

A Miscellany Surrounding Sexual Purity – *Song of Solomon 4:1-15, Eph 5:32, Heb 13:4*

Sexual Purity III

Introduction – Having established the Scripture’s teaching on sexual purity and porneia, and having considered the practical instructions the Word gives for fighting such temptations, let’s consider a few loosely connected things that are associated with the charge to “flee sexual immorality” and “let it not even be named among you.”

Eyes Are Supposed to Notice – In this passage in the Song of Solomon we see what we all know. Men love to notice and women love to be noticed. And, when handled appropriately, there is nothing at all wrong with this. Sarah and Rebekah were both very beautiful women (Gen 12:14, 24:16) as was Abigail (1 Sam 25:3) and the world noticed. The husband in the Song of Solomon is particularly delighting in the attractiveness of his spouse; he notices her body, her garments, her jewelry, and her perfumes. And this passage is the least erotic of many passages in this book.

Beautiful Adornment Is from the Lord – To be dressed beautifully is an expression of God’s covenant love upon His people. In Isaiah 61:10 we see that salvation is glorious and wonderful; salvation is like jewelry. In Revelation 21:2 we see the New Jerusalem, “coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.” Clothing, jewelry, perfumes, and hairstyles that accentuate feminine beauty are not necessarily worldly. In both of those passages, note that God has done the adorning; the Father has taken responsibility for the dressing of the bride. And this is connected to why Paul says what he does in Eph 5:32. Sexual union is not simply scratching a biological itch; human marriage is a great mystery, analogous to the union and communion of Christ and the church.

Turned into a Curse – But human marriage must be defined by the One doing the creating and declaring and human sexuality must be disciplined by the Word in order to be holy and honorable. Heb 13:4 is making just such a point. Even in matters of adornment, there is a profound difference between seeking to be attractive and seeking to be seductive and ostentatious (Isaiah 3:16). Lewdness and immorality become the curse upon a society (Isaiah 47:1-3, Nah 3:5, Ezek 16:37-39, Rom 1:24). Spiritual infidelity and sexual immorality are also analogously linked.

Being Made in the Image of God, Male and Female (Gen 1:27) – Each of us individually is created fully in the image of God. But this is only true because there are males and females. This is true practically (how did you get here?), but it is also true on a far deeper, transcendent level. You are only fully human, even while you are single, if there is this biblical, high view of gender, sex, marriage and family. Egalitarianism, and now, gender-blending and confusion, are attacks upon the Triune God of creation. Some (I think rightly) say that we are a culture of “soft” men and the clergy lead the way, which is why a woman can often be a better pastor in today’s church – she is just the kind of man we are looking for.

Male and Masculine – Common temptations surrounding sexual purity for males abound. For young men especially, laziness and lust are related (Prov 6:9-11; 7:1-27). Men should be taking initiative and responsibility for others, saying no to lusts and pleasures, and have the faith to do things, standing for righteousness, that might destroy their career path. Jesus is Lord. Masculinity means taking responsibility for our actions and not making excuses. Young men should avoid the cultural trend to marry later and later in life. The trend is a result of self-gratification, laziness, unbelief in a sovereign God Who has called you, and cowardice.

Female and Feminine – Corresponding but different temptations abound for women. Fatherlessness in our country means that, even more so, women must come to know and love their heavenly Father, which can only be done through Jesus Christ. When a father is present, girls must learn how to live under and alongside a covenant head, willing to receive physical affection, emotional protection and sustained leadership from her father. In that security, she learns how to give herself away for the sake of others. Once married, a biblical transfer of headship must be understood so that she can submit to her husband (and not to men generally) with great joy. She must be known as a woman who dresses modestly from the heart (1 Tim 2:9). In his choice of words, Paul is addressing the two ways women are tempted to call attention to themselves inappropriately, with ostentatiousness and like a seductive harlot. Much of today’s clothing is made for the point of encouraging men to look and lust after you. Naiveté is not an excuse for parents who aren’t giving guidance or for young ladies who try to say they never meant their dress to “say that!”

Application for All – We must find and be instructed by the Word as to what it is to be male and female, what is masculine and feminine glory, what are the sexual counterfeits and what is the real thing.

The Marriage Bed as a Gift – Finally, if we are really going to fight for sexual purity, we must let the Scriptures also teach us that we are to drink deeply of marital lovemaking (Song 5:1). Men are commanded to rejoice in, over and with their wives (Prov 5:15-20) and so it is to be her delight that he do so. There is a holy horsing around that is just plain fun (Gen 26:8, AV). It’s funny that the Puritans get such a bad rap for being “puritanical” about these things. The first generation of Puritans wrote that *lovemaking should be with a “good will and delight, willingly, readily, and cheerfully,” you wife is a “companion for pleasure,” your passion for her should be “a golden ball of fire,” and accompanied by “all demonstrations of hearty affection”* (D. Wilson and L. Ryken).