

Keeping Yourself Pure In An Impure World

1 Timothy 5:22-25

Introduction:

1. As Paul writes to his son in the faith, Timothy, he admonishes and encourages him to do something very challenging. Look at the last three words of verse 22: “...*keep yourself pure.*”
2. This is certainly no easy task for a young person (or any person for that matter), especially today. Satan’s world system that we live in is very corrupt. 1 John 2:16
3. Satan desires to swallow up believers into his world system. He desires that they blend in with his world system. In James 1:27, we learn that God’s desire is that believers keep themselves “*unspotted from the world.*”
4. Notice that Paul told Timothy to keep himself pure. Only one person can keep you pure – **you!** It is an individual decision, and nobody can make it for you. We choose daily to either keep ourselves pure or live in sin. Every believer must choose to live a pure life.
5. In our text, Paul is going to give Timothy some very practical advice that will keep him on the path of a pure life. How can a believer live a pure life in an impure world?

First, carefully guard your associations. vs. 22

1. The context of this verse is ordaining elders. It was a custom to lay hands on them at the time of their ordination. In doing this, those who were ordaining the person were identifying themselves with that person.
2. Paul tells Timothy, “Don’t do that suddenly or hastily. Make sure you know them, and they have been tested and proven.”
3. What is the principle at work here? Be careful who you associate yourself with. If you associate yourself with a person who is impure and lives an unrighteous and ungodly life, by associating yourself with him, you can either directly or indirectly become a partaker of his sins. Birds of a feather flock together.
4. Paul’s advice to Timothy is very applicable to us today. If we desire to live a pure life in an impure world, we must be careful who we associate with on a daily basis. Proverbs 13:20; 22:24-25
 - There were times when Paul had to draw a line and withdraw from a person. He would not associate with him. **Example:** 1 Timothy 1:20
5. This has great application for whom we hang out with. Indirectly too, not just face-to-face (Facebook, texting, phone, the Web).
6. Parents, know who your children are associating with and carefully guard those associations. This is why God gave children parents! How can your kids live pure, if they are hanging with impure friends?

Second, look at sin's result. vs. 24

1. What is sin's result? Verse 24 answers this question – judgment. There is no escaping it. Sin always carries consequences. Galatians 6:7-8
2. We reap the results of sin in our minds, emotions, and bodies. The Bible teaches that when a believer sins, he grieves the Holy Spirit who lives within. In other words, there is no peace or contentment or fulfillment. It creates guilt, shame, regret, pain, and misery.
3. Sometimes people will say, “You Christians who believe in eternal security just believe that you can live any way you want to after salvation, and it doesn't matter. Once saved always saved; it is just a license to sin.”
4. This is ridiculous. This isn't what we believe at all. All sin carries consequences, and all sin must be judged by God. The Bible teaches that, one day, all believers will stand before God at the Judgment Seat of Christ, and we will give an account of how we lived our Christian lives. I'm not sure what all that will entail, but I do know that the Bible teaches that some will gain reward and some will suffer loss. 1 Corinthians 3:14-15
5. Paul teaches in this verse before us that all sin carries consequences. But not all sin carries **immediate** judgment and consequences. You don't sin and immediately feel the pain. In fact, there may be temporary, fleshly gratification. But there is always a payday. **Illustration:** Living a promiscuous lifestyle in which you could become affected by one or more than 30 STDs. Some, you don't know you have until you suffer the ramifications in your body, years later.
6. This should be an incentive to keep ourselves pure. Do you want to avoid the judgment and consequences of sin? Simply keep yourself pure.

Third, actively embrace good works. vs. 25

1. We said that sometimes sin brings delayed judgment. In the same way, when you do good works, and you do the right thing, you may not receive immediate reward and pleasure. vs. 25
2. Sometimes when you do good works, there is immediate reward, gratification, and commendation from others. There are other times when you do right, and you may be ridiculed for it or suffer loss for it.
3. But Paul says that when your good works go unnoticed and unrewarded down here on earth, they cannot be hid forever. One day, God will bring all those hidden, good works to light, and you will be commended by Christ Himself! Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 6:4
4. One of the vital keys to keep from sin is to be involved in doing the right things—doing good works.
5. Romans 12:9 says, “*Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.*” In other words, it is not enough to simply hate that which is impure and unholy. We need to develop a love for that which is pure, holy, good, and right.
6. This, of course, comes as we get into God's Word and truly fall in love with Christ. We begin to see things through His eyes.

In Conclusion:

1. When our hearts and lives as believers are not pure, it takes its toll on our bodies, souls, and minds.
2. Of course, not every health problem is a sin problem. Timothy was having some stomach issues, and Paul gives him a medicinal prescription in verse 23. It appears that Timothy was a stressed-out young man and was getting physically sick. Remember, Paul's advice was not for pleasure or social reasons, but for physical reasons.
3. God commands believers to take care of their physical bodies because they are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Sin will destroy you from the inside out. Like cancer, it will spread, if not addressed.
4. God's desire is that our lives be exemplified by a wholeness (integrity) that will only come as we live a pure life in an impure world.