

*D GROUP – Life on Life Discipleship for Women of FBC

OUTLINE

Titus 2 for Women, Pursuing Purity, Part 2

THE ROLE OF WOMEN - OPENING DISCUSSION:

#1 How is the world moving us (even Christians!) more and more toward sexual impurity?

#2 What causes Christians to get involved in such activity?

#3 What can the Christian do to provide protection from this attack?

In our study of the godly Christian woman who desires to live a Titus 2 life as a model for others to follow, we have come to the topic of purity. In Titus 2:5 we read that women are *to be sensible, pure...* Why is there so much sexual impurity today? **One reason is that there is pressure from the world, Satan and our own flesh.** The world pressures us to be permissive. We live in a world where few parents tell their children about God's design for sex, and kids learn about sex from the culture. They learn about sexuality on the streets, at school and from the media. Television and movies purposely aim to go as far as they can, portraying explicit sexuality but hoping not to get censored. The media slowly erodes our tolerance. Satan takes something God created to be very good and distorts it with his crafty lies—like the lie that sexual intimacy is the most important thing in the world. The Bible shows us that sex is a part of life to be enjoyed in marriage, but that God's glory is the most important thing in the world. The enemy says there is no harm in flirting with someone or fantasizing about someone you aren't married to. Jesus says if we look at someone with lust in our hearts, we have committed sin. God calls our lust a sin. To compound the problem, our own flesh also pressures us to sin sexually. Many Christians have a hard time distinguishing their physical drives from their emotions and desires. **Another reason for sexual impurity is that it is so deceptive.** Impurity is a rampant problem because the battle is deceptive. Christians easily forget that they are in a constant battle. James 1 shows us that sin deceives us because most of its consequences are hidden. Verse 14 *But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.* The words "carried away" and "enticed" both have the idea of using bait to trick someone into doing something because of the pleasure it will bring. A hunter leaves a chunk of fresh meat in a trap, concealed in the snow. The trap holds immediate rewards to the bear that stumbles upon it—the meat tastes good. But the ugly consequences, hidden from the bear's view, are swift and deadly. There is pleasure in sexual sin, but it holds a deadly trap within its pleasures.

So, how does a Christian develop sexual purity? A list of rules cannot teach us not to sin, but God has designed a process to help us grow in purity. **First, seek Christ.** In 1 John 3:2-3, purity starts with longing to see Christ, to imitate Him, worship Him and love Him. The word for purify in 1 John 3 is the same Greek word that Paul uses in Titus 2:5. Purity starts with a life that is focused on the One Who is pure. 1 John 3:2 *We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is.* 3 *And every one who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.* **Second, purity is something Christ does within you.** To stay pure in a dirty world, you must remember that real purity starts within. In Mark 7:20, Jesus is teaching a confusing principle to His disciples: 20 ... *"That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man"* ²¹ *For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries* ²³ *All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."* Purity does not come from following external do's and don'ts; purity comes from an inner longing to be right with God. Purity is a heart attitude that starts with a desire to have a clean, guilt-free conscience. Purity is the desire for holiness that comes with genuine reverence for God. **Third, purity happens when you stay sensible.** Titus 2:5 connects sensibility with purity. The sequence Paul gives to Titus is first sensible, then pure. Purity requires serious thinking in advance that helps an individual to deny desires, reject feelings and flee from passions in order to please Christ. It requires common sense self-control. We spoke in our last lesson about the importance of fleeing from immorality (1 Corinthians 6:18). Paul also tells Timothy that he is to flee from youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22). What does this look like in a practical sense?

Prepare for situations Be prepared in advance for situations that could arise. Like Joseph, who knew to run when Potifer's wife tried to make him compromise, Christians singles need to decide in advance how they will respond in situations of sexual temptation. If temptation comes when you are alone with someone, don't take time out to pray—run, flee! Don't try to talk it out with the person—get away from him quickly. Fleeing means that you prepare for situations in advance. Know what you will do before you are in a tempting situation.

Plan your environment Don't place yourself in an environment where temptation would be easy. Be careful about spending time alone with someone of the opposite sex in an apartment or home. Staying public and staying busy is a form of fleeing. Finding a place where you can be alone with someone of the opposite sex is like planning to sin. Romans 13:14 says, *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provisions for the flesh in regard to its lust.* No provision means to not expose yourself to sexual sin or provide your flesh with an opportunity to lust. Never give your thoughts freedom to indulge in cravings or sexual fantasies outside of marriage. Never put your body in a place where it is free to sin sexually.

Pick the people Carefully pick the people you spend time with. Don't go out with a flirt. Avoid the charming guy who can win you over easily. In the Bible, the only person who flirts is the harlot. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, *Do not be deceived, bad company corrupts good morals.* If you're single, witness to the lost, but don't go out on dates with them. Avoid the Christian with a reputation of sexual compromise. Remember, not everyone who claims to be a Christian is actually a Christian. And not every Christian is filled with the Spirit—and self-control is a fruit of the Spirit. Pick your friends carefully so that you do not grieve God's Spirit.

Ponder your appearance Ladies, ask an older woman to critique the modesty of your neckline, skirt, blouse, top, shorts, t-shirts, pants and bathing suit. The style of your clothing could place you in danger. Are you unaware of the impact you have on the opposite sex? Do you misunderstand their response? Do you wear tight, revealing or low-cut tops, mini-skirts or short-shorts that give unintended messages to guys? Are you making it difficult for godly men to keep their thoughts pure? Pondering your appearance is a form of fleeing.

Pounce on your thoughts Remember that purity starts within. Work at thinking things that cultivate purity. Don't allow your mind to drift into lust-provoking thoughts. Philippians 4:8 *whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.* Don't allow your mind to fantasize. Think about Christ. Pray always and decide in advance to flee even a hint of impurity. By dealing with your thoughts, you are fleeing.

Paralyze your glances Fleeing from impurity includes guarding your gaze. Job 31:1 says, *I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?* You flee from sin when you do not take a long, second look at someone attractive. Don't expose your eyes to anything that may provoke lustful thoughts. And tape this message on your television. Psalm 101:3 *I will set no vile thing before my eyes.* Turning your eyes from impure images is a form of fleeing.

Proceed cautiously Don't be casual about the issue of purity—be extremely cautious. Get tough with anything that stirs up sensuality. This is war. 1 Peter 2:11 *Beloved, I urge you ...abstain from fleshly lusts, which wage war against the soul.* This is a battle where bullets are aimed at you and bombs are constantly going off. This war is real! If you get lax, you'll be shot. Write down specific standards and commit to live by them. What things will you refuse to be entertained by? What things will you refuse to involve yourself in at each level of a relationship? Develop biblical convictions—and ask an older, more mature Christian to hold you accountable.

Pursue righteousness The positive side of fleeing from sin is the pursuit of righteousness. 2 Timothy 2:22 says, *Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.* Run toward righteousness by being busy living out your faith. If you are preoccupied with your Christian walk, then you won't have time for sexual lusts and evil. Get involved in ministry—serving, witnessing, giving, discipling—and you won't find time for sin. Instead of investing all your time in putting out fires, water the new growth in your life. Instead of putting all your focus into trying to resist evil, invest your time doing good.

Recommit to God's standard God's Word is very clear—adultery is evil. An unhappy marriage is no justification for adultery. There is no justification for adultery. 1 Thessalonians 4:3 *for this is the will of God ... that you abstain from sexual immorality.* Sexual immorality and all the things that lead up to it are wrong for the true Christian. Being mistreated by your spouse and being attracted to someone else does not justify unfaithfulness. Tell your spouse today, "Whether you meet my needs or not, regardless what you do, I will never commit adultery."

Work to maintain your marriage Invest in the relationship God has given you. Proverbs 5:15-18 says in one version *Drink from your own well my son. Be faithful and true to your wife. Let her charms and breasts satisfy you; let her love alone fill you with delight.* 1 Corinthians 7:4-5 is a warning never to deprive or cheat your spouse by withholding normal sexual intercourse, because doing so will encourage obvious temptation by Satan. In marriage, sexual intimacy becomes a spiritual responsibility. When two people become one, their sexual needs for each other are legitimate. You are the only person who can meet those needs for your spouse. If you try to avoid meeting the sexual needs of your spouse, you are sinning. But if your goal is to fully meet the sexual needs of your spouse, then you are protecting your spouse from temptation.

Maintain proper relationships with other people In the NIV, Ephesians 5:3 reads, *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality.* What does "not a hint" mean? It means there is no trace, no suggestion, no possibility or not a chance of immorality. If a glance leads your thoughts down the path of impurity, turn your eyes away quickly. If a fleeting thought could develop into a fantasy, take that thought captive in obedience to Christ. Married Christians need to set appropriate boundaries for all their dealings with the opposite sex.

May our lives will be filled with the blessed fruit that comes from inner and external purity. If you've already lost too much from this sin, it is never too late to repent. The Bible says to turn from your sin, and God will wash you, cleanse you and make you whiter than snow. He will create in you a clean pure heart.

QUESTIONS for Discipleship Groups

1. Each person, briefly discuss areas of rejoicing and battling of being a Titus 2 woman as we have studied thus far.
2. When have you seen relationships start off in an innocent way, but end up in sexual immorality? What can you note as the contributing factors for that to happen?
3. Of the many guidelines for fleeing immorality, which do you believe to be the most important for maintaining sexual purity?
4. **KEY: What steps can you take for pursuing righteousness in your life that you are not already taking?**

D group project: Pray for our church as it seeks to develop a ministry of building strong marriages. Pray that godly women will be able to model pure lives and mentor younger women in being the woman God has described in our study of Titus 2.