

March 1, 2015 by Phil Guske & Steve Brandon



Off the Top

Proverbs 3:9-10

- 1. Let's Be Different (verses 1-5).**
- 2. Let's Be Pure (verses 6-23).**
- 3. Let's Escape Judgment (verses 24-30).**

The greatest thing about America is that you have the freedom to do whatever you want to do. The worst thing about America is that you have the freedom to do whatever you want to do.

In the 1960's this freedom led to the sexual revolution. This is what we call the time period when many balked against the social norms of heterosexual monogamy - one man with one woman for life; when many sought freedom to express their sexuality however they saw fit. It championed sex before marriage, sex outside of marriage, sex with the same sex. And with the invention of the pill, came sex without consequences. Soon afterwards came the legalization of abortion, to deal with the unwanted results of sex.

Enter the 2000's and the internet. Sexual expression has been taken to a new level. Images and videos of deviant behavior are easily accessible, from anywhere, in private. And all of those things spell disaster for the Christian marriage.

I'm calling this morning for a counter revolution to the sexual revolution. My message this morning is entitled, "Sexual Derevolution." That is, undoing what has been done in our society since the '60's. Because, this is exactly what God called Israel to do as they entered the land of Canaan. And people say that the Bible isn't relevant anymore. Listen, church family, I cannot think of anything more relevant to our lives that what is contained in our text this morning.

If you haven't done so already, I invite you to open your Bibles to Leviticus, chapter 18. Again, I remind you of the context of the book of Leviticus.

The first half of the book deals with matters concerning coming to God -- things like sacrifices and priests and clean and unclean things. The second half of the book deals with matters concerning living for God. That is, our conduct; how we act toward God; how we act toward others. Many have called this last section, "The Holiness Code," as it deals with our living before God.

When God prescribed life for the Jews, he wanted them to live holy lives. And the same applies to us. God always directs us toward a holy life. And the first order of business is this matter of sexuality. Here's my first point:

1. Let's Be Different (verses 1-5).

Leviticus 18:1-5

And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, I am the LORD your God. You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes. You shall follow my rules and keep my statutes and walk in them. I am the LORD your God. You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them: I am the LORD.

Remember, when these words were written, Israel had recently been freed from slavery in Egypt. And Israel was headed into the promised land of Canaan. Both of these lands were filled with pagan people.

And God was calling Israel to live differently than both of them, both Egypt and Canaan. His people were called to walk in His ways. And the promise for them if they did was life! Verse 5 says, "You shall therefore keep my statutes and my rules; if a person does them, he shall live by them."

Though this was written to Israel, this is easily applicable to us. As believers in Christ, God is calling us to live distinct and different lives than those around us. Consider the following New Testament admonitions:

Ephesians 4:17

Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds.

1 Peter 4:3

For the time that is past suffices for doing what the Gentiles want to do, living in sensuality, passions, drunkenness, orgies, drinking parties, and lawless idolatry.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5

For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God;

This is exactly what God was calling Israel to do: live differently than those around them. Not like the Egyptians. Not like the Canaanites. But, like followers of God. And this is what God calls all of His children to be and to do. To live differently than those around us. To live differently than the unsaved.

We spend our Sundays differently. We use different language. We keep a different crowd. We watch different movies. We listen to different music. We spend our time differently. God, His word, and His people are of utmost importance in our lives. We hate our sin. We love God! We read in Galatians 6:14, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."

Is this the sort of life that you are living? Are you living differently than others in the world? It's the clear application of our verses this morning. Not like the Egyptians. Not like the Canaanites. We are to be holy.

1 Peter 1: 14-16

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

To be holy is to be pure and clean and righteous. To be holy is to be different. God is different than us. We should be different than the world.

If someone would come into your house, would they notice a difference? Does it have the aroma of Christ? When people interact with you at work or in the market place, can they tell that you are different? I'm not talking different in a strange way. I'm not talking wearing frumpy clothes or hairstyles that are so out of place that everyone can spot you a mile away. I'm talking different in your actions. That people see that your behavior is different.

The first five verses of Leviticus 18 are talking about behavior. We are talking about actions, what you do. And our call is to be different.

Have any of you been to Chick fil-A? That's a different place. On the one hand, there's nothing really special about the restaurant. It's an upscale fast food place. It serves some good chicken sandwiches and a good price. On the other hand, it always makes an impression upon me, whenever I go. When I'm served, I often say, "Thank you." And the employee responds, "It's my pleasure."

It catches me by surprise, every time. It's like the servers really care about helping you. Now, they may be putting on an act, as they are trained to say these words. But, this is different than the world's ways. I never hear, "It's my pleasure" from anyone at Burger King or McDonalds. It's so different than Egypt; it's so different than Canaan, that people can't help but notice. Do they notice you?

In some cases, I know they do. I have spoken with several of you who have given testimony about what your co-workers say about you. Or what your neighbors say about you.

I remember when we moved into our neighborhood a dozen years ago. We were told that there was another minister in the neighborhood. Turns out, he wasn't a minister at all. He was simply a neighbor with an evangelistic zeal that shared the gospel with a number of our neighbors. But, he had a reputation for being different, for being passionate about Jesus. And people took note.

Let's Be Different (verses 1-5). Let's be holy. Let's move on to my second point, ...

2. Let's Be Pure (verses 6-23).

This is the crux of the passage. When God speaks here about not living like the Egyptians or the Canaanites, his primary reference is to sexual purity. And as I read this passage, let me tell you that Moses speaks about uncovering nakedness, he's really talking about marital intimacy. And we have all sorts of regulations given. Follow along, beginning in verse 6.

Leviticus 18:6-23

"None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness. I am the LORD. 7 You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father, which is the nakedness of your mother; she is your mother, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife; it is your father's nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether brought up in the family or in another home. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your son's daughter or of your daughter's daughter, for their nakedness is your own nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's wife's daughter, brought up in your father's family, since she is your sister. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's sister; she is your father's relative. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's relative. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your father's brother, that is, you shall not approach his wife; she is your aunt. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness. You shall not uncover the nakedness of a woman and of her daughter, and you shall not take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter to uncover her nakedness; they are relatives; it is depravity. And you shall not take a woman as a rival wife to her sister, uncovering her

nakedness while her sister is still alive.

"You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. And you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor's wife and so make yourself unclean with her. You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the Lord. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you shall not lie with any animal and so make yourself unclean with it, neither shall any woman give herself to an animal to lie with it: it is perversion.

Trying to keep all of this straight will make your head spin.

A man shall not marry his: Mother (verse 7), Aunt (verses 12, 13), Step-mother (verse 8), or Aunt by marriage (verse 14). A man shall not marry his: Sister or half-sister (verse 9), Step-sister (verse 11), Step-daughter (verse 17), Sister-in-law (verse 16), or Daughter-in-law (verse 16). A man shall not marry his: Granddaughter (verse 11) or Step-granddaughter (verse 17)

Basically, a man shall not marry a close relative. That point was explicitly made in verse 6, "None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness."

Now, I don't think that this is such a danger for us this morning. We have laws against this sort of thing. In our society, we have seen how marrying a close relative brings all sorts of danger to potential offspring, as genetic deficiencies are magnified. They didn't understand all of that back then. But God did. And He prohibited the marriage of close relatives.

But, lest you think that these things are not applicable to us today, consider how Jesus spoke about marriage and adultery. In the Sermon on the Mount, he said, ...

Matthew 5:27-28

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

It's at this point that the euphemism for marital intimacy becomes very applicable to us, "uncovering the nakedness." For what causes a man (or a woman) to lust, but to view nakedness. And nakedness is all around us today.

Twenty years ago, one had to purchase a magazine in a store. Twenty years ago, one had to purchase a VHS or a DVD in a store. But, today, it is all around us. We carry around in our pockets the potential for "uncovering the nakedness." If you don't know what I'm talking about, then you are blessed. But, for the rest of you, know that we are living in very dangerous times. To marry a close relative will bring physical danger. To uncover nakedness will bring spiritual danger. Jesus continued by saying, ...

Matthew 5:29-30

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

This is severe danger. Viewing nakedness has the power to send you to hell! And it's not just bad for our eternal lives. It's bad for our current lives as well.

I read an e-book this week entitled, "Your Brain on Porn." It's a free e-book distributed by Covenant Eyes, a Christian internet accountability and filtering company.^[1] It describes how such images can desensitize the brain to pleasure. In other words, the more exposure, the more the brain gets used to it. And the more the brain gets used to it, the more is needed for similar feelings of pleasure. And the pleasure of marital intimacy decreases.

Men (and women), for the sake of your own pleasure and joy, stay away! God's plans are always the best. One man with one woman for life! Any deviation of that brings pain and hardship and toil. Even if the deviation is only in the mind. Porn is no different than a powerful drug, which initially provides a high, but with prolonged use, more and more of the substance is needed to get the same high. And soon, you have addicts, who will do all manner of things to get their drug.

It's exactly the same with porn. You should think of it as a drug. It creates the same physiological symptoms that drug use does. There's dependence. There's craving. And it becomes controlling. It creates lying and deception and manipulation and anger in order to get that drug.

Like other drugs, the effects are devastating. I have seen marriages crushed by the power of porn. The effects are devastating on women, on marriages, on relationships.

And an entire industry has arisen because of this. Viagra. Cialis. Testosterone supplements. And a whole host of others. All of this to "help cure" this problem of impotence that has magically exploded in the last decade or so. Do you think that it's any accident that this has arisen during this day of widespread internet access? Where such images are widely available and accessible? I believe that there is a one-to-one correspondence.

And I believe that there is an easy cure. Stop uncovering the nakedness! ^[2] Or, as I'm saying this morning, Let's Be Pure (verses 6-23).

I know that these aren't idle words. In a room this size, there are probably several of you for whom this is a great struggle. You are in sin's grip! And I know that willpower isn't enough to conquer these things. You need the gospel. Thomas Chalmers preached one of the most famous sermon ever. It's entitled, "The Expulsive Power of a New Affection." [\[3\]](#)

In it he argued that "A Moralist Will be Unsuccessful in Trying to Displace His Love of the World by Reviewing the Ills of the World. Misplaced Affections Need to be Replaced by the Far Greater Power of the Affection of the Gospel." In other words, you will be unsuccessful in displacing your love for the world by reviewing the ills of the world. Rather, to overcome sin, one must replace your affections with a far greater power. See, it doesn't work to think through all of the bad things that will happen because of my sin. Rather, you need to have something that you want more than your sin, if you will ever hope to conquer your sin.

As I recall, Chalmers used the illustration of a woman facing the prospects of spending an evening home alone. Such a thing is less than appealing to her. Much better (from her perspective) is an evening spent with others, despite the worthlessness of the company. Now, she knows that such a place isn't good for her. Nor will it yield any productive effects upon her life. But, the pleasure of going there is greater than the prospect of staying at home alone. No amount of telling herself how bad the place is would work to keep her from attending. Yet, if she were to expect to have company in her house that evening, the place would hold no attraction to her. She would happily clean her home, bake some food and prepare her house for company, because it would be her greater desire than the place of vanity. Such is the way that we overcome temptation: with a greater affection.

Perhaps an illustration from my life might help. When it comes to dieting, it's not enough to tell yourself not to eat certain foods that you like. It's not enough to tell yourself that they are bad for you. It's not enough to tell yourself that such foods will take you off your diet. Last night in our home was a good example. Yvonne made up some peanut butter fingers, my favorite dessert. I had too many of them, even though I knew that I should have so many. What I need is the greater pleasure of seeing my weight go down on the scale. What I need is the greater pleasure of a flatter stomach.

And when those pleasures outweigh my desire for fatty and sugary foods, I will lose weight. I will not eat the food that I should not eat. But, right there is where the battle is won or lost. Which pleasure rules? My delight in my favorite dessert? My delight in a lower number on my bathroom scale?

And with sin it's the same way. It's not enough to tell yourself how bad your sin is. It's not enough to tell yourself that you shouldn't do these things. It's not enough to tell yourself of the bad consequences of your sin. You need to fight your temptation with a greater pleasure. You need a greater delight. So, find your delight in Jesus! Find your pleasure in God and the joy of obeying His voice. Find your pleasure in living for the one who died for you.

When you can say with Asaph, "Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you" (Psalm 73:25). You will be able to conquer any sin. And when it comes to sexual sin, as we have talked about today, find your pleasure in the greater pleasure of marriage.

You want to maximize your marital pleasure? Staying away from the sinful images will give you more pleasure in your marital intimacy. Being convinced of the greater pleasure will keep you away from the lesser pleasure of porn.

OK, let's move on to our third point, and the Lord's Supper. Let's Be Different (verses 1-5). Let's Be Pure (verses 6-23).

3. Let's Escape Judgment (verses 24-30).

I'm going to skip over verses 20-23, as these are dealt with in chapter 20. They deal with adultery and abortion and homosexuality and bestiality. We will face them head-on at that point. For now, let's look at verses 24-30.

Leviticus 18:24-30

"Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean, and the land became unclean, so that I punished its iniquity, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. But you shall keep my statutes and my rules and do none of these abominations, either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you (for the people of the land, who were before you, did all of these abominations, so that the land became unclean), lest the land vomit you out when you make it unclean, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. For everyone who does any of these abominations, the persons who do them shall be cut off from among their people. So keep my charge never to practice any of these abominable customs that were practiced before you, and never to make yourselves unclean by them: I am the LORD your God."

Verses 24-30 are a warning of judgment. For Israel, their failure meant expulsion from the land (verse 28). The logic goes like this: the Canaanites practiced these things (verse 24, 27). The land became unclean as a result (verse 25a). As a result, it vomited out its inhabitants (verse 25b). Should you practice these things (verse 26), the land will vomit you out of the land as well (verse 28).

When I was in high school, I remember when my two older sisters feeling full and fat after gorging themselves on a holiday meal. One of them came up with the idea of taking some ipecac (a medicine that induces vomiting) to clear their stomachs. This wasn't a regular practice of my sisters, neither of whom were anorexic or bulimic. And I don't recommend that you try it. But, they decided to give it a try. After taking the medicine, they promptly vomited. But, the cure wasn't as effortless as it sounds, as they felt sick for much of the rest of the day.

Disobedience in the land is like divine ipecac. God promised to vomit them out of the land if they followed in the ways of the Canaanites. For Israel, their failure meant death (verse 29). And according to Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount, death can come to you as well.

Matthew 5:29-30

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

How about some hope? Turn with me to 1 Corinthians 6. In this context, Paul is dealing with the matters of sexual immorality.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

This is the call. If you continue in this, you have no hope. But, there is hope that these things can be a part of your past.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Those in Corinth used to be sexually immoral. They used to be idolaters and adulterers. They used to engage in homosexual practices. They were greedy thieves and drunkards and revilers and swindlers. And in their former state, they had no hope of inheriting the kingdom of God. But, through the power of Jesus Christ, they came to know and experience forgiveness of sins. They were justified in Him!

Their lives were changed! Such is the power of the gospel. So, believe in Jesus! Be different than the world. Be pure. Escape the coming judgment.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on March 8, 2015 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] <http://www.covenanteyes.com/>

[2] <http://www.covenanteyes.com/2012/08/01/a-cure-for-sexual-dysfunction-stop-using-porn>

[3] You can read it here: <http://www.theologynetwork.org/historical-theology/getting-stuck-in/the-expulsive-power-of-a-new-affection.htm>.
You can listen to it here: <http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=62613165292>.