

Maintaining Moral Purity

Resurfacing Series

Slide #1 Over the past three years we have this series of sermons that keep reappearing called True Grit.

Slide #2 True Grit is an attribute that most people don't possess. It is the courage... to do what is right even though it might be unpopular. It is the strength and reserve... to swim against the tide for the sake of honor and integrity. It is the edge... to remain firm even when peer pressure is chipping away at our foundation. It is tenacious, relentless and beyond compromise!

Slide #3

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

This morning I want to speak specifically to the men at TL... so that we might be thoroughly equipped for every good work... but regardless of your gender this morning... I believe that the words I share will be helpful to all who listen.

In the third chapter of 1Timothy and the first chapter of Titus we have a list of 20 characteristics that describe a godly man and this is the profile we look for at TL when looking for an elder.

Slide #4 A guy by the name of Gene Getz became increasingly convinced that men in general need more spiritual help and accountability and as a result of this observation he wrote a book in 1974 entitled, 'The Measure of a Man'

In his book he addresses these 20 attributes and in chapter three he tell a story about a guy he calls Jose and I'd like to read that story to you this morning.

The Jose story: Page 32

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If we go back in history we will find that Jose's story is not that unusual. In the Roman world of the NT it was common for a Gentile man of means to have at least three women in his life. One might be a household slave girl that he would own and therefore she would be expected to be at his beck and call for sexual pleasure. A second possibility for female companionship might be a prostitute down at the pagan temple, which was considered a religious experience, and it was not unusual for a Roman man to hire her out as well, to fulfill his sexual desires. The third woman would be the man's wife. She would be the one who would give birth to and care for his children in order to carry on the family name.

Today most of us would say... how strange! We would wonder what woman would ever tolerate such behavior! But we need to remember that all of us here in this auditorium this morning, live in a culture that has been deeply affected by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. And even if you are here today and do not embrace the Christian faith, your world view has been impacted by it. We need to understand that there are cultures around the world today that view marriage, freedom, morality and faith in a very different way than what we do. And some of these belief systems are much more similar to what Jesus and the Apostle Paul faced in the NT... where women had no other option... because their lives fully depended on their cooperation with the system.

Here is just a side bar. I know that there are some exceptions to this statement... but I believe that generally speaking... wherever the Gospel is taught... women experience a greater sense of self worth and freedom.

So it is into this cultural setting that the Apostle Paul brings these rather unpopular words.

Slide #6

1 Timothy 3:1-2 Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife...

We must be the husband of one wife or more literally a one woman man! For many... this was a new thought! If we are married, there is only one woman that we should give ourselves to sexually, whether in thought or in action, and that is to our wife. If we are single we save that gift for the one we will someday marry or if we choose celibacy we save it for eternity.

Adultery is not an option and it isn't just a sexual act, but rather it is when a 3rd party enters the relationship...and this can happen with a real live person or with a picture in a magazine or with a person on the internet. One man at Boot Camp explained that one of the reasons internet pornography is so enticing is that the girl on the internet never says no!

Adultery can also happen with a thought. Jesus said...

Slide #7 Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

This past week I have been reading out of the book of Job in my QT and I came across this verse.

Slide #8 Job 31:1 I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.

This morning I want to talk with you about how we can become a 'one woman man' in thought and in action.

I'm at an interesting season in my life. I lived as a single person for 29 years before I got married... and currently Lisa and I have been married for 29 years. In one sense I am at the halfway point in my life... but I have always made it a priority to be a 'one woman man'... and men... this morning I would like to share with you the steps I have taken... and the steps you can take... to become a 'one woman man'. Let's go to our notes.

Slide #9 Becoming a one woman man:

1. Develop good communication.

Did you ever find communication difficult? Here is a great example from one of my favorite ancient TV shows, Hogan's Heroes, that highlights the difficulty of communication. Take a listen.

Slide #10 Video Clip: Hogan's Heroes

Developing good communication with your spouse or people in your life in general... is one great way to maintain moral purity. Let me explain.

Slide #11 Proverbs 25:11-13 A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver. Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold is a wise man's rebuke to a listening ear. Like the coolness of snow at harvest time is a trustworthy messenger to those who send him; he refreshes the spirit of his masters.

There is something refreshing, 'like the coolness of snow', that takes place when good communication is happening, even though it is one of those words that is greatly overused.

We have seminars on communication, we read books on communication and we go to counselors to learn how to communicate. We have more ways to communicate than ever before... by way of smart phones and texting and e-mailing and skyping and chatting and messaging and blogging and tweeting and facetimeing... and yet research seems to indicate that we really aren't any better at it... than we were before the digital revolution and we continue to blame communication for all our marital, business and employment issues..

Every couple I marry, I send to premarital counseling and one of the topics that is always given great attention by the counselor is... communication. Communication is key... because we can often nip issues in the bud before they get the chance to bloom and devour us.

Communication is a spiritual issue because Satan is the great deceiver.

Slide #12 Revelation 12:9 NAS And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.

Deception is bad communication and Satan deceives through bad communication.

Slide #13 A while back I showed a video clip from Mark Gunger... and in it he explains why it is so hard for good communication to take place between husbands and wives. If you have never seen it... Google 'men's brains and women's brains explained perfectly' and not only will you get a good laugh... but you will understand how to communicate better.

So, Lisa and I have worked hard at developing good communication over the years and one of the most helpful tools... has been learning to listen... by learning to understand... the differences in the way our brains have been created... and this understanding has helped me to stay... a one woman man!

**Slide #14 Becoming a one woman man:
2. Avoid compromising situations.**

In 2009 I was the speaker for the graduating class at Solanco and I gave a message entitled 'Just because it was there'. This coming Friday I plan to share the same message at LMS for their morning chapel service.

Let me give you the short version of this message. In May of 2009 I was down at our pond with Lisa doing spring clean up and suddenly I saw this little snake about 12 inches long crawling towards our pond. Now I don't mind snakes like some people do, so my first thought was... let it live... what will it hurt?

And then my mind went back to the summer before when we were swimming down at the pond and out of the corner of my eye I saw this snake swimming through the water right between me and my youngest daughter Christy. She had not yet seen the snake so I tried to distract her hoping it would disappear... but it didn't. When the moment of truth hit... a snake is coming at her in the water...she redefined the term 'freaking out'!

So as I'm watching this little snake slowly move down the bank into the pond... I'm remembering Christy and the summer before... and so I took a vote with myself and we decided that he needed to die and so I killed him with a rock.

Several minutes later Lisa yells at me from across the pond and she is making all kinds of animated motions and pointing and so I went over and there was another snake... only this one was about 4-5 feet long and he was right on the edge of the pond and I knew that if I tried to kill him with a rock he would just slither down into the pond and be gone... and then sometime this summer he would emerge... when Christy or one of my other daughters was swimming... and then we would have a new definition of 'freaking out'!

So I went up to the house and grabbed my little 28 gauge shotgun and sighted in his beady little head and boom... he died as well.

Now there is only one reason these two snakes died... they were in the wrong place. If they would have stayed where they belonged... out in the woods...I wouldn't have paid any attention to them.... but in our pond... after seeing the look of terror in Christy's face... they had to die!

Slide #15 Psalm 11:2 Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers. But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

We have a couple of choices, we can walk in the counsel of the wicked... this is the wrong place to be... or we can stand in the way of sinners... this is also the wrong place to be... or we can sit in the seat of mockers... and this is for sure the wrong place to be or we can delight in the law of the LORD... and this is the right place to be!

If we want to maintain moral purity there are just some places we don't go. There are some compromising situations we need to avoid. We need to stay away from the newsstands where the skin is sticking out, we need to stop needlessly browsing the internet where the girls never say 'no', we need to stop watching movies that have more flesh than plot and we need go home at night instead of running around to places that will not help us stay pure.... think about how many people would live longer if they just went to bed at 10 PM and got up at 6 AM.

We can and must avoid compromising situations! We may need to get off our phones or our I-pod or turn off the internet or shut our eyes or walk away... whatever it takes... and if we don't... we may either get a rock dropped on our head or we might take a bullet... just because we are in the wrong place!

Slide #16 Becoming a one woman man:

3. Think right.

Slide #17 Philippians 4:8-9 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. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me — put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Notice the promise for right thinking.... what is it? The peace of God will be with us! How can we improve on that? This word peace comes from the Greek word 'eirene' and it means to 'set at one again'.

Slide #18 How many of you have ever played Dutch Blitz? It's one of those card games that is won by fast hands and a quick eye and that's why I am not very good at it! It is a game for multi-taskers and once it begins... cards go flying... and the longer the game goes the messier things get and by the time the hand is over... cards are everywhere. And then the cards are counted, shuffled and then placed into one pile. This is a picture of 'eirene'... what is scattered and cluttered... the chaos... is... 'set at one' again... and the cards are all stacked together on a neat pile!

This describes the peace of God... turning chaos into order and this peace of God begins with right thinking... Men, we need to be intentional about the way we think... and we can do that!

This past Friday at the end of our Men's Evening, I asked them this question, 'can we choose to have right thinking and if so... how?' And the response was overwhelming.... we can choose what we think about... and our thinking impacts our purity!

Slide #19 Becoming a one woman man:
4. Choose accountability.

Slide #20

I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Accountability is a personal choice. No one can make us be accountable and I have learned that there are 101 ways to get around those who try and demand it from us.

I have made a personal choice to be accountable to Lisa and the most important component of this accountability is that there are no secrets. This is what it means for me to walk in the light with Lisa... Lisa has full access to my life. I don't hide things from her financially. I don't hide things from her on the computer. I don't have secret relationships with people that she is

unaware of. I don't go places without telling her. I don't leave out chunks of the story in order to mislead her. This is the highest level of accountability because she is my wife.... and no one else has this kind of access to my life. If something or someone is in the light...nothing is hidden, and the less we need to hide... the healthier we become.

I doubt there is a broken marriage anywhere that didn't begin with a secret... and secrets can be deadly... especially in a marriage.

This isn't impossible to do... it's just a choice we can make. If your life is filled with secrets... it may take some time to learn to walk in the light... but it can be done. Walking... is just a series of steps and it always begins with the first step... so take that first step.

**Slide #21 Becoming a one woman man:
5. Pray diligently.**

Slide #22 Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

Prayer is the glue that holds our purity together. There is not any group of people that I am accountable to where we don't pray together... whether it be the Elders, the pastors that I meet with, the people I mentor, boot camp men or the guys that gather at 4 AM on Tuesday morning... we pray together with all kinds of prayers and requests... because prayer is key for maintaining moral purity.

This is what Lisa and I do on Saturday morning... we pray together... we have a prayer meeting! And I believe it is more difficult to bring the third party into a marriage when we pray together on a regular basis.

**Slide #23 Becoming a one woman man:
6. Seek help.**

Slide #24 Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?

Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

So if you need help... whether it be a moral need or a marital need or a business need or a financial need... who would you go to?

One of the questions I ask couples that I marry... is this question... who will you go to when things began to fray? It's an important question because every couple will struggle... the question isn't 'if'... the question is this... do you have someone to go to when it happens? Who is your 'go to' person?

Slide #25 Prayer and Reflection: In closing this morning. I'm much more concerned about where you go from here... than I am... where you have been.

If you have blown it... and if you have allowed that third party into your marriage or into your mind... or into your life... today is a brand new day! Take some time this morning to make things right... shuffle the deck and put your cards in order... set things at one again.

Let's pray: