

WHAT'S YOUR REACTION TO THE WORD "PURITY"?

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Is purity a word that sits comfortably with you or one that seems a little ill-fitting?

Do you consider it something of a white elephant?

Something that doesn't really have a practical place?

Is purity something you'd think was a little obsolete? Out-dated, antiquated, no longer a word in our vocab so therefore not really applicable?

Are we so progressive now we think we just need to talk about sex with all it's issues and problems instead?

Why do Baptists disapprove of sex? Because it might lead to dancing!

Of course you could insert the name of any denomination you think could handle it!!!

How does that philosophy work (if applied exclusively) in other areas of life? (Not the sex leads to dancing philosophy - the "we need to talk about the problem" one!!) How about the problem of a mean child? We can talk about not being mean till the cows come home but perhaps it's learning to practice KINDNESS, HUMILITY and PATIENCE that might begin to make a difference.

Sure, lets talk about the problems. Lets get on the same page as each other. Let's define the issues... and then talk about the answers.

Purity is like a mirror. In this mirror we see reflected all that we are and all that we are not. The mirror of this word reflects an attribute of God that He just IS and we are not. Blessedly this word is a verb - a doing word - something that we can be active in bringing about.

How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. PS 119:9...

This may seem a little obvious, but purity is pure. Absolutely pure. Nothing, nada, zero, zip - to make it the slightest unclean. Look up any dictionary and you'll see for yourself.

Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father. Treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity. 1TI 5:1-2

If the word 'pure' finds us squirming a little internally, perhaps its because we feel it's an unattainable standard. And perhaps it is (an perhaps it is not!). In the Old Testament, a standard is like a flag or a banner. It was lifted high as a rallying point for armies and families to gather. What good is a standard that is not high?

CS Lewis wrote in "Mere Christianity"
**Very often what God helps us towards is not
the virtue itself but this power of always trying again...
this process trains us in habits of the soul...
It cures our illusions about ourselves and
teaches us to depend on God.
We learn on the one hand that
we cannot trust ourselves even in our best moments,
and, on the other hand that we need not despair
even in our worst for we are forgiven.
The only fatal thing is to sit down
content with anything less than perfection.**

Purity lost can be purity restored in Christ... could Jesus have been anything but pure?

**Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your
earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires
and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these,
the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways,
in the life you once lived. But now you must rid
yourselves of all such things as these:
anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.
Do not lie to each other, since you have
taken off your old self with its practices
and have put on the new self,
which is being renewed in knowledge
in the image of its Creator.
COL 3:5-10**

Purity is also a journey where the trail we traverse is as long as life. We'll see new sights and scenes along the way - and be met with different terrain, weather patterns and fellow travellers who'll have joined the journey at different points of the track.

Just like the mirror that shows us things we may not want to see in ourselves, purity is part of God's refining process. Like gold in a smelter, dross rising to the surface until it is pure.

**I will thoroughly purge away your dross
and remove all your impurities. Isaiah 1:25**

Purity is freedom. Freedom for whole relating and relationships. Freedom in body, soul and spirit. Purity and sexuality are not divorced from each other. But sexuality fits within purity in God's order of things. God's green light is marriage, and His red lights have positive purpose too.

**May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice
in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer-
-may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be captivated by her love.
PR 5:18**

**Marriage should be honoured by all,
and the marriage bed kept pure...
HEB 13:4a**

Purity enables God's people to be navigational lights to others in the world around us. Without the light to guide and warn, many more lives will crash upon the rocks of sexual brokenness.

**... 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...
PHP 2:15**

Purity is God's heart for us.
He wouldn't have bothered to tell us it mattered if it didn't.

So, what's your reaction to the word purity?