

Summit Woods Womens Retreat
June 27, 2015
Speaker: Chantele Ferguson, **Purity**

Titus 2:3-5³ Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good,⁴ and so train the young women to love their husbands and children,⁵ to be self-controlled, **pure**, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled.

What does the Apostle Paul mean by “**pure**” in this passage?

I googled the term and found this definition: unmixed or unaltered with any substance or material, without extraneous or unnecessary elements, free of contamination, wholesome and untainted by immorality (especially of a sexual nature).

Synonyms include: virtuous, moral, ethical, good, righteous, saintly, honorable, reputable, and irreproachable

Carolyn Mahaney’s book, “*Feminine Appeal*” – holy, innocent, chaste, and not contaminated. Offers it has to do with sexual **purity**. Avoiding any immorality in thought, word and action. She moves further and contends that it denotes much more than pre-marital **purity**, it includes the concept of sexual **purity** in marriage.

Warren Wiersbe’s Bible commentary – “**pure** is equated to being chaste, **pure** of mind and heart. A Christian wife is true to husband in mind and heart as well as in action.”

So what stands out in my mind relates to being holy, chaste and innocent.

Holy – set apart:

Leviticus 19:2² “Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

2 Corinthians 11:2² For I feel a divine jealousy for you, since I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a **pure** virgin to Christ.

I Peter 1:15-16¹⁵ but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct,¹⁶ since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

I Peter 3:1-2 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives,² when they see your respectful and **pure** conduct.

We are models before an audience of unbelievers - that might include our husbands. We are God’s servants; his representatives.

Chaste - pure mind and heart:

Philippians 4:8⁸ Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is **pure**, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

2 Corinthians 10:5b⁵ take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Pure, Innocent: not guilty of a crime or offense; blameless, faultless

Matthew 5:8 - Blessed are the **pure** in heart, for they shall see God.

I Timothy 5:22 - nor take part in the sins of others; keep yourself **pure**. Paul called Timothy to remain untainted by the sins of unqualified elders.

Proverbs 15:26 - The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the LORD, but gracious words are **pure**.

There is a connection between our thought-life, in what we say, and ultimately in what we do. In Titus 2:5, Paul addresses women who have been newly converted to the faith. Titus, himself, had been converted to the faith through Paul's testimony as we learn in chapter 1:4. Titus was young, like Timothy, and he served with Paul in Corinth (2 Corinthians 7, 8, and 12). In Galatians 2:3, that Paul was a Greek believer Paul knew that Titus would have a difficult time with the Cretans -- Titus 1:12-13 ¹² One of the Cretans, ^[h] a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." ^[i] ¹³ This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith.

The Christian home was a totally new idea and young women saved out of paganism would have to get accustomed to a new set of priorities and privileges. The older women would have the responsibility to teach the younger women how to be successful wives, mothers and housekeepers. The younger women would have the responsibility to listen and obey the older women's teaching. Everything had to be laid out for these new believers.

Paul left Titus with the task of ensuring that the believers would live in accordance with the gospel as servants and representatives of God. Wiersbe's commentary on Titus proposes that the greatest priority of a home then and now should be love. If a wife loved her husband and her children, she was well on her way to making the marriage and her home a success.

To whom does this apply? Is Paul's admonition just for women who are married or about to marry or does this apply to all of us?

We will see this is a call to all of us. I Corinthians 7:1-9 says - Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." ² But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. ³ The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. ⁴ For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵ Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ⁶ Now as a concession, not a command, I say this. ^[a] ⁷ I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. ⁸ To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. ⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

Hopefully you see yourself in this admonition whether you are married, single, older or younger women. The call to sexual **purity** is implicit. As Christian women we are called apart from the world. Sex is a gift intended only for married people to enjoy.

Family life speaker and author of the book, "*Sick of Sex*," Robin McElvey (and also a friend of mine) – writes – "God intends for us to experience tremendous joy and satisfaction when we express our sexuality

within the confines of marriage. Through fidelity and the marital union, the husband & wife are to delight wholly in each other without the consequence or contamination of sin.”

The world bombards us with the idea that sex is for any and every consenting adult. We see it in romantic movies that suggest the best sex is had by single adults (NOT TRUE!). We hear it in the music that is available to us and bombards our youth with explicit lyrics. We see it in advertisements for clothing and underwear – leaving nothing to the imagination – mostly everything is uncovered.

Paul’s direction to women is to be **pure** and it applies to all of us. We, like the women of Crete, live in a world where impurity is commonplace. But as Christians, we have to live in the world but not be of the world. In John 15:19 - If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

Are we okay to be hated by the world and not look like the world? We should be.

Psalm 4:3a - But know that the LORD has set apart the godly for himself

I John 2:15 - Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life^[a]—is not from the Father but is from the world.

In 2 Corinthians 5:20 - Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

That should be our testimony to the unbeliever and to the world that watches us. The way we live our lives should beckon them to come to the lover of our souls. We can easily see that the Christian women of Crete, if they obeyed Paul, that they were effectual in the lives of those who witnessed and had to be impacted by their testimony. They were either drawn to learn more or rejected the God they were serving. Either way, they were called to live **pure** lives. **Pure** in thought, **pure** in conduct, **pure** in what we take in and what they we put on, and **pure** in speech as well. In this portion of Scripture - Titus 2:5 – we can’t get away from the fact that Titus was to instruct women to be **pure** in their marital relationships – but again – this instruction is that we should all obey as women. Again the marital relationship took special focus. Paul instructed Titus to have older women instruct the younger women.

The goal was to establish a God-centered life. A new way for Christian women to exist in relating to their husbands and this new way was to fully enjoy the wonderful gift of sex. Remembering God made Eve from Adam’s rib. In Genesis 2:24 - Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

God made man and woman to be sexual creatures, but according to his prescription - not only did he call us to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:27-28), but the Word provides ample evidence that it is to be for our enjoyment. Check out the Song of Solomon or Proverbs 5:18-19 or Genesis 2:21-25. He gave sexual desires to both men and women to be enjoyed only in marriage. One man and one woman. The two shall become one flesh. This is the most intense physical intimacy and deepest spiritual intimacy possible between husband and wife. It is in this physical relationship that husband and wife fully know each other. They have complete knowledge of one another and should be unashamed.

In Robin’s book, *Sick of Sex*, she comments that “the sexual union is the highest form of communication of love, the pentacle of human bonding.” If this is true, it makes sense that God would have us to abstain from sex until marriage. If Robin’s assertion is remotely true, then it is not difficult to imagine the emotional damage men and women can do if they don’t obey God’s plan for marriage and sex and yet

people do choose to not obey. They forfeit **purity** and indulge in what is forbidden. They allow the sexual appetite that God has given and reserved for marriage and be ignited out of season, prematurely, inappropriately.

Maybe this is your story. Maybe you chose to have sex outside of marriage. Maybe you are bearing the consequences of that choice in your marriage or current relationship. Or if you are single and it's your story too and may be carrying scars or baggage. If it is your story – there is still hope. Our God is a redeemer, a healer, and restorer. If you bare scars in this area of your marital life or your single lie and you'd like to be set free – there is help in the Word of God or the counsel of godly women. Or maybe you were the victim of sexual trauma of abuse or rape and you too bare scars. Seeking help in Biblically counsel is a way to begin to set you free.

I pray that we can see God's call for all women to be **pure** and to see sex as his special precious gift to married people. To see that being **pure** is more than abstaining from sex until marriage. It has to include being **pure** in our thought life. There is a connection between what we think and ultimately what we do. We must be on guard to protect our **purity** no matter what stage or phase of life we are in. We live in a world that is ruled by an enemy that walking about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may destroy. We must not be lured into sin by what we taken in and by what we fail to do. I strongly encourage you to read *Feminine Appeal* or the book, *Sick of Sex* that I've referenced.

(Chantele shares her testimony having been raised in a devout, Catholic family. Please take time to visit with Chantele personally and ask her to share her testimony with you if you are unable to listen to the message online)

I pursue **purity** because I love God and because He commands it. This study was very helpful in reminding me to be active in this pursuit and to guard it and to teach my daughters in particular about being holy and about protecting their modesty. And this is a charge to all women to hold onto **purity** and protect their modesty. Growth in **purity** can only be realized as we look to Christ.

In Colossians 3:1-5 - If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ²Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴When Christ who is your^[a] life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. ⁵Put to death therefore what is earthly in you:^[b] sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

When we consider **purity** – it would be helpful to think about if there is a line in which we must not cross. How close are we getting to that line? Are you getting as close to that line as you can? I urge you to back it up and to look up and to keep your focus on him.

Romans 13:14 - But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

We inadvertently can make provision for the flesh. If we know that watching movies with just a little bit of kissing will put you in the wrong frame of mind –don't watch it. If you know that certain music will put you in the wrong frame of mind that focuses you away from Christ – then don't listen to it. You have to be over your own mind. I like that quote to be the “mistress of your own heart or your own self.” We have to be that way for ourselves because our private thoughts – no one can discern, but God knows. We are always active before an audience of ONE.

Psalm 101:2-3 says

² I will ponder the way that is blameless.

Oh when will you come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart
within my house;

³ I will not set before my eyes
anything that is worthless.

We have to honor what God is calling us to in being **pure**. We have to set our mind and being committed to being **pure**. It is a worthy calling, a commandment from the Lord.

I Corinthians 6:18-20 - Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin^[a] a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. ¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

2 Timothy 2:22 - So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a **pure** heart.

We are encouraged in every way to seek **purity** in our lives. As we continue to study Titus 2 we see a relationship between older women and younger women. Women need each other for training, accountability, fellowship, encouragement, support, discipling, and connectedness. We have a responsibility to each other. Without you my growth is limited and without me your growth is stifled. This is the beauty of community. We are members of the same body on purpose. None of us has accidentally shown up at Summit Woods to be members or partakers of the life here. We each bring to bear experiences, knowledge of God, the Word at work in our lives, God's activity in our lives and we have to share it. We must be able to teach each other and to love each other as God intended. We must bear one another's burdens and must continue to remind one another to be **pure**, chaste, holy and set apart.