

Week 16: "Perversion"

Day One: "Sexual Immorality, Impurity, Greed"

Read: Ephesians 5:3-4

Reflect: What examples, from our present culture, of sexual immorality, impurity, and greed can you list in the space provided?:

Dig: Read Acts 19:23-27. Artemis was a Greek goddess, the worship of whom included acts of sexual immorality. What does this story in Acts tell you about the cultural situation the Ephesian Christians faced?

The word "But" to begin this sentence draws a contrast between descriptions of self-sacrificing love in Ephesians 5:1-2 and _____ in Ephesians 5:3-4.

Notice how sexual impurity and greed go together here and also in Ephesians 4:19.

Apply: How has sexual sin been greedy and self-serving in your experience?

Do the images of sexual freedom and fulfillment depicted in the media deliver what they promise? Why or why not?

Week Sixteen: "Perversion"

Day Two: "God's Holy People"

Read: Ephesians 5:3-4

Reflect: In your experience, how much different are Jesus-followers in the conduct of their sexual lives?

Dig: According to 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, what three or four reasons are given for avoiding sexual immorality?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

According to Ephesians 5:3, what reason is given for avoiding sexual sin?

What other words come to your mind as possible synonyms for the word "improper"?

Apply: Since God tells us in this passage that there is not to be even a "hint" of sexual impurity in our lives, what habits of thought or activity should you confess and turn away from?

Week Sixteen: "Perversion"

Day Three: "Innuendo and Witty Jokes"

Read: Ephesians 5:3-4

Reflect: Do you enjoy telling or laughing at jokes that are off-color or sexual in nature? Should you?

Dig: "Obscenity" has to do with disgraceful talk or dirty talk.

"Foolish talk" (Greek: "morologia") is derived from "moros," from which we get moron. It is sometimes referred to as low obscenity, foolish talk that comes from the drunk or the gutter mouth.

"Coarse joking" (Greek: Eutrapelia) refers to talk that is more pointed and determined. It carries the idea of quickly turning something that is said or done – no matter how innocent – into that which is obscene or suggestive.

Reading and reflecting on the above paragraph – are God's standards clear?

Are they restrictive of a lot of what we hear?

Is this a clear call for being counter-cultured?

Apply: Ask God to cleanse your tongue and give you a more biblical sense of right and wrong.

Week Sixteen: "Perversion"

Day Four: "Instead: Thanksgiving"

Read: Ephesians 5:3-4

Reflect: Is the language of gratitude and thanksgiving common for you? Why or why not?

Dig: The words "but rather" show a contrast. How is thanksgiving the opposite of the attitudes listed before?

Thankfulness is also mentioned in Ephesians 5:20 as part of the evidence of being filled with the Spirit. To what is thankfulness contrasted to here? (See Ephesians 5:18)

How, specifically, could thankfulness defeat greed?

Read Colossians 3:15-17. How many times is giving thanks or thankfulness mentioned?

What might we be thankful for? (See the context, especially Ephesians 5:1-2)

Apply: In the space below, list at least five things that you are grateful for:

Week Sixteen: "Perversion"

Day Five: "Lectio Divina"

Read: Ephesians 5:3-4 "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving."

Lectio divina (a Latin expression which means Sacred reading) is done in three stages:

- **reading:** you read the passage slowly and reverentially, allowing the words to sink into your consciousness: after you have memorized the text, write down one word which strikes you and draws your attention and note why you chose that word.
- **meditation:** you allow the passage to stir up memories within you, so that you recognize in it your own experience or that of people who have touched your life: write down memories of events or conversations or other scripture passages.
- **prayer:** you allow the meditation to lead you to prayer -- thanksgiving, humility and petition. Write out a prayer based on the passage.