

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

January 25, 2015

Abstinence Is Reasonable

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1 Peter 2:11, "Beloved, I beseech you as sojourners and pilgrims, to **abstain from fleshly lust, which war against the soul**; 12 having your behavior seemly among the Gentiles; that, wherein they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works, which they behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."

People think abstinence is unreasonable because they do not understand what sin really does. They think about the pleasure sin will bring (Heb. 11:25), and think "Why not?" They think on what their flesh desires and choose not to see why they should restrain themselves. Does this sound like a harsh judgment? It is God's judgment, "17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of **their mind**, 18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, **because of the hardening of their heart**; 19 who being past feeling **gave themselves** up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." (Ephesians 4)

People who give their bodies to sin, start by giving their heart to sin. The more they give of their time, the more their conscience is ignored, hardened, deadened. People can get to the point where they are "past feeling" the pangs of a moral consciousness. People can get to the point where fornicating no longer seems wrong, homosexuality no longer seems wrong, and even more... After the

conscience is dead to righteousness, the only limit is an arbitrary one set by the seeker of pleasure.

People think abstinence is unreasonable because they are not thinking based on revealed truth (1 Cor. 2:14-15). Thus, people act like unreasoning animals: "12 **...as creatures without reason...** 13 suffering wrong as the hire of wrong-doing; **men that count it pleasure to revel... revelling in their deceivings...** 14 having **eyes full of adultery**, and that cannot cease from sin... **having a heart exercised in covetousness...** 15 forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who **loved the hire of wrong-doing**" (2 Peter 2).

A person can become so focused and enamored of their pleasures that they rejoice in them, forgetting that judgment will come. Their eyes can be filled with lustfully looking at others, no longer seeing souls created in God's image... but just objects by which to gain more personal pleasure. They can exercise themselves in desires and love what evil brings... in this life. But they do not think about the harm sin does to their soul.

People think abstinence is unreasonable because they don't understand sanctification. Whether it is premarital sex, extra marital sex (adultery), lesbian or homosexual behavior, people engage in such practices because they put out of their minds the need to be sanctified.

Sanctification doesn't mean complete abstinence, since one can be properly married as God arranged. But it does mean spiritual purity. It means refraining from and complete abstention from conduct that violates God's revealed will.

First Thessalonians 4:3 "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye **abstain from fornication**; 4 that each one of you know how to possess himself of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in the passion of lust, even as the Gentiles **who know not God**; 6 that no man **transgress**, and **wrong** his brother in the matter: because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, as also

we forewarned you and testified. 7 For God called us not for **uncleanness**, but in sanctification. 8 Therefore he that rejecteth, rejecteth not man, but God, who giveth his Holy Spirit unto you."

Immoral behavior is transgression, is wrong. It is unclean. Imagine that you sit down to dinner and see a wonder, savory smelling steak on your plate. As you lift your fork and knife... you see three smashed flies laying smeared all over that steak. Do you want to eat it now? No. God hates sin. It is revolting to Him. He is holy. We cannot be unclean and be acceptable to Him.

Sanctification is reasonable. It helps us arm ourselves to make good decisions. It bases our self-worth in God's great love, not in someone else's fickle & selfish passion. It connects us with God who wants us for eternity, not just to use us for a moment. We must learn to refuse sin and "make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14). Sanctification answers the question, "What do we do with ourselves?" We serve the Lord!

So why did God give us sexual desires and sex? Sexual faithfulness in marriage is really about sanctification. It is about our purity, faithfulness and oneness with God. In Ephesians 4 we read a beautiful parallel between the husband and wife relationship and our relationship with Christ and His church. It is a vivid illustration of spiritual relationship with Christ.

Sanctification is a reasonable choice because it leads to eternal life. It is not reasonable to act like unthinking animals. It is reasonable that in Christ we act like the sanctified people (saints) He has made us to be. "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints." (Ephesians 5:3)

Beloved, with all of the sexual immorality going on around us in today's society, let us heed the clear admonition of Scripture & remain pure in body and in spirit.

Psalm 119:6 Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect unto all thy commandments.

Psalm 119:80 Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Business Meeting - Last Sunday Each Month

Web: [Http://NSCOC.Info](http://NSCOC.Info)

E-Bulletin: Preacher@NSCOC.Info

"Let Love Be Without Hypocrisy" (Rom. 12:9)

Margie Moore; Jerry Taylor; Mary Cox; Jean Gambrell; Betty England; Michael & Eileen, Elizabeth & Robert Laurence (preacher & his family in Texas).

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