

"Pondering Purity"

Living Pure: Lesson 1 (Thoughts)
Jonathan Landis 9/8/06

Introduction to "Living Pure Series":

Tonight we are beginning a series of lessons on the subject of purity. I know some of you are already thinking, we know about this already, we went to the "Girls of Purity" conference and we've heard it all before. Slow down... I'm fully convinced that there is a lot more that every one of us can learn about purity. We aren't only talking about sex... although we will. We are going to be talking about purity in our thoughts, our actions, our emotions, and our relationships. I think that every one of us will grow as we study the subject of purity together over the next few weeks.

Prayer: Lord, please guide us as we dive into the subject of purity. I ask that each one of us would have open ears to hear and open hearts that would receive. Speak through me Lord, and let the message I speak tonight not be my own words, but the truth that comes from your Word.

Audience Repeat this part...

Lord Jesus, speak to my heart and change my life, tonight. AMEN.

Introduction to "Pondering Purity":

PURITY begins in our thoughts. Everything that we do, whether good or bad, begins with an idea, or desire. Most of us wouldn't get up in the morning for school, unless we set our alarm the night before. You have to set the alarm to wake up on time. Just like setting the alarm comes before waking on time, so thinking comes before doing. The way that we think decides our actions, and ultimately our thinking decides who we become!!!

Thinking → Doing → Who we ARE

Proverbs 23:7a NASB

For as he thinks within himself, so he is.

1. Thoughts Make Us Who We ARE

What kind of person do you want to be??? Do you want to live a life of purity??? If so, it begins with your thoughts. It is impossible to do what's right, if we don't think right.

Illustration: Do you think that a rapist just wakes up one day and decides to go rape a woman, and spend the rest of his life in jail? NO WAY!!! A rapist becomes one over time... He begins by looking at pornography, and dwelling on evil thoughts, before he even considers committing the crime. His mind becomes the canvas on which his horrible deed is painted before it ever takes place. Then one day his evil thoughts become actions... and he even hurts someone else in the process. Then he spends his life in jail. He didn't plan to go to jail... but his thoughts ruled him, and he became a criminal, because of his evil thoughts.

The rapist ruined his life and someone else's because he let his thoughts rule him. We as Christians should not let our thoughts control us. We have to control our thoughts.

2 Cor. 10:5 NIV

We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

We should "take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ." To take something captive is like what an army does in

battle. They don't casually deal with the enemy. The army takes the enemy captive. They make them their prisoner. Any thought that isn't pleasing to God should be thought of as our enemy. We can't casually deal with evil thoughts, and we definitely don't want our thoughts to rule us. We have to rule our thoughts, and take them captive.

2. Eliminate Bad Thoughts with "Extreme Prejudice"

When a squad of infantry captures an enemy tank they stop it right where it is. When we take our thoughts captive, we stop our thoughts in their tracks. If we have a bad thought, instead of dwelling on that thought (and giving it power)... we have to stop that evil thought, before it continues to fester... like an infection in our mind.

When we capture our thoughts we should remember though that we TAKE NO PRISONERS. In other words, we aren't going to hold on to the disobedient thought, we need to "eliminate bad thoughts with extreme prejudice!!!" As soon as we realize we have a bad thought, and we capture it, we have to kill it.

A good way to kill evil thoughts is to pray immediately and ask Jesus to cleanse your mind. Focusing on Christ overpowers evil. When we look at Him, everything else looks dim in comparison.

Matthew 9:4 NIV

Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?"

Realize 2 Things:

1. Jesus knows our thoughts.

Because Jesus knows our thoughts, He's the best One to help us deal with them. He knows exactly what it is we might struggle with, and He is more than able to overcome it... All we need to do is to turn to Him for help. If we focus our thoughts on Him and admit our struggles to Him, He will help us defeat them.

2. He commands us **not** to entertain evil thoughts.

Entertaining evil thoughts is the opposite of "capturing" them. When someone entertains a visitor, they make him feel at home, and usually they feed him. The last thing we want to do is make evil thoughts feel at home in our mind (or feed them!). We should make a conscious effort not to dwell on evil, but to focus on the good.

3. Focus Your Thoughts

Philip. 4:8 NIV

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is **pure**, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.

The Bible tells us to think about these things. Remember we are in control of our thoughts. They don't control us. So, since we control our thoughts, we should purposefully dwell on pure and excellent things. Dwelling on awesome stuff all the time takes effort.

The most important thing we can do to focus our thoughts is to **READ THE BIBLE!!!** The Word of God is full of awesome stuff we can think about. As we read the Bible it shapes the way we think. We begin to focus upon God's ways, instead of the world's ways.

It also gives God an opportunity to "cut away" evil thoughts from our mind.

Hebrews 4:12 NIV

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; **it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**

We should not try to win the battle of our minds without the Word of God. It would be impossible. The Word of God is the sword that we use to defeat the temptations and lies of the enemy. Whenever the devil puts an evil thought in our minds we can recognize it's wrong, because we know what's right... Then we take that thought captive and kick it out of our minds.

The way to have pure thoughts is to read the Word and dwell on pure and excellent things. If we make an effort to dwell on the good, and not to fill our minds with garbage, then we'll be able to defeat the enemy, and win the battle over our thoughts.

Challenge:

Tonight I'm not doing a regular altar call. Instead I'm giving you a challenge. Here is your challenge: **Pursue purity in your thinking. Remember our thoughts make us who we are. Read the Word of God every day. Seek to capture every evil thought.**

ASK: Will you do this?!?

Prayer: Lord, let my thoughts be pleasing to You. Help me to capture every bad thought and dwell on good things. Give me the discipline to read the Bible daily. In Jesus Name, amen.