

offhanded comments we make. These fit in the category of impurity of mind and God clearly warns us that if we engage in such activity we will NOT inherit the Kingdom of God. We risk eternal punishment.

Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God.
(Ephesians 5:3-5 NLT)

Impossible standards? On our own, YES! But God is faithful to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Now may the God of peace make you holy in every way, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ comes again. God will make this happen, for he who calls you is faithful. (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 NLT)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

- Is sexual purity part of my new life with God in recovery? Why or why not?
- In a world that has drifted far from God's plan for loving sexual activity, where do my beliefs and actions line up with God's plan?
- No sexual intercourse outside of heterosexual marriage – impossible standard? Am I choosing to disregard or obey this command?
- When do I notice impurity in my thoughts, my speech, my desires? When I am aware of this what action do I take?
- How do I overcome the temptation to use people or pornography to gratify my personal desires?
- How is God helping me change my perspective and behaviour in the area of sexual purity?

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, You have called me to be holy because You are holy. Give me the strength to live in sexual purity so that I may honour You with my body. Help me to guard my heart and turn away from all false beliefs I have held in the area of sexual ethics. Help me keep my eyes from viewing anything that would raise lustful passion within me. Give me grace and discernment to walk in truth in a culture that has drifted far from your plan for purity in sexual relationship. May my whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless. I am forever grateful that You care for me and are faithful to complete the work you have begun. AMEN

Life With God In Recovery

STEP FOUR: SEXUAL ETHICS



SEXUAL ETHICS

Step 4: We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

God made men and women sexual beings with the ability to recreate their kind. His plan for sexual intercourse was, and still is, that it only be practiced inside the protection of heterosexual marriage. Any other type of sexual intercourse is not in keeping with God's plan for His creation. Those may be stark and startling words for the majority of people in our society today. However, this is the Biblical direction for sexual relationships between humans. This is certainly not what is taught today in sex education classes in school. It is definitely not evident in the storylines of television programs or movies. It is also not evident in the real lives of people who participate in the TV or movie industry or in society in general.

Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God.... Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18-20 NLT)

The fact that people have engaged in sexual activity outside of marriage for thousands of years is not the issue. What is at issue is that until the 1960's it was well understood across society that such activity was harmful and wrong. In the last few decades, things have shifted so dramatically that saving sex for marriage now seems an impossible standard to attain and an unreasonable demand from ancient times.

As Christians, our primary concern is not what other people think or practice, but how we are personally following God's established principals for human sexual relationships. The Bible is quite clear about the issue of sexual activity in its many forms. The most basic rules for a healthy society (The Ten Commandments), were handed down from God to Moses for the people's well-being, and the seventh rule is ***"You must not commit adultery."*** (Exodus 20:14 NLT) It seems obvious from the need for this commandment that intercourse outside of marriage was happening in ancient times as well.

In Jesus' most important collection of teachings called the Sermon on the Mount, He extended the call for sexual purity to include not just our actions but also our thoughts and feelings.

"You have heard the commandment that says, 'You must not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:27-28 NLT)

We should be aware that looking at pornographic images on the internet and in magazines has a negative impact on legitimate sexual relationships. Viewing explicit sexual content in television programs and in movies is also damaging. This type of viewing often leads to a desire for increasingly degrading sexual activity. It may also lead to a longing for adulterous relationships to fulfill the aroused lustful desires. Adultery is detrimental to the one flesh union that God intended in marriage.

When it comes to murder, everyone recognizes that it is wrong and something to be avoided and punished. Jesus puts sexual sin in the same category as murder. ***For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you.*** (Matthew 15:19-20 NLT) Jesus says that indulging in sex outside of marriage spoils and pollutes us, ruins and degrades us. In the scriptures we are also taught that those who engage in sexual activity outside of marriage are not just disobeying human rules but are actually rejecting God.

God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways.... God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7-8 NLT)

We need to be crystal clear where we stand. If we are engaging in immoral sex, we are saying "No" to God. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus and disobey what He clearly teaches. We are told that if we repeatedly engage in sexual sin we have no part in the Kingdom of God. Many people who enter into recovery seeking victory over drugs and alcohol find themselves relapsing into their addictive lifestyles when they refuse to obey God's teaching on sexual purity. When we disobey God, we give permission to Satan and his cohorts to operate in our lives. The satanic forces of evil will take every opportunity we give them to steal, kill and destroy us.

For those of us not currently engaging in sexual impurity, we are challenged to be careful what we condemn in others while condoning offensive behaviour among ourselves. God includes the way we talk, the way we think, the jokes we tell, the