

**God's People Part 2: How We Act
Morally
Ephesians 5:7-17**

Introduction: American culture is interesting. We consider ourselves to be a “Christian” nation with a “Christian” culture, while at the same time openly practicing and defending blatant, biblically unethical, and immoral practices. The secular Christianity that dominates our nation uses its own self-derived opinions of God as authoritative justification for whatever unbiblical political, moral, or ethical position it wants. That cultural pattern has reached such a level of absurdity that it would actually be hilarious if the practice weren’t being supported by a rapidly growing number of pastors and churches who seem not to be remotely inhibited by their blatant out-of-context misinterpretation and application of the Scriptures! Whether it’s the justification of abortion, ethnic hatred and racism, or sexual immorality, it doesn’t baffle me to see people who claim no love and allegiance to Christ hold to unBiblical positions and lifestyles with a clear conscience, but rather, those who claim to be followers of Christ who do so! It’s heartbreaking and frankly infuriating to see the race to greater and greater levels of justification for sexual immorality being led by people who proclaim to be “Christian” pastors and scholars of the Bible!

But, as sexualized and as lost as our society is becoming, it’s in no way the most sexualized and lost society in the world, nor is it even close to what was going on in many of the cities in the Roman Empire, particularly in places like Corinth and Ephesus. Ephesus, the city associated with our current study, had a temple so grand and magnificent that people traveled from all over the world to see it and participate in its rituals. It was considered one of the seven wonders of the world. It was dedicated to the goddess Artemis, whom they saw as the goddess of a variety of things, including the hunt, vegetation, and childbirth. Yet, ironically, she was a staunchly committed virgin. You would think a goddess who was believed to affect fertility, crop growth, and even childbirth would be anything but a virgin, but given that she was, you would likely then believe the worship of that goddess would create a culture committed to sexual morality, but it didn’t.

Culturally, there didn’t seem to be any sexual inhibitions in Ephesus. It was filled with legal brothels as well as some of the first public “billboards” advertising them. Archaeologists have found impossible to miss engravings on stones in the road that helped people find and locate the houses of prostitution in Ephesus. My point in mentioning this is that when the Gospel reached Ephesus, and people started repenting and believing in Jesus, it was reaching people who were embedded in a massively sexualized culture that had no knowledge or desire to have any knowledge of Biblical morality. It was not only a culture that embraced every sexual desire one could have, but because sexual immorality was a natural part of their culture, people and teachings that challenged that way of living would be seen as an attack on the culture itself—sound familiar?

Therefore, as people were giving their lives to Christ and getting plugged into the church in Ephesus, they were being confronted with a radically different way of thinking and living. Biblical morality was so opposite to the culture in Ephesus that it was literally as different

as night and day; as darkness and light, which is exactly how Paul is going to address it with the church in Ephesus.

In Ephesians 5:3-17, Paul confronts the sexualized, immoral culture of Ephesus that was seemingly still being justified by some within the church, and, in so doing, he gives very specific, clear instructions on how God's people are to live morally.

Proposition: Paul gives us three instructions in Ephesians 5:3-17 on how to morally live as God's people.

The first instruction on how to morally live as God's people is to ...

(1) Make no room in your life for sexual immorality. (5:3-6)

- A. Today, we are picking up where my father-in-law left off last week. If you recall, the passage he taught us last week began with the word "Therefore," which required Dr. Zachary to begin his sermon by going backward in the Epistle for a minute to remind us of what Paul was drawing his "therefore" from. Similarly, the passage we are reading this week begins with a transitional word that requires us to recall what was written before it, except this time, instead of a word that tells us what he's about to write is based on what he just wrote, he uses a word that says what he's about to write is going to contrast with what he just wrote. Ephesians 5:3-6 begins with the word "But", so before we read Ephesians 5:3-6, let's take a look at what we looked at last week that verses 5:3-6 are going to contrast with. Paul wrote,
- B. **1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. (Ephesians 5:1-2)**
- C. Now, if we stopped reading right there, we could possibly find ourselves using that verse the way far too many pastors in America are now using it. We could insert our definition of love and, in so doing, justify whatever we wanted, so long as we somehow reconciled it with our interpretation of love. However, Paul's letter doesn't stop with Ephesians 5:2. Paul then writes about things that necessarily do not belong to any definition of God's love, or to a life lived in it!
- D. **3 But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. (5:3)**
 - 1. So clearly, sexual immorality, impurity, and covetousness can never be associated with God's definition and understanding of a life of love because Paul just said don't let it ever be something that describes your present life! Don't let there be any justification for it in your individual lives or in the life of the church. Now, understand, this was MASSIVELY counter-culture in Ephesus. The people of Ephesus didn't allow for sexual immorality as long

as it was hidden in the closet somewhere; they put it out there with pride for everybody to see!

2. And understand, Paul, isn't saying as long as nobody knows about it, it's okay. He's saying give it no place of practice or even justification in your lives, so that there is no chance anybody could ever rightly conclude it's a part of your life, because it isn't—it's nowhere near your life and thinking!
3. **“sexual immorality’** The Greek word used here, *porneia*, refers to any kind of sexual immorality.”¹
4. **“1. Sexual immorality.** The Greek word translated “sexual immorality” is *porneia*, from which we get our word “pornography.” But it does not refer to lewd pictures or films; it refers to sexual intercourse outside marriage. In older versions of the Bible *porneia* was translated “fornication.” It would be wrong to suggest that sexual sins are the greatest of all sins, for sins of the flesh are never so great, destructive, or demonic as sins of the spirit. Still Paul is right to place this vice in first position if only because it is so harmful to the individual and society. The positive answer to this view, Christian marriage, is going to be discussed later in the chapter. **2. Impurity.** This word includes the sexual sins first named, but it probably also goes beyond it to embrace particularly defiling practices. The Greeks, among whom the Ephesians lived, openly approved of such practices as prostitution and homosexuality. In fact, in Athens a great temple to Aphrodite, the goddess of love, was built with the profits from the brothels, which were established in the city with this objective. To the Greeks this was not the least bit strange. Nor was it strange to combine what was regarded as a high moral standard in other areas with homosexuality. Paul says that what was perfectly acceptable in the surrounding society was not even to be hinted at among Christians.”²
5. “Though *immorality* (cf. Matt. 5:32; 15:19; 19:19; John 8:41; 1 Thess. 4:3) refers basically to unlawful sexual intercourse, it probably includes illicit, clandestine relationships of every description. Evil in the sexual realm was, and is today, a characteristic feature of paganism. It is often closely associated with idolatry. That even those who had turned to Christ had not thoroughly shaken off this sin is clear from 1 Cor. 5:1 ff. Is it also implied in the present epistle: 5:27? *Impurity* or *uncleanness*, not only in deeds but also in words, thoughts, intents of the heart, desires, and passions, is here condemned. The phrase “of any kind” covers a very large territory!”³

¹ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Whitehead, M. M., Grigoni, M. R., & Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Eph 5:3). Lexham Press.

² Boice, J. M. (1988). [Ephesians: an expositional commentary](#) (p. 180). Ministry Resources Library.

³ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [Exposition of Ephesians](#) (Vol. 7, p. 228). Baker Book House.

6. “[‘**Covetousness**’] This term conveys the idea of ‘more and more for me at any cost.’ Because it is in a list of sexual sins it probably relates to self-centered sexual exploitation (cf. Col. 3:5).”⁴
- E. He then goes on to say that sexually immoral talk shouldn’t even have a place in our lives. He writes,
- F. **4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.**
1. Some interpret this to mean it is sinful to talk about sex. That is obviously an unbiblical interpretation. We are literally reading a passage about sex! The Bible is full of conversations about sex. In the Old Testament, there are tons of verses that directly tell us about people who had sex with one another and what became of it. The Bible even contains a book called the Song of Solomon, and it describes a married couple’s deep love, passionate courtship, and intense sexual desire for one another. It’s one of the most beautiful pieces of romantic literature you will ever read, and it lets us clearly see God’s design for sexuality in marriage.
 2. In addition, there are even what many would call awkward stories of sex in the Bible. For instance, in Genesis 38, Judah commanded his son Onan to fulfill his brotherly duty for his deceased brother Er by having sex with Er’s widowed wife (Tamar). As was customary in those days, Onan was to have sex with Tamar until she became pregnant with a son who would then be raised as the son of Er, not Onan. That son was supposed to then provide for Tamar in her old age, inherit Er’s wealth, and continue Er’s name and heritage. However, in Genesis 38, we read this,
 3. **9 But Onan knew that the offspring would not be his. So whenever he went in to his brother’s wife he would waste the semen on the ground, so as not to give offspring to his brother. 10 And what he did was wicked in the sight of the Lord, and he put him to death also. (Genesis 38:9-10)**
 4. There is nothing inherently immoral about ejaculating on the ground. It was sinful in this case because Onan was obligated to have sex with Tamar, not for his own pleasure, but to give his dead brother an heir through his widowed wife.
 5. Now, for some, hearing that story was really awkward for you, and you might have even felt like it was wrong for me to tell; that in doing so, I’m doing exactly what Paul is saying not to do. However, you have to remember

⁴ Utley, R. J. (1997). [*Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison \(Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, then later, Philippians\)*](#): Vol. Volume 8 (p. 125). Bible Lessons International.

that the story came right out of the inspired, infallible, inerrant Word of God. I literally read part of it straight from the Bible we give our kids.

6. In doing so, I'm making the point that sexual conversations are not sinful, and that can include ones that are awkward to talk about. Sinful sexual conversations are sinful! Conversations and joking that encourage sexual immorality or justify it are conversations we shouldn't have, just as we shouldn't be looking at porn. Sinful sexual conversations point our hearts and minds to treat sex sinfully instead of righteously. They encourage the justification of sexual immorality if in no other way than in our imagination, which eventually will bear the fruit of darkness in other areas of our lives, as well as in the lives of other people. We reap what we sow ... always!
7. "*Filthiness or shamefulness* covers more than "shameful language" (Col. 3:8). It includes *any* thought, imagination, desire, word, or deed of which a believer who is sensitive to the demands of God's holy law and who views himself as living constantly in his presence would be ashamed. *Silly talk* is the kind of conversation one could expect to hear from the lips of a fool or of a drunkard. The next term is hard to translate. Judged on the basis of its derivation it is very innocent, for it means literally "that which turns easily." The closest to it as to etymological significance would be *versatility*; for this, too, has reference to turning easily. The versatile person is able to turn with ease from one subject to another, being at home in all of them. Similarly, the word which the apostle employs was often used in a favorable sense, to indicate the nimble-witted individual. However, it is also possible for certain speakers *to move very easily* into the mire of unbecoming expressions. They seem to have a garbage can type of mind, and every serious topic of conversation reminds them of an off-color jest or anecdote. The word used in 5:4 has therefore come to mean *coarse jesting, wittiness in telling coarse jokes*. There need be nothing wrong with a joke. Good humor is what everybody needs. But the kind to which Paul refers should be thoroughly avoided. Regarding such practices the apostle adds: **which things are improper**. They are improper because they are *not worthy of the calling with which believers were called*. See on 4:1. What, then, is the remedy for the vices mentioned? The apostle answers this question by stating: **but rather the expression of thankfulness**. See further on 5:20. When mind and heart are centered on "all things bright and beautiful" which God grants to us and still has in store for us, the interest in squalid indecency will vanish. So the apostle places *thankfulness* over against *wittiness*. This translation not only gives the sense but preserves, to some extent, the wordplay of the original (*eucharistía* over against *eutrapelía*) *Clarion praise* should be substituted for the *clever* (but vulgar) *phrase*."⁵

⁵ Hendriksen, W., & Kistemaker, S. J. (1953–2001). [*Exposition of Ephesians*](#) (Vol. 7, pp. 228–229). Baker Book House.

8. “Neither *filthiness*. The word αἰσχροτης, is not simply *obscenity*, but whatever is morally hateful. The adjective αἰσχρός means *deformed, revolting*, what excites disgust, physical or moral. It is the opposite of καλός, which means both beautiful and good; and hence τὸ καλὸν καὶ τὸ αἰσχρόν, means *virtue and vice*. The substantive is equally comprehensive, and includes whatever is vile or disgusting in speech or conduct. Lesser evils are expressed by the words μωρολογία and εὐτραπεία, *foolish talking and jesting*. The former means such talk as is characteristic of fools, i. e. frivolous and senseless. The latter, according to its etymology and early usage, means *urbanity, politeness*. Naturally enough however the word came to have a bad sense, as the adjective εὐτράπελος, *what turns easily*, as the wind, when applied to language or speech, means not only adroit, skilful, agreeable, witty, but also flippant, satirical, scurrilous. Hence the substantive is used for *jesting and scurrility*. The former sense is best suited to this passage, because it is connected with foolish talking, and because the apostle says of both simply that they *are not convenient*, not becoming or suitable. This is too mild a form of expression to be used either of αἰσχροτης (filthiness) or of εὐτραπεία, in the worse sense of those terms. Paul says, these things (foolish talking and jesting) do not become Christians; οὐκ ἀνήκοντα, *what does not pertain to any one, or, to his office*. Foolish talking and jesting are not the ways in which Christian cheerfulness should express itself, but rather *giving of thanks*.”⁶
- G. Now here is where Paul gets brutally honest, and by that, I mean that he’s always been honest; it’s just that now that honesty is brutal. Paul writes,
- H. **5 For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**
1. Now first, Paul is NOT saying that if you commit sexual immorality or have impure thoughts, then you are going to hell. If that were the case, nobody could be saved! Until either Jesus comes back or we die and go to heaven, we will all deal with sexually immoral temptations, and because we are all weak in our faith, we will at times find ourselves bowing down to those desires in some way. Just as the best of kids still at times disobey their parents, we as God’s children will reject the Holy Spirit’s leadership in our lives in favor of our desires, if nothing more than in our thoughts. (Romans 7:7-25, 1 John 1:8-10).
 2. In this life, every follower of Jesus is in a process called sanctification. In this process, the Holy Spirit is working within us to strengthen our desire and

⁶ Hodge, C. (1858). [*A commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*](#) (pp. 283–284). Robert Carter and Brothers.

commitment to live in glad submission to Him, but it will never be complete this side of Christ's return. So, Paul cannot be suggesting that if you sin, you're going to hell.

3. What he is saying, is that if your life is described, not by the practice of trying to live in glad submission to Jesus, but rather by the practice of living in glad submission to the desires of the flesh and, maybe at best, when it's convenient for you to get what you want from others, toss in some perceived Biblical living, then you are testifying to yourself, God and everybody else that you don't belong to Jesus! It's not that Jesus doesn't want you and won't take you, it's that you haven't surrendered to Him yet! You're still surrendered to you! A life lived with no inward conviction and drive to turn from sin and walk in God's righteousness is the testimony of a life surrendered to the desires of the flesh and not God (Galatians 5:16-26, 1 John 3:6-9).
4. So, if you've either listened to your own desires or you found some preacher somewhere that twisted up the obvious teachings of God's Word so you can try to convince yourself that your sinful living isn't sinful, I need you to know that I'm not attacking you! I don't think I'm better than you, and, as a matter of fact, I need God's grace just as much as you, but that reality changes nothing about the fact that making room for sexual immorality in our actions or even our thoughts (i.e. in Matthew 5:28, Jesus said lusting after a woman whose not your wife is committing adultery!) is making room for the very thing that God's wrath is being poured out on one day. Furthermore, if our life is being lived in submission to sexual immorality, we are not God's children and are destined for the promised judgment on all who refuse to surrender their lives to Christ. You are not pardoned from God's wrath because you went to church, gave money, or did some good deeds; you are only pardoned from God's wrath if you repent and surrender your life to the one who will stand as the substitute for all who are in Him! You are only pardoned from God's wrath if you are in Christ, and if you are in Christ, the posture of your life is to follow Christ! That's literally what it means to repent and believe in Jesus!
5. So, I am not looking down on anybody, and in no way am I suggesting I'm better than anybody else. I'm just preaching the Holy, inspired Words of God that you and I both will be judged by. I'm preaching exactly what the Bible tells me to preach to help you see that you need to stop trusting in the ways of sinful man and start trusting in the glorious GOD that you will stand before as your judge.

The second instruction on how to morally live as God's people is to ...

(2) Live an out-loud, openly surrendered life to Christ and His morality. (5:7-14)

A. 7 Therefore do not become partners with them; 8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.

1. The “them” in verse 7 is not a reference to people but to the immoral actions he just listed in verses 3-6.
2. “And so in this passage believers are required to walk as children, of light, examining and determining what is acceptable to the Lord. They are to regulate their conduct by a regard to what is well pleasing to Him. That is the ultimate standard of judging whether any thing is right or wrong, worthy or unworthy of those who have been enlightened from above. The word LORD is in the New Testament so predominantly used to designate the Lord Jesus Christ, that it is always to be referred to him unless the context forbids it. Here the context so far from forbidding, requires such reference. For in the former part of the sentence *Lord* evidently designates Christ. “Ye are light in the Lord, therefore, walk as children of the light, proving what is acceptable to the Lord.” This, therefore, is one of the numerous passages in the New Testament, in which Christ is recognized as the Lord of the conscience, whose will is to us the ultimate standard of right and wrong, and to whom we are responsible for all our inward and outward acts. It is thus that the sacred writers show that Christ was their God, in whose presence they constantly lived, whose favour they constantly sought, and on whom all their religious affections terminated. He was not merely the God of their theology, but of their religion.”⁷
3. Don’t surrender your allegiance to the darkness you once were. Don’t go back to bowing down to the values of the lost immoral person you used to be; the one who did not know God and His Gospel; that had no knowledge of the beauty and power of God and His life! That life was darkness.
4. Paul is calling the believers in Ephesus, and us, to allow our hearts and minds to be changed by knowledge of His Word, and the work of the Holy Spirit in us, so we can learn to know the difference between what is of God and what is not; what is darkness and what is light; what is made for us and what isn’t, and that starts with the realization that you who were once darkness have now been made to be light! We are now made in the image of Christ! We are light as He is light, so learn only to do and think things that match who you are, and have nothing to do with the things that don’t! Live in total surrender to who God has rescued and rebirthed you to be—light!

⁷ Hodge, C. (1858). [*A commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians*](#) (pp. 290–291). Robert Carter and Brothers.

5. Paul then adds that we should do this right out in front of everyone! Light is not meant to be hidden. It's by its very nature meant to shine! Therefore, Paul writes,

B. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. 13 But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, 14 for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."

1. This is not a call to expose people, but to expose works, and to do so not by getting all up in people's business, but by being such a light in their lives that they see the works of their lives for what they are—darkness, sin, destruction, and death! When we live Christ's life out loud, not in some religiously obnoxious way, but rather in an unashamed, joyful way, we function as literal lights in the darkness. The lost world is living separated from God and thus separated from His light that exposes sin as sin. The lost world doesn't see sin the way God sees sin! The lost world doesn't even understand why we call sin "sin."
2. So Paul isn't telling us to run around screaming at them; he's telling us to live as those who gladly live their lives in submission to Jesus and gladly tell people why. He's saying if we do that, people will finally have enough light in their lives to see the difference between the fruits of their lives and the fruits of yours! Your life bears the fruit of God, and His light, and their life bears the fruit of darkness and sin! One is life-giving, and the other is life-draining, if not life-killing! But they are lost and in darkness and can't see it, that is, until they get the light of your life, which is Christ's life, shining in theirs! I posted this to Facebook the other day. William Barclay wrote,

Note: "The surest way to cleanse the depths of our own hearts and the practices of any society in which we happen to be involved is to expose them to the light of Christ."⁸

3. The lost world isn't going to repent from sin because we scream at them and tell them what they are doing is sinful. The Lost world will repent from sin and surrender to Jesus for the same reason we as followers of Jesus are daily led to repent of sin in our own lives—the light of Christ that shines on and shows us His life that's better eternally than sin!

C. I'll never forget what happened right before my first two-a-day practice at Virginia Tech in August of 1991. We were in the locker room getting ready, and guys were telling stories, bragging about the sexual experience they had the last night they were with their girlfriend back home before they left to come back to

⁸ Barclay, W. (2002). [*The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*](#) (p. 190). Westminster John Knox Press.

VT. I was at my locker, minding my own business, totally disengaged from the conversation and fully focused on getting ready for practice, when suddenly I heard, “RAMMELL ... we know you got a girl back home ... tell us what ya’ll did!” Without hesitation, I turned around and confidently said, “Man, I’m saving myself for marriage.” A hush immediately fell over the entire locker room filled with 100-plus football players. It felt like even the trainers and managers who had been busy going in and out of the locker room stopped what they were doing and looked over at me. After a brief but very loud silence, the locker room erupted in laughter.

- D. Everybody thought I was joking. Guys were slapping me on the back, saying stuff like, “You’re hilarious, bro!” If I wanted to, I could have just played along, laughed with them, and everybody would have thought I just didn’t want to say anything about it. But the Holy Spirit stirred in me, and I interrupted the laughter with a loud, confident, loving, and cheerful voice that all could hear. I said, “Seriously. I gave my life to Jesus Christ, and as difficult as it can be sometimes, I’m gladly saving myself for marriage.” The room erupted in laughter again, assuming that I was now super committed to a joke.
- E. However, after my second statement, a handful of guys realized I wasn’t kidding around at all and circled up around me and began to ask me questions about why I think a Christian shouldn’t have sex outside of marriage. They asked things like, “Don’t you believe God created sex, and if He created it, don’t you think He wants you to enjoy it?” They hit me with every kind of question imaginable because they were truly baffled that they had just met somebody who sincerely believed in and was committed to submitting to God’s standards for sexual morality. The conversations finally subsided because anything less than being on the field noticeably early for a Frank Beamer football practice was considered being late. You did not want the Strength and Conditioning Coach, Mike Gentry, to catch you running onto the practice fields when he blew the whistle for us to start our warm-ups.
- F. Going forward, just as I had done in High School, I didn’t try to cram the Gospel down my teammates’ throats, but I also didn’t hesitate to talk about Jesus, who He is, what He accomplished on the cross, and what it meant to live a life joyfully surrendered to Him—i.e., why I wouldn’t go get drunk with everybody and why I was sexually saving myself for marriage.
- G. Here’s why I’m telling you that story. One of my VT teammates, whose locker was really close to mine, is a guy named P. J. Preston. He’s now a passionate follower of Jesus who serves as the Lead Pastor of a growing church in Lynchburg, VA, that he started, as well as the Chaplain of the Liberty Flames football team. But back at VT, I referred to P.J. as the Black Rick Flair! He was cut up like a bodybuilder with muscles on top of muscles. He was an insanely athletic 220-pound guy who could run forty yards in 4.3 seconds. Throughout his time at VT, they played him at Safety, Outside Linebacker, and Defensive End

... sometimes in the same game! They could literally line him up anywhere on the field, and nobody could stop him! My point is that he was an extremely popular guy on campus, especially with the ladies, which is why I used to call him the black Rick Flair! But back then, he also had no interest in Jesus and certainly had no desire to even remotely consider Biblical sexual morality as a standard for living. He and I had a variety of conversations about the Gospel, and because his locker was close to mine, he could also overhear my conversations with others about Jesus. But, in my two seasons at Virginia Tech, P.J. never showed any interest whatsoever in surrendering His life to Christ nor to the morality that goes with it.

- H. For many years after transferring to Liberty University, I lost touch with pretty much everybody at VT, including P.J. Still, I continued to pray for his salvation, just as I continue to do so for some of my other teammates from high school and college who still aren't followers of Christ. As the years went by, I never forgot what had happened before that first two-a-day practice, and for many years I wondered whether those kinds of conversations ever made an impact on anybody's life. Did it matter that I shared the Gospel with my teammates those two seasons, because while I was there, nobody ever gave their life to Christ? Did it matter that I exposed the works of darkness by living the Gospel out loud in my life and words? Did shining the light do anything, because while I was there, not once did somebody come up to me and tell me God had convicted them to repent? I wondered if anybody had ever truly thought about anything we ever talked about.
- I. So, where am I going with this? Well, a few months ago, I got a text from P.J. It was a link to a podcast the School of Divinity at Liberty University did with him. They were interviewing him about his testimony and calling in Christ. This link will take you right to the moment in his interview when he says something that should encourage every believer never to quit living an out-loud surrendered life to Christ! It's the most powerful life you can live, and even if you can't see anything happening around you, the Gospel and the light of Christ through you matters ... ENORMOUSLY! - <https://youtu.be/tct0lBwMfvQ?si=IqRw-WddnvJ-9eWB&t=620>
- J. I wasn't the one who led P.J. to Christ, but I got plant seeds that God used. Live the Gospel out loud, and a light will shine that changes the world, whether you ever see it or not!

The third instruction on how to morally live as God's people is to ...

(3) Learn and practice Biblical wisdom. (5:15-17)

- A. **15 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.**

- B.** “Making the best use of the time” is not sitting around looking at porn or fantasizing about sexually immoral actions that you tell yourself you will never do, and as such justify imagining what it would be like to do them. FYI, the practices of our mind will eventually become the intentions of our heart, which is why Romans 12:2 tells us to be righteously transformed by the renewal of our mind. But if our lives can be righteously transformed by our mind being focused on Him and His righteousness and truth, then that also means our lives can be corrupted by focusing on immorality and sin!
- C.** In addition, in dealing with sexual immorality, we have to remember that on this side of Glory, we are all vulnerable to the temptations of living in a sin-sick society that not only justifies sexual immorality but also celebrates it. It’s not new. It’s been going on since man fell in the garden. So, in our spiritual battle, we also need to learn basic practical wisdom to combat the real-life traps all around us.
- D.** For instance, if you are addicted to porn, you will only find victory through the transforming power of Christ and His Gospel in you, but you also need to obey the Scriptures and use some wisdom in your fight. There is not a single thing you can do with an iPhone that’s worth being addicted to porn. Get a dumb phone if you can’t handle the temptation of a smart one!
- E.** Likewise, no job is worth keeping if there is a person in that job with whom you have developed an immoral relationship or want to and just haven’t got the courage to do it yet. You need Jesus to change your heart for sure, but in the meantime, you need to RUN. If Jesus required a man to sell all he had to follow Him, you better believe that He is just fine with you quitting your job and finding another one if that’s what you need to do to get away from a person you’ve aligned your heart with instead of your spouse, even if it hasn’t become physical yet. Wisdom is to RUN from sin, don’t keep dancing with it.

Note: 6 The Lord said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it.” (Genesis 4:6-7)

- F.** The Bible is FULL of super-easy-to-understand practical wisdom on avoiding sexual immorality, both in what not to do and what to do. For instance, in Proverbs 5:19, Solomon tells his sons to find sexual gratification in their wives’ breasts and as such don’t think about other women’s breasts! It leaps off the pages in proverbs.
- G.** We even find wisdom of what not to do in the Song of Solomon. A book that clearly points us to the beauty and righteousness of sexual passion within marriage, also tells us on three different occasions to not stir up sexual passion

before it's supposed to be stirred up (Song of Solomon 2:7, 3:5, 8:4) or it will royally mess you up!

- H. Finally, we have to remember the practicality of the fact that when we make room in our life for the covert hidden practices of the sexually immoral fantasies created in our own minds or make room for the thoughts brought to us by secretly looking at pornography, or justify giving ourselves emotionally to a person whose not our spouse, or the blatant outright overt practices of sex outside of the confines of Biblical marriage, which JESUS clearly defines as a lifelong monogamous relationship between a man and woman (Matthew 19:1-9, Mark 10:1-9), we are necessarily actively making room in our life to live in total defiance of how God designed it work!
- I. In making room for sexual sin, we as the creation, insist that the creator's instructions do not apply to us, and, even more insanelly, that we can create an outcome of our choosing! It's literally as if you refused to change the oil in your car and decided to put diesel fuel in the fuel tank of your gasoline engine all while confidently thinking nothing bad would happen to your car, that it wouldn't leave you stranded, and that it wouldn't cost you a ton of money to repair! This is exactly why Paul says don't let yourself listen to people who try to justify sexual immorality! Therefore, you need to learn the wisdom of ignoring all of the "Christian" denominations that are redefining Biblical morality, as well as the cultural tendency in churches that claim to embrace Biblical morality, but are too scared to teach it because they are scared it will offend people who are justifying sex outside of the confines of Biblical marriage.

Challenge: Jesus is worthy of our obedience; therefore:

- (1) **Bring your sexual immorality into the light by being honest with yourself, God, and people you can trust to help you accept God's forgiveness and walk in righteousness.**
- (2) **Stop making excuses for yourself.**
- (3) **Implement wisdom.**
- (4) **Live in community with people who will help you love being loved by Jesus more than anything!**