

On Purity

Mr. Kaiser, how can a single young man of twenty-three stay pure in today's society? I have found that to be the million-dollar question without an answer. Do you know the horrible cycle of sin-confess-sin-confess that I go through? I cannot help but to question the reality of a God who cannot help us—rather, me—to deal with this issue. Can you give me any advice?

Okay, here goes. My brother, there are no free rides in a sin-infested world. We have the choice to obey or disobey God, His Word, His plan. We have the ability within us to follow Jesus or deny and reject His work in us on a moment-by-moment basis. The scenario of no free will, no free-choice love (on our part) sounds more like rape than love—and there is NO WAY God is into that!!! So here's the devil, demons, and our own "flesh" or "old nature"—even as Christians, truly saved, blood-bought.

One of the battles (Wendell) Phillips said, "Christianity is a battle, not a dream." is, of course, in the area of sexuality. Are we going to get/remains/be pure . . . and as you mean it—"entirely pure" in this present life? That is, literally PERFECT in this life? Nothing in either the Word of God nor in personal experience seems to clearly state that any human being ever reached (or can reach) that state while on earth.

ONLY Jesus was "tempted in ALL points, yet never sinned." He IS the one who declares "not guilty"—not that we don't sin, but rather He is the perfect sacrifice, obeying the will of the Father, completely doing the will of God in all areas. Yet in His approximately thirty-three years on earth as a human (fully God, fully man) He was tempted sexually and in all other areas over and over again. And so, as it says in Hebrews, He is able to help those who are tempted. He understands thoroughly.

Direct answer to your question? God's reality is not based on your obedience or disobedience. I understand your cycle of sin-confess-sin-confess because every genuine Christian goes through the exact same process

in any number of areas of continual struggle. To say there are easy (as in painless, nondifficult) answers would not be honest, but to tell you that anyone has ever become completely without sin in this life would be an outright lie.

You can do or not do as you choose—and you will. You can grow or not grow as you choose—and you will. You can follow Jesus or backslide, curse God and die, try to remain apathetic—whatever you wish—and you will. It is an issue of the free will of man that is at the core of God's love for us, and He has chosen to not violate it. Despair, allowing our emotions lordship of our life, is folly and disaster. Playing our own God is a lie as well as a sure trip to eternal separation from Him. The issues are clear, but not always "fun." And so the list:

1. Study God's Word daily—Do Bible studies specifically about sexual purity. Really, you are on the edge of considering holiness and that's very good.

2. Pray daily, off and on all day—I mean worship God, thank Him for His grace in all its forms as He blesses you in it, tell Him your hurts, fears, worries, but also give thanks—not only your "grocery list"!

3. Be accountable—Find and speak truthfully to a solid pastor, youth pastor, or leader (as a guy, be sure it's a guy; women should go to women) and at least weekly. Give him permission to ask you directly if you haven't told him exactly how you're doing in terms of sexual purity. He can pray for you, show you Scripture that can help direct, comfort, and strengthen you, and you can find friendship with someone who isn't on quite as intensive a rollercoaster as you may be at the moment. Stay accountable over the long haul and see God's grace work through this!

4. Read books on the issue—There are a number of great books; one I know of is by Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer (pastor of Moody Church here in Chicago), *Living With Your Passions*, and another I just found out about (but have not read) also by Lutzer is *How to Say No to a Stubborn Habit*, which is one I would like to read myself!

5. Choose your friends, media, and "alone" times carefully.

6. You have not been specific and may not wish to, but if you have established a pattern of using pornography or indulging in sadism or prostitution, you may need ongoing professional help, i.e., counseling from a solid, Christian counselor in order to come to healing and victory. Any form of sexual temptation or sin involving children requires you to disclose it to a responsible pastor or authority.

Believe me, I get tired, as do all Christians, of having to fight. "Be not weary in well doing for we shall reap in due season IF we faint not." There are so many verses relating to help from the Lord, to spiritual warfare (going on the offensive as well as defensive with Satan), and so on. But in the end, sure, it gets tire-

OF THE REASONS
Christians refer to this world as a
"veil of tears."

Jesus promised us that in this world we would have tribulation. He also said that we should "learn" of Him, that His yoke was easy, HIS burden light. I will stop giving you all the answers at this point, but you should meditate on what He meant by HIS yoke, HIS burden, and how it relates.

But to determine God is nonexistent on the basis of your continuing struggle is to miss the point entirely. I'm not saying you've done or are doing so, but a warning: whether or not we get delivered from pain, temptation, whatever, this in NO WAY reflects on God's existence nor His love for us. Read history. Christian history as well. Ever consider the martyrs? Persecuted Christians? What about when holy, loving, living the Word daily Christians don't get healed? I will spare you more troubling scenarios along this line, but the fact of God and His love for me is not dictated on the point of whether or not I'm feeling good or getting my way in a matter. God HAS done something about it, and daily DOES do "something about it." But the issue is how you and I respond.

You have my prayers, my understanding, and my respect for caring about doing right at all! You allude to your world and generation and the apparent lack of purity. I agree. It is tough, but it isn't impossible! The question is, will YOU take God up on any/all of the things I have listed (and many more you will learn about in doing these) in order to come to some growth and freedom?

God's will and choice for you in the matter is clear. It's your move.

Love, grace, strength from a fellow struggler!

2 Cor. 13:8; Phil. 4:13