not even be spoken about you
 - i. Sexual immorality (*porneia*) is not to be named among you
 1. Porneia means every kind of prohibited sexual relationship in Scripture
 - a. Sexual relationship outside of marriage between one man and one woman
 - b. Extends from unfaithfulness by husband/wife, sexual relationship w/o lifelong commitment of marriage, homosexuality, bestiality,
 - ii. Impurity is not to be named among you
 1. Literally "every" impurity, indicative of all sins that are "unclean"
 2. General moral impurity, which defiles the entire personality; very broad term for that which is in contrast to the revealed desires of God morally
 - iii. Greediness is not to be named among you
 1. "wanting more and more" – descriptive primarily of money, but really is an attitude of over-desire for anything, i.e. lust.
 - a. Money is a powerful idol of the heart which promises great security and happiness, but it is an idol when we trust it to bring us such fulfillment
 - b. Christians are not to be characterized as money-chasers, or as those who continually want more and more material wealth
 - c. Selfishness to the extreme
 2. Greed is the internal attitude of the Flesh's selfishness and distrust of God
 - a. Not loving or concerned with others, but ourselves
 - b. This attitude should not even be named among the Church
 - b. These things are not appropriate for saints
 - i. "Does not fit"
 1. As holy people, called by the holy God, made righteous by the holy blood of Jesus, it does not fit to continue in sin
 2. "not even to be named"
 - a. This does not mean that we cannot identify such sins, but rather that they should be so universally absent from Christians that we cannot be said to be associated with them
 - ii. HOLY = distinct; as holy ones we are to be distinctly different than the world particularly in regards to sexuality and money and power (greediness, which is idolatry).
 - iii. F.F. Bruce – "Such unholy things should not be acceptable subjects of conversation among people whom God has called to be holy."

2. Walking in God's Love Means Holy Speech

- a. The sins of the tongue reveal the deeper root sins of the heart
 - i. How and of what you speak reveal the true condition of your heart
 - ii. Luke 6:45-49 – out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks; the one who obeys the words of the Lord is the good man, the one who disobeys will be shown to be evil when the trials come
 - iii. Matt 12:34-37 – "by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned"
 - iv. James 1:23-26 – He who does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this is worthless
- b. Shameful speech is not fitting to the holy children of God
 - i. filthiness - shameful, dishonorable, flouting moral standards, obscene conduct and/or speech
 - ii. foolish talk - foolish, obstinate words, speculative words that detract from wise edification
 - iii. coarse jesting - innuendo, risqué wit, sarcastic ridicule, to turn a phrase at the expense of another: both jesting by belittling God's revelation concerning sexuality AND sarcasm at the expense of tearing another person down

- c. These things are “inappropriate” for holy ones (saints):
 - i. “not fitting” “does not compute” with children of God
 - ii. “holy ones” – holy because their Father is holy, their Savior is holy, and the Spirit within them is holy
 - iii. What shows us to be children of God? It is that we look like the Father who loves us and the Savior who died for us!

- 3. Christians are to honor God by giving Him thanks, instead
 - a. Rather than dishonor God through sexual immorality, impurity, greed, and evil speech, it is fitting for the redeemed to honor God through giving Him thanks for His gracious gifts (see chapter 1) of grace toward them. This should always include praise, the public giving of thanks to God, so as to honor the One who redeemed us!
 - b. This is the proper, or fitting, use of the tongue of the Redeemed people of God!!!
 - c. Not just once a year, either, but it should characterize Christians
 - i. What do we speak more of?
 - 1. God’s goodness?
 - 2. Light-hearted view of sin?

- 4. What’ the Big Deal? Because evildoers have no inheritance from God! (5-6)
 - a. Those characterized by idolatry have no part of God’s Kingdom in Christ
 - i. How “funny” is it that sin brings God’s wrath?
 - ii. How little a thing is it that the sin of which we lightheartedly joke around about brings about the terrible furor of God and DID bring about the death of Christ for us?!
 - b. Idolatry is seen as and adulterous relationship against God (Hos 3:1; Jer 3:20; Jam 4:1-6)
 - i. These sins matter! To make light of our former condition as enemies of God by living like and speaking like enemies of God is ridiculous!
 - ii. This is like a husband checking out another woman whom he’s had an affair with and making obscene comments about it. How sick is that? More than deeply inconsiderate of his wife, it is deplorable and detestable.
 - 1. This is what we do when we joke about sin, when we take immorality and impurity and greed lightly.
 - 2. Because at the root of every one of these sins of the heart, the body, and the tongue lies a deep, adulterous affair with the world

- 5. God Desires our Exclusive Love
 - a. God has called us into an exclusive relationship with Him
 - i. He is our husband, we are His bride
 - ii. We were made to worship Him
 - b. This means that He is enough for us, we need nothing else to be fulfilled
 - i. Sexual immorality, impurities, and greed are all “other lovers” which call our hearts away with promises of great fulfillment
 - ii. These are things that our hearts set up *beside* Jesus, not exclusive of Him. We think we can have both.
 - 1. Israel never excluded YHWH when they followed idols, they just included the idols in the relationship...adulterous
 - 2. This is why YHWH proclaimed that “I am a jealous God”
 - 3. The wonderful grace of God, however, did not let them go, but pursued them (through suffering and discipline) to bring them back to an exclusive relationship with Him
 - c. These “other lovers” blind us, deceiving our hearts and minds
 - i. Romans 1:18-23
 - ii. These other lovers make promises that they never keep, they never satisfy us and only lead us into great oppression and hardness of heart

- iii. Oddly, we usually don't blame the sin, we blame God
 - d. The "other lovers" enslave us as well
 - i. They lie, promising fulfillment, but actually enslaving us:
 - ii. Whatever we feel that we "must have" or "cannot give up", outside of God Himself, will rule us
 - 1. Since we feel that we have to have it (sexual fulfillment, money, reputation) our minds and emotions are controlled by how we relate to it
 - 2. If somebody gets in my way of this "other lover" I get angry
 - a. Tell someone that their sexual relationship will not deliver and that is a sinful affront to God. Response?
 - b. Tell someone that their greed is out of line with the gospel and is a sinful affront to God. Response?
 - 3. "Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she wants to please. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lords of our lives." (Rebecca Pipert)
 - iii. Whatever we see or feel to be our "functional ultimate good" (that which will bring us satisfaction and fulfillment) is what we offer ourselves to.
 - 1. So, to live and speak of sexual immorality, impurity, and greed is really an adulterous affair with another lover besides Christ.
 - 2. God desires our exclusive love, and He is trustworthy to bring us ultimate fulfillment
6. What do we do?
 - a. Dwell on the beauty of Jesus Christ
 - i. As we see the awesome promises of God in the gospel and meditate on the glory of the face of Christ we are transformed into His image (2 Cor 3:18)
 - ii. Learn what He desires and trust Him when He says that He is more than you need for fulfillment and joy (John 15:11; 1 Pet 1:8)
 - b. Identify these "other lovers" in your life, where they are against what God has commanded and what their promises are that you have fallen for.
 - i. If you are living in immorality or impurity: Can you trust Christ enough to let go of a sinful relationship or to make it right? What do you think that you need apart from Jesus? Run to Him, lean on Him, repent and rejoice in His righteousness imputed to you by His grace and through His blood!
 - ii. If you are greedy: What do you think that you need that you have not been given in Christ? All in this world will fade away, but Jesus remains forever! Repent and rejoice in the gospel and come near to God again through Jesus.
 - c. "On an eternal scale, the world's promises are not very reassuring. By contrast, the promises God makes in Scripture are rich and enduring. Hundreds of years before Christ, God promised to enter into a new covenant with His people (Jer 31:31-34; Ezek 36:25-27), and he kept his promise. Jesus promised his followers 'rest' – not only the well-being believers enjoy now, and the 'rest' from their works (Heb 4:1-13), but the ultimate rest of the new heaven and the new earth. Jesus promised that he was going away to prepare a place for his people; he promised to receive them at the end, so that they might be where he is, forever (John 14:1-4). He promised he would build his church and do so with such vigor and certainty that the gates of hell would not be able to prevail against it (Matt 16:17-19). Jesus promised to bequeath his Spirit to us (John 14:15-27; 15:26-27), and he kept his word. He promises to be with us until the end of the age (Matt 28:20). God promises not to allow his people to endure a temptation beyond what they will be able to bear (1 Cor 10:13). He promises us resurrection life on the last day (1 Cor 15); he promises to complete his work in us (Phil 1:6). These and countless other gospel promises have been given to you, Peter tells his readers, in order that 'through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption of the world caused by evil desires' (2 Pet 1:4)." D.A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church*

The calling to walk in love is founded upon our gracious relationship between us and the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ in our place. To live in sexual immorality or greed, even an inkling of it among us, is to dishonor the Father, not merely to dishonor Him but to *distrust* Him, and not walk in exclusive love for Him. Love, by the nature of God's definition, is exclusive. God desires and commands exclusive love from His people. He will not share us with other gods or other lovers. This is why the Scriptures call Him "jealous." He is like a jealous husband who desires His wife's love completely exclusive of others. When we walk in sin, or even take it lightly in joking or worldly sarcasm, we mock and belittle His honor in grave unbelief. You know with certainty, O Church, that you were not redeemed with mere money, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. In fact, the jealousy of the Father shows the intensity of His love for you! As Octavius Winslow wrote, "There is a sacred place in the heart of Jesus Christ only for you." As the Lord revealed through David: "You make known to me the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (Ps 16:11)

My fellow brothers and sister, since we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and made the children of God who are deeply loved and delighted in, how can we walk in sin? That for which Christ had to die! How can we pursue impurity and immorality, greediness and selfishness? Do you not realize that these pursuits make you out to be an enemy of God, an adulterer of His kindness, and living in-line with that which brings His wrath?! Let us walk in exclusive love for our beloved Father, resisting every immorality with a shunning disposition of evil and of that which would pull our hearts away from pure devotion to Jesus. Let us repent of our adulterous and idolatrous desires and rejoice that Jesus' blood is sufficient to make us right with God for eternity! Let us meditate on the glorious face of Jesus and walk in complete and exclusive love of our Savior, ridding ourselves of that which is inconsistent with holiness, sexual immorality, greed, and foolish speech, out of the great gratitude to the Lover of our souls. Let us instead offer up loud voices of great praise and thanksgiving to our True and Eternal Love, Jesus Christ, who pursued us all the way to the Cross. May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, Our Rock and Our Redeemer. Amen.