



A Good Example

Part 4 – In Purity

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Today we finish up the series called *A Good Example*. In this series, we've been going through 1 Timothy 4: 12 – It's where we get our outline – where Paul says to young Timothy, ***Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers.*** We looked at these five areas. Well, we've looked at four. Today we're going to look at the fifth area. These are areas of maturity that are expected in every leader but should be growing in all believers. We looked at speech, conduct, love, faith, and today, we're talking about purity, specifically sexual purity.

The apostle Paul shares with Timothy how to get along in the body of Christ and how we should be treating one another as members of God's household. We read in the very next chapter, ***Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, 2 older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters...*** And this is where we get a little bit more understanding of what he means by purity in Chapter 4:12 ***...with absolute purity.***

Now, all through college and seminary, I was taught something called the Billy Graham rule. The Billy Graham rule is very simple. The rule was I was not to spend time alone in an office with a closed door, in a car, at a meal with someone of the opposite sex. It was given to women about men and given to men about women. For me, it was just common sense. It was nothing I ever questioned. I didn't dig into it or debate it at that time. Every church I've ever served has had this expectation on me as a pastor. I would think you would have the understanding that you wouldn't go to Cantina Laredo on a Friday night and see me eating with another woman.

To me, that rule was always common sense... Until Mike Pence became the Vice President of the United States and told the world that he follows the Billy Graham rule, and the world went after him. Articles started coming out, calling him everything you can imagine. One article by the Washington Post... and we know if the Washington Post said it, it's gotta be true. The Billy Graham rule doesn't honor your wife; it demeans her and women.

When I read that, I told Amy, "Brace for impact." What happens is when the world starts questioning what we believe... In this case, this is application of the purity message of what we believe. Everyone can have different application, but this is one application. When the world starts looking at that and calling it crazy, it won't be long before church leaders and pastors, authors, influencers start coming around saying, "Yeah, maybe we should rethink the Billy Graham rule."

I've been asked about the Billy Graham rule on podcasts and stuff and people ask me and others in interviews or wanting to write about it. I always love to give this answer. Because if I'm supposed to rethink the Billy Graham rule, the first person you should probably ask about this in our family is my wife. Amy, what do you think? Guess what? She says, "Hey, Buddy, you're still following the Billy Graham rule and taking me to Cantina Laredo on Friday night."

But then you know what the world says when they hear Amy say that. "Well, she's under duress." Honestly?? "She may have trauma in her life, or she is not able to freely speak her mind." If that's what you think, you've never met my wife. My wife speaks her mind, with discretion, but she speaks freely. I am married to a strong woman, so hear that before this message this goes... She's a very strong woman! Raise your hand if you're married to a strong woman. There are guys going, "I don't know; should I raise my hand right now? Is this alright?" Under duress!? Abused!? Afraid to speak her mind!? She'll speak her mind. Years ago, someone called me aloof. Saying I'm distant from people within the church. I got in the car, and I was kind of wrestling with that. Amy goes, "Hey, buddy, I want you to be aloof. I want you to really practice discretion in this area of leadership."

So, people started coming online asking, should we get rid of the Billy Graham rule? I'm just telling you that it's still an expectation. For me, it's not to dishonor my wife or demean her or all women. The very reason I do it is to honor my wife. The very reason I do it is to honor our relationship. The very reason I do it is because I see all women as created in the image of God and highly valuable and I want to honor them.

Today, the heart of this message is not to objectify women, it's not to create a battle between the sexes. The heart of this is that we don't... In the deconstruction of the faith that a lot of people are going through right now... I went through it years ago. There are times I sit there and go there's a lot about the purity movement that needs to be rethought. There are a lot of crazy things we've said and done. I don't think we need to do purity rings and purity pledges, but if you did that, I'm not coming at you. We can rethink the purity movement, but let's get back and reclaim the Bible's understanding of purity.

Here's the bottom line: **Purity is a discipline for all believers.** Young and old. These purity talks are not just a message for young people. We have senior adults in our church that need to hear today's message every bit as much as the teenager you're sitting next to. We confront senior adults as much as we do the young people. This is a message for men and women. This is a message for marrieds and singles. We're not targeting any one person with this message. But please hear the heart of this message. The heart of this message... and I have prayed, and I have talked to friends, I have texted, I have called. I have spent more time asking people permission to share things and to quote. And as we end the conversation, I go, "Just pray for today's message." Many of them are going to watch as I quote them.

The heart of this is that a purity talk, any time we speak on purity, **is that it would grow us in faithfulness to Christ first and foremost, not take us on a guilt trip.** That is not the goal of today. And I know that in this broken world, and the brokenness in this area of the sexual immorality, and the marriage bed being defiled, and people hurting in this area, that today you would rest in Christ.

And for many, that you would repent of your sins. For many, that in the struggles... If it's just a temptation right now but you've not acted out on it, that you would be able to openly confess this before your Father in heaven and share it with someone you love whether that's a spouse or a parent. We want no guilt trips today. Today, the goal is to grow us all closer to Christ.

If you have your bibles, turn to Proverbs 5. We're going to attempt to go through the whole chapter. We didn't make it in the first service, so here's to a second shot. Well try, but what a heavy message. I can just tell you; I didn't wake up this morning going, "Whoo-hoo, yeah! Cannot wait to talk about sexual immorality and purity and modesty. These are the hot exciting topics of the church..." Nope, that was not it. It was the prayer of Mel Gibson. "Lord, make me fast and accurate."

Purity starts in the mind by heading instruction and warning. So, it doesn't start physically; it's a discipline that starts in the mind. I want you to read the first seven verses of Proverbs 5 with me. Every dad in here, I want you to read it as though you're sitting on the bedside of your son tonight, giving him instruction and warning, discernment, knowledge, and wisdom. Mom, as sitting down, sharing with your kids. The goal of this message is that parents would be equipped to talk to their young people about it. I asked my kids this week. This isn't something we had because we didn't have phones when I was growing up, but that I actually have to encourage our congregation and all young people listening today to stop sending nude pictures to people. Stop requesting nude pictures from people. You see the heaviness of what we're dealing with today and in our culture that you would read these first seven verses. It's instruction and warning.

Proverbs 5 - My son... Hear this with passion. **...pay attention to my wisdom, turn your ear to my words of insight, 2 that you may maintain discretion and your lips may preserve knowledge. 3 For the lips of the adulterous woman...** You read that and it doesn't say the lips of a woman. It says the lips of an adulterous woman. It could be the lips of an adulterous man. Purity if for both men and women in the conversation we're having today. **...drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; 4 but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. 5 Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave. 6 She gives no thought to the way of life; her paths wander aimlessly, but she does not know it.**

7 Now then, my sons, listen to me; do not turn aside from what I say. Listen, this comes from the heart of dad who loves you. This comes from the heart of a mom who loves you. Please take this warning and please take this instruction, first and foremost, from the Lord and from your parents. In Verse 8, we learn that purity safeguards us when tempted. Let's talk about temptation **8 Keep to a path far from her...** This isn't about seeing how close you can get without getting burned. No, keep far back. **...do not go near the door of her house...**

In Proverbs 7: 6-10, we read, **6 At the window of my house I looked down through the lattice. 7 I saw among the simple, I noticed among the young men, a youth who had no sense. 8 He was going down the street near her corner, walking along in the direction of her house...** Instead of staying far back, he was moving toward her. Not only was he moving toward the place where he knew he could get access, **9 ...at twilight, as the day was fading, as the dark of night set in.**

Look at it. As twilight and as the dark... So, not only do I know where to go, I know just the right time to do it. I know the timing. I know when I hear my parents' footsteps coming down the hall and my computer is faced away from the door. I know exactly the right moment to hit that button and get off that screen. We know the timing all of this.

10 Then out came a woman to meet him... That's what he was expecting. **...dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.** If there is a message the church doesn't want to hear today more than purity, it's the message of modesty. You won't hear these messages anymore. I didn't want to talk about it. And I'm not going to give you specifics on modesty. I'm going to ask parents and families to have that conversation. I know there are some in here that want me to give you a list of what to wear and what not to wear. Use discretion. Somebody actually texted me this week and asked the question, "What are your thoughts about yoga pants?" I responded right back in the text, "I don't feel comfortable wearing them." Although I was dodging my friend's question, I said the truth. These are conversations for you to have.

Here's what we need to know clearly about modesty and purity: **How another person dresses matters. However, you are still 100% responsible for your thoughts and actions in that moment.** This is where many who are deconstructing in their faith and deconstructing the purity movement right now, I think, are making some very good points. I think many that may watch this make some great points. I've heard one say that noticing is not lusting and that's true. We need to be very clear on this. Temptation is not sin. Noticing is not sin. Noticing is not lusting. Modesty matters, how I dress matters. I've joke about this with you for years. I don't wear skinny jeans, but I do own a pair. My little gift to Amy; that's really what they are. Once I spilled coffee on my shirt before a service and someone said, "Just go up in your undershirt." I'm like, "What!? No, I'm not going up in my undershirt. I'm not going to cause people to stumble while I'm trying to preach."

How we dress matters. Please hear that. Modesty matters. Have the conversation with your kids. But I'm still 100% responsible. Can we just add to this the struggle in the church today, and part of the deconstruction, is this obligation sex message? If you're married to someone who does not want to have sex with you and you have an affair or you view porn, your wife is not to blame for your sin. You are 100% responsible for your thoughts and actions. We have taught this for years at Woodland Hills Family Church. You choose, you make the decision.

Keep reading in proverbs 7: 24- 25, after this woman comes out to meet him. **Now then, my sons, listen to me; pay attention to what I say. 25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways or stray into her paths.**

You're like okay, I've never committed adultery, I've never gone toward a woman physically. Look at what Jesus says in Matthew 5: 27-28, **27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** Temptation is not sin. Let us all be reminded that Jesus was tempted. Satan tempted Jesus, yet he did not sin. Temptation is not sin, lust is. What we do when tempted. Temptations will come to both men and women. We will be tempted, but we should expect both men and women to fight them and not sin. What do we do in the moment?

She was here last August. A friend of mine, Shaunti Feldhahn, wrote a book called For Women Only. She's been under a lot of scrutiny by those deconstructing the purity movement. I think she has handled it with such grace and kindness. She and Gary Thomas and I were talking this week, going back and forth. I said, "Can I share this quote that she had texted me?" She said, "Absolutely." She has done all the research and all the study on this. She has made this her career.

She says, "When men see an attractive woman, his nucleus accumbens lights up."

I butchered that word (accumbens) so badly in the first service. Travis Brawner corrected me. I was like, 'Who are you to correct me?'

"And then a microsecond later..." Researchers call this the brain ping. Doctors call this the brain ping. It happens in a man, and it doesn't happen in a woman. Whenever you teach this, there are going to be some watching that are going to call this junk science. I'm telling you we're moving away from the created differences between men and women.

...his cortical (thinking) centers light up and that's where choice (to fight the temptation or not) comes in. So, the first step is biological, next is thought and will. The problem is that in most cases when a woman sees an attractive man, her nucleus accumbens doesn't activate. Instead, the cortical centers light up from the beginning and she THINKS to herself, he's attractive! And that's about it. There's no biological, sexual stimulation so there's no intra-brain war to fight. Which is, in my view, why women simply don't 'get' what guys go through – because most women have never experienced it."

You know why I don't want to move away from the created differences between men and women? It's because there are godly men here in this service who have made good decisions in their life, guarded their marriage, guarded their walk with Christ. I want young men to hear this because I don't want young men in our church that think the way God created them makes them a pervert. I want us to think through what we do in that moment. What decision do we make? Purity... Now these are some of the hardest parts of the text as we get into Verses 9 – 14.

Purity guards us from the consequences and regret of sexual sin. This is what happens when you go near that house, and you take the step.

9 lest you lose your honor to others and your dignity to one who is cruel... Your reputation takes a hit. Then your livelihood and that which you saved. **10 lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich the house of another.** Some of you have experienced that. You've had an affair and it's been very, very expensive. **11 At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent.** **12 You will say, "How I hated discipline! How my heart spurned correction! 13 I would not obey my teachers or turn my ear to my instructors. 14 And I was soon in serious trouble in the assembly of God's people."** This is one reason when we confront people in sexual sin, when we confront someone... It happens all the time. I'll wake up to emails. Somebody will get on their spouse's computer and start forwarding me emails. I can't figure it out and then I realize this person is having an affair and they are wanting me to call and confront. Again, I don't wake up in the morning going, "Whoo-hoo, I was hoping

to have a challenge like this this morning.” I don’t do that. Then you take the first step of discipline. You go one on one and you confront. I can’t tell you how many phone calls I’ve had in 20 years where I pick up the phone and someone’s confessing to me, “Help me out of this. I want help out.” Or I have to make the phone call. Do you have any idea what it’s like to call somebody and go, “Hey, are you having an affair? Will you meet me today?” As soon as you make that confrontation... Do you know how many times this has happened? Someone is stiff-necked and they are going to continue in that pleasure. They leave our church and go to another church in town. May I remind all of us. This is a small town. They get there and someone goes, “Oh, you don’t go to Woodland Hills anymore?” “Yeah, things didn’t work out there.” That’s not at all what happened. We were trying to help. We were trying to save your marriage. We were stepping in and being advocates for your children. That was our heart in that. It wasn’t because we hate you. It wasn’t because we wanted to tear you down. That wasn’t it at all.

The Bible has a word and it’s a word we all need to hear today. I asked Katie to put it on the screen just to make sure we see it. FLEE! Don’t be like, “How close can I get?” “It’s just Facebook Messenger; what’s the harm?” I’ll tell you what the harm is. “It’s just a coffee.” “It’s just a meal.” “It’s just a text.” “She just looked like she was having a rough day at work; I wanted to check and see how she’s doing and we got to talking about her marriage...” Or “He was having difficult time.” Listen, FLEE. And this isn’t objectifying anyone. This is honoring. Get that person the help they need. You can help without being the direct.

We read in 1 Corinthians 6: 18 -20, ***18 Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.***

2 Timothy 2, ***22 Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.***

Hebrews 13: 4 teaches us that **Purity Honors Marriage**. It’s why I still follow what this article calls the Graham/Pence rule. I’ll call it the Graham/Pence rule. ***4 Marriage should be honored by all... Young, old, male, female, married, single. ...and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.***

Proverbs 5 says... This is why I am an advocate for marriage. I believe sometimes we have so much talk on purity we forget that purity is not the headliner; marriage is the headliner. With my purity, every step I’m taking is to stay faithful to Christ and to honor my wife. ***15 Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. 16 Should your springs overflow in the streets, your streams of water in the public squares? 17 Let them be yours alone, never to be shared with strangers. 18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving doe, a graceful deer—may her breasts satisfy you always... May that be your prayer tonight, guys. ...may you ever be intoxicated with her love.*** May you be... let me just say it another way in our terms for our culture. May you be drunk with the naked body of your wife. Purity is part of my daily walk with the Lord. We don’t talk about it enough as a church, but we need to.

20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife? Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman? 21 For your ways are in full view of the Lord, and he examines all your paths.

There are some in here right now that we hope you find freedom today and forgiveness today in Christ because you think it's all hidden. You think no one sees what you're doing and what's going on. It's not. He examine all your past.

22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them; the cords of their sins hold them fast. 23 For lack of discipline they will die, led astray by their own great folly.

That's a tough text. May we receive the Word of the Lord today.

Pastor Matt Chandler in Dallas, Texas, probably has one of the best illustrations on purity I've ever heard in my life. It was freeing for me as I was trying to figure out how to really think through what I was taught about purity and sexual immorality. I heard plenty of messages growing up in an independent, fundamental, pre-millennial, King James version only church of don't, wait, quit, stop it, don't touch that. And when I heard him share this... If you get time today, I just encourage you to Google Matt Chandler rose.

He says when he was in college, passionate for the gospel, passionate for evangelism, he met a 26-year-old single mom that he and his friends befriended for the purpose of sharing the gospel. They would go watch her kids and take care of them. She had been in and out of relationship after relationship after relationship. He invited her to a concert a friend of his was giving. He didn't know there was going to be a sermon with the concert. The pastor got up to give a purity sermon. Matt says it was the worst sermon on purity he had ever heard in his life. He said at best, it was fearmongering.

At the beginning of the sermon, the pastor pulls out this beautiful rose and he starts smelling it and feeling it. Then he throws it out into the crowd. He said, "I want you to pass this around. I want everybody to touch it, I want you to feel it, I want you to smell it." Then he goes into his sermon.

At the end of his sermon, he says, "Hey, hey..." This was like the crescendo of his message. This is like the big moment; like he's really going to get his point across. He says, "Where's that rose?" They give him the rose and he holds it up. It's broken, petals are falling off, it's nasty. This was his crescendo question: "Who would want this rose? You don't want to date this. You think somebody wants to marry this? Who would want this?"

Here's what Matt said: "Jesus wants the rose." Jesus wants the rose. And if that's not how we end, we miss the entire point.

I was exposed to pornography at the age of eight by my pastor's son. Then I remember at his wedding... I was 16 years old, and I was in the wedding. At his bachelor party, I was the only minor there. Everybody else was older than me – adults. I sat in the room with all these adults at 16 years old watching porn for the bachelor party.

So, a lot of today what you get is I still have a lot of anger that I deal with, at 48 years old, over a lot of what I grew up in. Processing that... After the 8:30 and sharing this, I said I wasn't going to do this for the camera because this is the snippet, right? This is the clip. But so be it. I just remember... I can get so frustrated going back to those days because that's part of my issue. Have you ever wondered why I react so violently to legalism and fundamentalism? It's because it's so damning. It's so destructive in the lives of people. Some of you were taught on this subject to hide. But when I hear this: "Jesus wants the rose." He wants you. He wants me. With all the brokenness that I have, he wants me. And he wants you.

Romans 7: 25 – 8:1 **25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!** This is our crescendo today. **8 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus...**

You can find freedom, and some of you have, and you need to be reminded of it today. Others of you are in the throws of it right now and you don't even know how to have the conversation with a spouse or with a parent. We're to walk, be good example to the believers in speech, in love, in conduct, in faith, and in purity that we would walk with Jesus. I think sometimes the people that challenge the ways we try to pursue purity forget that all of us have a story. And there is a reason why we do some of the things we do because we want to honor the Lord, and honor marriage, and teach our kids and be a good example for them. And that's my prayer for you. If you are in it right now... I've had this happen I don't know how many times at events. Someone walks up to me with their head down standing next to the person they are in the affair with saying, "We left our spouses and we're together, what should we do?"

I get to ask, "Are you married?"

"No."

"End it immediately. Go back if you can. Go be reconciled to your spouses."

This is our desire here. We want to help. I know we enjoy fellowship together and part of enjoying fellowship is that we go through the difficult times together as well and through these seasons. Please here the message today. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ.

And as we pray, that you would come forward, that you would confess your sins, confess with your mouth Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that he has been raised from the dead that you would be saved, and that you would rest in the freedom and the forgiveness that only Christ can give.

Father, every person in here can share a story over their life, whether it be from childhood, college, young adult years. We rest today as a church and, first and foremost, I thank you for Jesus wanting the rose. Thank you.

May we live in the light in our marriages and in our church and in our community. We walk in that freedom. For the one right now, that they would see their struggle as a struggle that we all have. The challenge that comes to all of us. All of us will be tempted in one area or another. That today, we make the decision that, when tempted, to make the choice to lean into you, to fall into your arms and not the

arms of another. Father, thank you for how you give us this grace through Christ Jesus and we are forgiven.

For the one right now that they would not be on a guilt trip, but they would be finding the freedom and committing to purity in the marriage that they are in right now, and in the relationship that they find themselves in, that they would process all of this according to you and your Word.

We pray all of this in the good name of Jesus, and everyone agreed and said... Amen