

# Marks of a Purity Outcome

Several weeks ago I asked and answered the following question: "What five areas are almost universal in those who wait?"

Today we're going to go into those areas a little more and apply them to some of the questions and comments we've received over the last weeks.

The following five markers hold *immense significance*.

**These are the five "Marks of a Purity Outcome"**

## **1 Parental influence**

This is without a doubt the highest rating individual contributor to purity. Whether positive or negative impact is felt, it remains the number one point. We can choose purity out of parental influence, example and teaching or choose against it in rebellion. Either way, Parental Influence is the driving force

## **2 Ongoing teaching and visitation of principles**

We cannot expect a one-off event or pledge to hold our young people throughout their whole lives and in every context and temptation. These principles must be taught and visited often!

### **3 Godly mentors**

We all need people we can look up to and see our goals as realistic and supported.

### **4 Positive Peer Pressure**

Peer pressure can also work for good! We need to create places and spaces of belonging among others with like minds and hearts.

### **5 Relationship with God**

Where a relationship with God is present and as immaturity gives way to ownership of values and choices, what God desires will have increasing impact in the way a young person lives their life. The parental influence will have much sway here also as parents are the ones who are bringing their children into the knowledge of God and His ways.

So what do these areas look like in practical terms? To demonstrate, here are four queries from Sonshine listeners received over the last weeks of this program.

- A One mother rang in with a concern about the parent negative role modelling in fairy tales.
- B A dad sent in a query regarding false accusations
- C Another mother called with concern for her own teenage kids having heard the kind of pressure and statistics common to that age group

D A young man emailed concern at staying pure himself in the light of statistics and of finding a wife in today's sexual climate.

**A. One mother rang in with a concern about the apparent negative role modelling in fairy tales.**

We spoke at the time of having lots of interaction about the stories we read and TV viewing... programming and ads etc. Plus the advantage of keeping a child's interests really broad.

We spoke about children not really understanding abstract thought till around age 8 and over so there is a need to be more careful in the younger years while they develop the understanding of the difference between fact and fantasy.

We also spoke of the words at the beginning and end of traditional fairy tales being like brackets - indicating that what lies between is NOT TRUE. ("Once upon a time" and "they all lived happily ever after")

I love this question as this comes from a mother after my own heart. She expressed having heard some negativity from others who felt she took it all too seriously. However, when you are built this way, you don't know how to switch it off, and remain totally unconvinced that you should have to!

There are elements of some fairy tales that would make me choose not to use them at all. (I have a CD message you can order "Fantasy and Occult in Children's Entertainment and Literature")

There are others though that - *within reason* - I feel comfortable about, even though not everything in them demonstrates values and beliefs we desire for our kids. Part of this comfort comes from teaching them to be active thinkers and assessors of (hopefully) everything they come in contact with. This is an important life skill - and one that is needed in the church as well as in the routine matters of life. I don't want our kids to believe everything they are told - in or out of the church. I'm not talking about kids who reject or question authority for its own sake - they do need to have a foundation of truth and an understanding of where you go to get truth.

So, if we want our kids to "test and approve as not everything is from God" when they are adults, what better place to start this process of learning than in their story reading!

RO 12: 2 Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

1TH 5:21 Test everything. Hold on to the good.

Ok... the concern of this mother is a valid one but something Edward de Bono says in teaching on Creative/Lateral thinking is that people rarely go beyond the first logical thought. What does that mean in this application? That yes, recognizing the girls in fairy tales *are* often portrayed as waiting for Mr Right to come along and rescue them as perhaps creating a mistaken belief that women need rescuing by a man... but there is more to consider than that fact alone.

An interesting and profound thought from Lisa Bevere is "Man is not your answer - not is he your problem". Human-kind *is* broken but men and women cannot fix that for each other - and as long as men and women look to another human for life to be complete - we will continue to have marriage partners laying fault and seeking answers that the other cannot be responsible for.

However, something to think about is that the fairy tale portrayal of women is very much a product of the times they were largely written in. It's not that long ago that a woman needed a husband or son as breadwinner - so in that sense a husband could certainly be seen as rescuing a woman from dire circumstances.

Again though - there is always more than one message coming through - fairy tales being no exception. Fairy

tales give expression to what most people still desire... someone to love and be loved by. I see this desire as something good. Certainly one that needs gentle care and cultivation in healthy ways, but ultimately an expression of a God given need - after all, it was God who brought Eve to Adam.

Another possible concern about fairytales is the phrase "Happily ever after" - the concern being that of setting up an expectation that everything is fine and happy and easy once joined in wedded bliss. I have to say that I still believe in "happily ever after". I've seen it and lived it. Notice I didn't say "happily, easily, struggle and effort-free ever after" - that really is a fairy tale. I also realise that this is not everyone's experience or point of reference and we *are* trying to be real with our kids. However, once again, no matter what a parents experience has been I've never met a parent yet who didn't want their children's experience to be better than their own. "Happily ever after" is not to be blind expectation but informed preparation for the work of marriage to another fallible human being.

What further logical points can we consider about fairy tales and other reading? An excellent thinking tool from Edward deBono is what he terms the PMI. (Plus, Minus, Interesting.)

A few PMI points from CINDERELLA...

### PLUS

Cinderella show some great character traits.

She is hardworking, cheerful, patient under pressure and kind.

### MINUS

Cinderella is in an awful situation with no apparent relief other than marriage.

### INTERESTING

- It is a product of the times and a reflection of a woman's difficult social status.
- Wouldn't it be interesting to experiment with some different endings! If we invented some others would they feel as satisfactory? Why?

Finally, when we teach into this area of our child's life we are building and applying areas A, C and E from the "MaP - Out" above.

If interested I can email you a 'think sheet' I wrote for our children called "Learn to Discern".

### **B. A dad sent in a query regarding false accusations**

I think this one may have been more of an alert to the fact false accusations do happen than a question about it.

False accusations are their own kind of evil and indicate areas of great need and frailty in the life of an accuser. They wreck lives and reputations. Human nature loves gossip and tends to believe the first thing it hears.

*PR 18:17 The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.*

As parents we need to raise our kids with a high regard for truth. Purity will be an outworking of all-round character. Growing Families suggests that temperament is the foundation we are born with, personality is the building that emerges and character is the quality of workmanship.

**"Purity Outcome"** areas 1,3 & 5 will be built here.

1. Parental example and teaching
3. Instruction in honesty and all round character
- 5 Relationship with God will be the driving force in adult life

Encouragement for any accused...

*MT 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before*

*men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.*

*PHP 2:14-16 Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life...*

*1PE 2:11-12 Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.*

**C. Another mother called with concern for her own teenage kids having heard the kind of pressure and statistics common to that age group**

This and the next query are similar in that they both are concerned with what modern statistics represent for them personally. This is good - we should be concerned and aware as this is what will mobilize us to be proactive. It is bad if it means fear reigns or if it creates a sense of fatalism and doom. Each one has control over the effect of this awareness.

Statistics are good in that they give us the 'lay of the land'. They help us notice our surroundings, catch our breath take note of our bearings and form a plan. Statistics DO NOT MANDATE OUR OWN OUTCOMES when there is truth, vision and creativity to the contrary!

A parent that becomes aware of the sexual climate their kids are facing needs to be proactive - in as many of the "MaP - Out's" areas as possible.

### **1 Parental influence**

Relationship. Authenticity (not perfection). Clearly communicated values with supportive structures and boundaries.

### **2 Ongoing teaching and visitation of principles**

LIVING values. Not dead ones off a page. Watch for things that strip the values. Teach into them when they occur. Make these negatives part of your positive experience. Use Books, videos, youth programs etc. There are some great resources around! Make some things happen! Initiate a program. Hire some videos. Get informed and involved with whatever your school is doing in this area.

### **3 Godly mentors**

Bring other mentors around you and your family. Youth Group? Church? Family members.

Teachers? Is what your child comes in contact with at these places a hindrance or help? Invite others to participate with your family. Letters are one good way.

#### **4 Positive Peer Pressure**

Consider the general harm or helpfulness of their friendships. Do you need to encourage change? Have you taken some proactive measures to find them places of belonging with others of similar values and life goals? Somewhere they don't need to feel freakish and different?

#### **5 Relationship with God**

Are you encouraging your child's relationship with God? Not just sending them to Sunday school or a Christian School. Are you showing them a faith that matters in your life? Are you showing them the wonder of God? Eventually their choices will be drawn more from their relationship with God (healthy or nonexistent) than their relationship with you. This is as it should be.

**D. A young man emailed concern at staying pure himself in the light of statistics and of finding a wife in today's sexual climate.**

Principles for Purity are already evident in the heart of the young man who wrote this email. My previous comments about statistics and their impact on us apply here also. Statistics need not mandate our own outcome. Even less so in the life of a young person owning the principles than for a family still working on that transfer taking place.

At this age a young person is well able to be proactive in all the **"Purity Outcome"** areas for themselves. They can also thank God for parents that paved the way in the culture of the day.

You can use the **"Purity Outcomes"**

- Initiate conversation and relational time with parents and other mentors.
- If other mentors are not in abundance then be active about finding some more - they are there!
- Keep visiting the principles for yourself - books, programs, churches, events. Also something I've heard is that the best way to learn something is to teach it. There are parents out there that long for their younger sons to have mentors with your values so see what you could also involve yourself in at a helpers level.
- Build a peer support network. Maybe through personal contact, maybe through church. Talk to your Pastor. Pass around the great books I'll

recommend and see if something flows out of that.

- God?... well He's the reason for it all isn't He?! Talk to Him. trust Him. Listen to Him. Believe Him!

AS for the worry about finding a wife who has values her purity... this comes down to trust. Trust in a God who is ABLE.

For managing your own purity in a culture that contradicts what you believe my recommendations for you to read are:

- "Sex is not the Problem, Lust is" by Josh Harris
- "The Purity Principle" by Randy Alcorn.

Also by Josh Harris - "I Kissed Dating Goodbye" and "Boy Meets Girl"

We can be actively involved in building a better future than the statistics forecast - and it's not really all that hard. We've just got to live it from the heart which is the original instruction to parents of old.

DT 6:4-9 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on

your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Parents, as I said before... never underestimate the power of the ordinary. The strength of today. The example of the everyday. Growing a child up in the Way they should go happens precept upon precept. It is laying the brick after brick that it takes to build a cathedral.

- When you plug away at the sport season after the novelty has gone - you lay a precept of commitment in their hearts.
- When you ask your child to wait till dinner to taste their favourite food - you lay a precept of delayed gratification.
- When you love your imperfect spouse day in and day out you lay the precept that everyone is worthy of unconditional love.
- When you apologize to your teen for your part in an argument you lay a precept of forgiveness and of healthy boundaries.
- When you turn off the telly when a program becomes "lewd or nude or rude" (in the words of Colin Buchanan) you lay a precept of honour and of self control.