

## Discovering Our Purpose

### **Living G-rated Lives in an X-rated World (Eph. 5:3-14)**

**Intro:** Perhaps no one could have been prepared for the social revolution that has taken our country by storm. Some of you were young when that first four letter word made its appearance in “Gone with the Wind” in 1939 and left many Americans aghast at such blatant profanity. Now, a four letter word would hard get a yawn.

Since that time we have seen almost every social moray be assaulted by the sexual revolution. With it has been an escalating acceptance and toleration of sexual deviance and the virtual acceptance of any kind of sexual relationship. Pitirim Sorokin, a Harvard professor, wrote in the “American Sexual Revolution”, “Our civilization has become so preoccupied with sex that I now oozes from all pores of American life”. I’m not saying that these problems have not always existed; but today there is a boldness, an unblushing, uninhibited brashness in today’s immorality that none can deny. Today there are more outlets for hard-core pornography in the US than McDonald’s restaurants. It is a \$10 billion business in America.

Today I want to talk about living G-rated lives in an X-rated world. Let’s turn today to Ephesians 5:3-14.

Our society is not the first to be so challenge by such a perverted culture. The world of the NT Christians was also saturated with sexual immorality. God called upon His people to live in purity. Even now as then it is important that we meet the challenge of purity in an impure world.

#### The challenge of sexual immorality

Do not let these sins be named among you.

**Immorality--To prostitute one’s body to the lusts of another, premarital sexual relationships, extramarital relationships and unlawful marriages (adultery), homosexuality**

**Impurity—sexual conduct that makes one unclean, emphasizing how unlawful sexual relationships make dirty what God has sanctified as pure and undefiled.**

**Greed--adds the element of the taking of what belongs to another, selfish indulgence at the expense of another. We often associate this word with money, but in this context the reference is more likely to “desire” for what is not lawfully ours. God warned Israel in the tenth commandment: “you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife..”**

**In an interesting insight, Paul considers this obsession with sexual stimulation an “idol” that can rule our hearts and lead into sin.**

**Filthiness, silly talk, or course jesting**

**Foul language, shameful talk or talk about shameful things  
Silly talk (From the word from which we get "moron" and  
the Greek word for speaking. Moronic or foolish speech.)  
Course jesting (Aristotle defined as "cultured insolence"  
but insolence none the less).**

**What may not be apparent in this description are the moral gradations suggested by Paul. Fornication is the most explicit and commonly viewed improper manifestation of improper desire. But Paul, like Jesus, goes all the way to the heart! (Mt. 5:28) Lust and impurity should be removed from our hearts. Even the simplest impure laughter at a dirty joke begins the loosening of the restraints of holiness and purity that lead to overt sexual sins. Many a couple caught in the trap of immorality first joked with each other about such things and in so doing created and excited feelings that should not be there between them. These things don't belong in the Christians life.**

**Why these things must be put away**

**Because they are shameful!**

**The conduct of sinners is disgraceful or shameful. It is manifest by the propensity of men to hide when engaging in such acts.**

**It is even shameful to speak in details about such sins!**

**Because they are unfruitful**

**They are works of darkness. They are a part of that life that leads to death. What is "fruitful" is what enhances our life with God. Tell me how a comedian joking about sexual matters helps you get closer to God or your wife?**

**Because they evoke the wrath of God, v. 6. They undermine the most fundamental building block of society---the home and marriage. They substitute "alternative" relationships to the one God instituted. They undermine the role identities that God intended perpetuate his institution. They undermine the stability of the home where God intended that His will be taught and encouraged and where souls would be prepared to know Him, love Him and serve Him.**

**Because they will result in eternal condemnation**

**Those who practice such things have no inheritance with God, v. 5.**

**Paul issues a warning: Let no one deceive you.**

**Even in our society there is this politically correct notion that whatever sexual course you take is your business and no one else's and isn't wrong. That those in alternative lifestyles are as qualified to provide the needed training and nurture to raise a child as those in heterosexual marriages. There is one thing a child will not hear in such a home—How God made**

the first home and marriage. What God says about sexual sins!

Two-fifths of self-identified Christians say do anything you want, just don't hurt anyone.

Members of a 24-member United Methodist Church (UMC) panel could not agree on whether homosexuality is a sin, so the committee's 14,000-word report on the subject was referred to the denomination's national policy-making body, which will convene in Louisville, Ky., in May. The report contains a majority statement, signed by 17 committee members, recommending the removal of an assertion in the church's book of rules that homosexual practice and Christianity are incompatible. A minority report, signed by four members, argues for retaining the current language. The panel agreed that biblical references to sexual practices should not be viewed as binding "just because they are in the Bible." Fierce debate is expected at this year's General Conference because at least 35 of the UMC's 72 regional bodies have approved resolutions calling for preserving the traditional stance.

### **The solution to sexual immorality**

#### **Imitate God and walk in love**

**Imitate God--If we are to view things as God views them, we must learn to think about them as God thinks. We must learn to ferret out of lives those tendencies that gradually lead us to toleration of the intolerable. Hard questions we must ask ourselves personally:**

1. Are we being desensitized by the present evil world? Do things that once shocked us now pass us by with little notice? Have our sexual ethics slackened?
2. Where do our minds wander when we have no duties to perform?
3. What are we reading? Are there books or magazines or files in our libraries that we want no one else to see?
4. What are we renting at the local video stores? How many hours do we spend watching TV? How many adulteries did we watch last week? How many murders? How many did we watch with our children?
5. How many chapters of the Bible did we read last week?

**Walk in love--In our society love and lust are so confused and interchanged. A rock singer croons to a steady beat about how much he loves his girlfriend. But what he means is he likes the sexual encounters he has with her. Love gives; lust takes. Love exalts the other person by sacrificing for them. Lust uses the other person in a way that demeans their value. A Christian does not see people as objects to be lusted for, conquered and possessed; but beings made in the image of God with needs to be met and encouragement to be given to the glory of God!**

#### **Vocalize gratitude to God for His blessings**

**Paul's answer to sexually inappropriate speech is the giving of thanks**

**First it may indicate that our time could be better and more appropriate spend rehearsing all the good God has done for us and others.**

**Second, appreciation for how God has provided for our needs to be met in marriage and for partners who accept this responsibility lovingly, we become a safeguard against immorality.**

**Realize our calling as unique people**

**We are saints**

**We are called to be “holy” people, like God!**

**1 Thes. 4:1-8**

**We are children of light**

**You were darkness--as pagans they were in their very lives "darkness" itself. But now light in the Lord. When we become Christians we are illuminated by the word of the Lord, such that we ourselves become truth or light to those around us!**

**We should then walk as children of light trying to learn what pleases the Lord. Like plants we photosynthesize the light into fruit!**

**These images challenge us to use our bodies to glorify God.**

**1 Cor. 6:15-20**

**Adopt a confrontational mindset toward sexual evil**

**Do not be partakers, but expose their sins.**

**First we must begin in the church. Sexual immorality is often ignored or swept under the rug when it should be lovingly confronted. The warning of 1 Cor. 5 is appropriate. Do we indicate by our conduct that we are not all that concerned about immorality in a brother or sister?**

**Perhaps we are all too passive about the revolution occurring around us. Are you too embarrassed to say, “I believe abstinence before marriage. I want to be a virgin when married. I don’t think sex before marriage is right or wise. I think homosexuality is wrong. I believe that show was lewd. I would not go watch that movie!**

**And perhaps we could do far more to fight against the open sewers of filth coming into our homes by tv and computer. Do we not by buying a movie with filth in any encourage the producer to continue to produce such things?**

**Conclusion: As Christians we may be little islands of purity in a sea of immorality; but we cannot afford to let down our guard.**