

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE . . . THE INESCAPABLE ISSUE

The Sanctity of Life Selected Scriptures



LET'S BEGIN HERE

Sexual promiscuity is neither new nor novel. Illicit sex is almost as old as humanity, always promising more than it can deliver. More palatable words have replaced the obsolete and ugly ones. Adultery has become “an affair.” Cheating and wife-swapping are now merely “playing around.” Inviting terms veil the ugliness of illicit sex in mystery, fascination, and excitement. What was once spoken of in closely guarded terms is now a best seller, a torrid scene on the movie screen, a television soap opera, the object of late-night talk show jokes, and even table talk among teens. Sex sells. Sex gets ratings. Sex is big business. Our culture has gone beyond the point of total saturation and has fallen off the deep end. We're told, “You only live once so live it up! Fulfill all of your sexual fantasies before they put the last nail in your coffin . . . before it's too late!” To speak of sexual purity in a society like ours may seem futile and may make us the object of jokes and scorn, but we must.



LET'S DIG DEEPER

1. An Ancient Scene with a Relevant Ring

Let's travel back in time, when the nation of Israel prospered under righteous King David. It was springtime, the flowers were in bloom, and the early sun had warmed the rooftop of the palace in Jerusalem. Behind the palace lived a young married woman who had no children. Her husband was out of town on military duty. Before she retired for the evening, she took a bath on her rooftop. She didn't parade her feminine beauty. Bathsheba was a faithful wife.

And King David, about 40 years old at the time, was a gallant warrior and a gifted monarch, but he wasn't a peeping Tom on the prowl. By this time, David already had seven wives, several concubines, and seventeen children! But David had what everyone else has: time on his hands and unaccountable privacy. And before the morning, Bathsheba would be carrying David's child. Then, David's attempt to cover up his sin left one man dead and his own family cursed.

What process can lead two unassuming people into sexual sin? First, there is *attraction*, which leads to *curiosity*. Curiosity is followed by *temptation*. Then, when imagination kicks in, temptation becomes the sin of *fantasy* and



Quotable

There is something distinctly precious about human life—so precious and unique it must be protected.

— Charles R. Swindoll



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eventually, *lust*. Lust then blinds us to the consequences of sin, and the *act* of infidelity results. Then, when the fog of lust clears, we realize that our actions have left a trail of destruction and brokenness. Truly, “temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death” (James 1:14–15 NLT).

2. Some Scriptural Insights with Practical Warnings (1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Corinthians 12:20–21; 1 Thessalonians 4:1–8)

Let’s consider three specific New Testament Scriptures that address purity.

- **First Thessalonians 4:1–8**

The first of these three passages is perhaps the most explicit statement in all of Paul’s writings regarding sexual immorality. Paul wrote this letter to believers in Macedonia, a free-spirited society that not only condoned divorce but permitted extramarital affairs. Even in that permissive culture, Paul called Christians to walk in obedience to God’s standard of moral purity and to abstain from any kind of sexual sin.

- **First Corinthians 6:15–20**

If we think morals were loose in Thessalonica, the extremes allowed in Corinth will boggle our minds! Since Paul repeated the word “body” six times in this passage, his point is directly related to using one’s body as an instrument of sexual sin. Somehow, sexual sin alone takes a toll on humans that no other sin does. In gluttony, drug abuse, and crimes against others, the body participates in the sin but it isn’t the *instrument* of the sin. Sexual sin, on the other hand, breaks the mystical bond between the believer and Christ and causes irreparable damage to one’s soul and, sometimes, one’s body.

- **Second Corinthians 12:20–21**

In this passage, Paul again wrote to the Corinthians on the subject of sexual immorality. In fact, Paul stated his feelings candidly, telling the Corinthian believers that he was afraid to come visit them, because he might be disappointed or, worse, humiliated because they hadn’t cleansed themselves of sexual impurity. There were three primary sins that the Corinthians struggled with: first, *impurity*, including covetousness, greed, and idolatry; second, *immorality*, a term used for sexual activity outside of marriage; and third, *sensuality* or a willful defiance of decency. Paul’s real problem with the Corinthians was that they had not *repented* of these impure actions. Only repentance, turning away from sexual sin, will lead to true freedom.



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A CLOSER LOOK

David and Bathsheba

Fresh off a series of victories on the battlefield, David was at an all-time high. He had ample money, incredible power, unquestioned authority, and remarkable fame. Therefore he was vulnerable. Perhaps he became a tad impressed by his own track record because in 2 Samuel 11:1, David indulged himself. David was in bed, not in battle. Had he been where he belonged—with his troops—the Bathsheba episode would never have been. Our greatest battles don't usually come when we're working hard; they come when we have too much unguarded leisure. Hard times create dependent people. We don't become proud when we're dependent on God. Survival keeps believers humble. Pride happens when everything is swinging in our direction. When we are growing in prestige and fame and significance, that's the time to watch out! In good times and struggles, we Christians should evaluate our thoughts and examine our lives according to Scripture . . . and, of course, surround ourselves with accountability.



LET'S LIVE IT

So what should Christians do if they have engaged in sexual impurity? Here are several helpful solutions:

- *Acknowledge the impurity.* It will heal the distance between us and the Lord.
- *Break all connections.* It will stop the cycle of sin.
- *Communicate your need.* It will make you accountable.
- *Determine to abstain.* It will free you to be all God means you to be.

Do you have any sexual sins to acknowledge and deal with? How can you make yourself accountable to others so that you won't fall when temptation comes?



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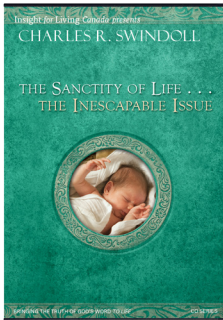
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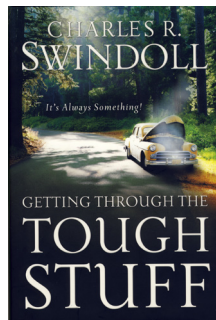
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Tools for Digging Deeper



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by Charles R. Swindoll and
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message series



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