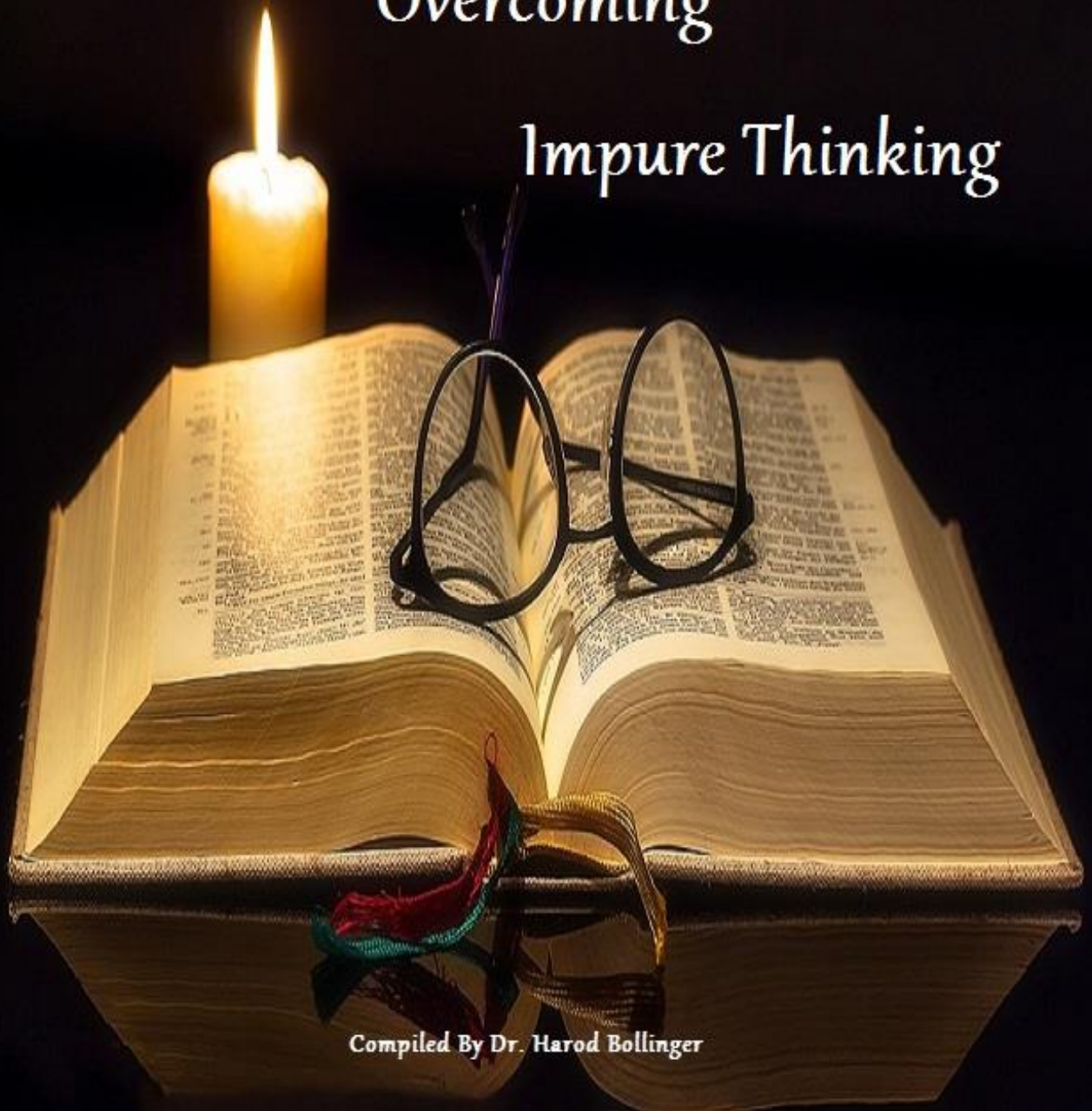


The Word & Prayer

Overcoming Impure Thinking



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Lasciviousness

Lasciviousness is a comprehensive term for evil and perversion (Balz, p. 169). For example, it describes the moral environment of ancient Sodom and Gomorrah

Lasciviousness is work of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness.

We all have evil desires, and we can't ignore them. In order for us to follow the Holy Spirit's guidance, we must deal with them decisively (crucify them—5:24). These desires include obvious sins, such as sexual immorality and demonic activities. They also include less obvious sins, such as hostility, jealousy, and selfish ambition. Those who ignore such sins or refuse to deal with them reveal that they have not received the gift of the Spirit that leads to a transformed life.

God delivered Lot from filthy conversation.

2 Peter 2:7

And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

Just as God rescued Lot from Sodom, so he is able to rescue us from the temptations and trials we face in a wicked world. Lot was not sinless, but he put his trust in God and was spared when Sodom was destroyed. .

Possess your vessel in sanctification and honour.

1 Thessalonians 4:4

That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour;

Paul said that lustful passions should not control God's people. Some argue that if they've already sinned by having lustful thoughts, they might as well go ahead with lustful actions too. Acting out sinful desires is harmful in several ways:

- (1) It causes people to excuse sin rather than to stop sinning;
- (2) It destroys marriages;
- (3) It is deliberate rebellion against God's Word; and
- (4) It always hurts someone else in addition to the sinner.

Sinful action is more dangerous than sinful desire, so desires should not be acted out. Nevertheless, sinful desire is just as damaging to righteousness. Left unchecked, wrong desires will result in wrong actions and will turn people away from God.

Mortify your members which are upon the earth.

Colossians 3:5

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

We should consider ourselves dead and unresponsive to sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. The warning in this verse is not against sex, but against sexual perversion. Where is the line between the two?

The Bible everywhere celebrates heterosexual, monogamous marriage as the proper situation for sexual fulfillment. Christian men and women should be open to true love—and to sexual intimacy—within the commitment to lifelong fidelity. That is God's way. The rest is dangerous and futile. Stay away. Sexual sin and perversion will drain your energies and turn your heart away from God.

Flee from lasciviousness and an evil eye.

Mark 7:22

Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

An evil action begins with a single thought. Allowing our mind to dwell on lust, envy, hatred, or revenge will lead to sin. Don't defile yourself by focusing on evil. Instead, follow Paul's advice in Philippians 4:8 and think about what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, and admirable.

Repent of uncleanness and lasciviousness.

2 Cor. 12:21

And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.

After reading this catalog of sins, it is hard to believe that these are the people that Paul said possessed great gifts and excelled as leaders (8:7).

Paul feared that the practices of wicked Corinth had invaded the congregation. He wrote sternly, hoping that they would straighten out their lives before he arrived.

We must live differently from unbelievers, not letting secular society dictate how we are to treat others. Don't let culture influence your behavior.

In the past, some gave themselves over to lasciviousness.

Ephes. 4:19

Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

People should be able to see a difference between Christians and non-Christians because of the way Christians live. We are to live full of light (5:8). Paul told the Ephesians to leave behind the old life of sin, since they were followers of Christ.

Living the Christian life is a process. Although we have a new nature, we don't automatically think all good thoughts and express all right attitudes when we become new people in Christ. But if we keep listening to God, we will be changing all the time.

As you look back over last year, do you see a process of change for the better in your thoughts, attitudes, and actions? Although change may be slow, it comes as you trust God to change you. For more about our new nature as believers.

Let us walk honestly, not in wantonness.

Romans 13:13

Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying.

The "night" refers to the present evil time. The "day" refers to the time of Christ's return. Some people are surprised that Paul lists fighting and jealousy with the gross and obvious sins of drunkenness and immorality.

Like Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), Paul considers attitudes as important as actions. Just as hatred leads to murder, so jealousy leads to strife and lust to adultery. When Christ returns, he wants to find his people clean on the inside as well as on the outside.

Live no longer after the lust of men.

1 Peter 4:2-3

That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

Suffering helps us be like Christ, yet people will do anything to avoid pain. Followers of Christ, however, should be willing and prepared to do God's will and to suffer for it if necessary. We can overcome sin when we focus on Christ and what he wants us to do. Pain and danger reveal our true values.

Anyone who suffers for doing good and still faithfully obeys in spite of suffering has made a clean break with sin.

People whose lives change radically at conversion may experience contempt from old friends. They may be scorned not only because they refuse to participate in certain activities but also because their priorities have changed and they are now heading in the opposite direction.

Their lives incriminate their friends' sinful activities. Mature Christians should help new believers resist such pressures of opposition by helping them to be faithful to Christ, surrounding them as new friends, and encouraging them to develop new habits and activities that are not only enjoyable but positive for their spiritual growth.

They allure through lust of the flesh.

2 Peter 2:18

For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

A person is a slave to whatever controls him or her. Many believe that freedom means doing anything we want. But no one is ever completely free in that sense. If we refuse to follow God, we will follow our own sinful desires and become enslaved to what our body wants.

If we submit our lives to Christ, he will free us from slavery to sin. Christ frees us to serve him, a freedom that results in our ultimate good.

Some turned God's grace into lascivious.

Jude 1:4

For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Even some of our churches today have false ("ungodly") teachers who have "wormed" their way in and are twisting the Bible's teachings to justify their own opinions, lifestyle, or wrong behavior.

In doing this, they may gain temporary freedom to do as they wish, but they will discover that in distorting Scripture they are playing with fire. God will judge them for excusing, tolerating, and promoting sin.

Many first-century false teachers were teaching that Christians could do whatever they liked without fear of God's punishment. They had a light view of God's holiness and his justice.

Paul refuted this same kind of false teaching in Romans 6:1-23. Even today, some Christians minimize the sinfulness of sin, believing that how they live has little to do with their faith. But what a person truly believes will show up in how he or she acts.

Those who truly have faith will show it by their deep respect for God and their sincere desire to live according to the principles in his Word.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

Prayer of deliverance:

Through heaven's door, The Blood of Jesus, I repent of the sin of lasciviousness. I denounce and cast out this evil spirit that is influencing my life and disturbing my peace of mind.

In the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. I command this spirit to leave and be cast into utter darkness never to return again.

Right now, I receive my deliverance from this spirit and receive God's peace. I pray in the mighty name of Jesus Christ, amen.