

The Top 10 for Life Series #8
Cmndt. #7 "The Right Passions"

Thank you Marianne and thank you Sean this morning for your accompaniment in that beautiful piece together.

I spent the first two days of this week up in Orlando. I have an annual pastor's gathering that I have been a part of for about the last six or seven years. We meet right after Thanksgiving break and we get together and talk about church and leadership and preaching, just a whole variety of things that pastors would be interested in. It is a wonderful meeting of encouragement and challenge. But as I left on Wednesday morning to return back to the area here I ended up taking one of those pastor friends to the airport in Orlando. When I was there I realized that in many ways it would be just as easy to take the Beeline Expressway from the airport out to Merritt Island, where I left about three months ago before I came to be your pastor, and to come down I-95. That way I could run by and check on our home that we still own in that area. So I decided to do that. As I made my way there to the area I drove up in the driveway of the house and from all curb appearances things looked pretty good. But as I got out of my car and began to walk around the house it immediately became apparent to me that whoever has been taking care of that yard has not been doing the job that had at one time been done. In fact, I looked in all of the beds where so often each year I would look forward, during the different seasons of the year, to planting the beautiful flowers for each season of the year. What I found in those beds instead of flowers were tremendous patches of weed that had taken root and were growing and really overtaking the flowerbeds. I went around to the back of the house and into the screen-enclosed area that was there. We had a pool in that home and I looked in that pool and I can tell you that no one would have wanted to go swimming in the pool because the bottom of the pool was just filled with trash and debris that had gotten into the pool. As I was walking around the house and looking at the house I was just amazed at the condition it had gotten in because of lack of attentiveness. In fact, because of being somewhat unguarded and uninhabited and lack of attention the house really looked in such a way that I was embarrassed. I was ashamed. The interesting thing was that if you were driving by from the curb things looked okay but up close the reality was that the house was showing a lack of attention. I believe that is how many of our homes are today. I believe that when you look at the homes and the families of people with whom we associate on a regular basis at a curb's distance things seem to be okay. But when you get a little bit closer to the home itself, to the front door, to the back yard, to the places that people pass day in and day out I think what you begin to find is that there are a lot of weeds in the beds. They lack attention and that an unguarded experience is giving way to allowing the home to fall prey to injury, to shame, and to disappointment.

You know, I believe that God is very interested in the quality and conditions of our homes, our families, and our marriages. In particular, in his Top 10 List, one of the key issues that God addressed was the importance of being on guard, of paying attention, and of keeping the weeds out of the beds of your life. You find that challenge, in that commandment it is given, in Exodus chapter 20 and verse 14. I invite you to join me there.

This is the sixth day of December. It is a day that we have sort of in-house called D-Day. I don't really know how that got to the forefront except that we just talked about this being a special day of gathering and tonight we are coming together. Now I gave you an option last Sunday. I said that if you had to be at one service this Sunday, skip this morning if you needed to and come tonight. Since all of you are here this morning I am assuming that you have decided to be at both and that you are going to be here both morning and evening today. For those who will simply come tonight they will be with us. But we are going to be talking about the direction and the future of our church in the days to come. But on this sixth day of December we are looking at the sixth of God's commandments to his people.

Because of the wonderful love that God has for us and because of his desire to protect us and to provide the very best for us he calls attention to the issue of the home and, in particular, the relationship and the honor of the relationship called marriage. There in verse 14 I want you to read with me outloud this verse. Let us read it together. "You shall not commit adultery." Let us say that one more time. "You shall not commit adultery." Clear, plain, straightforward. Adultery – taking the affection. Taking the physical intimacy. Taking the expressions of love that are designed for the home, for the family, and spilling them outside the

home is just like allowing weeds to grow up in the house that will eventually overtake and overcome the home and all of the beauty found therein. There are weeds in the garden of the home and God says that you need to be careful about the presence of those weeds. You need to see that when he speaks to the marriage relationship that God says, in particular, this is a high voltage issue. If you get too close and if you touch and put your finger where it should not be you are going to get injured, you are going to get burned, you are going to get damaged in life. So it is a strong and a stern word of warning. Not because of God's desire to keep us from the very best of life, but because of his desire to preserve and to protect, to guard the beauty and the fidelity of the marriage relationship. Every marriage has potential for failure and every marriage has potential to wear and to tear and to grow dull and undiscerning and to become vulnerable to the temptation of unfaithfulness.

I heard about a couple that were well on up into years. They were sitting out on a porch one day rocking together. The little man sitting there kind of had a romantic thought and he just looked over at his wife and he said, "sweetheart, I am sure proud of you." She rocked along a minute and said, "What did you say?" Rocking. He said, "Sweetheart, I am sure proud of you." She said, "Speak up, I can't understand what you are saying." He said, "I am proud of you." She said, "Yea, and I am tired of you too." If you don't pay attention, your marriage can be in trouble. But nowhere is there greater potential for injury and for trouble than in the area of the violation of the sixth commandment because God is firm. God is clear. God is straightforward about the importance of preserving the purity of your life and the fidelity of your marriage.

Really, this message is not just to married couples because this commandment applies to you if you are not married. If you are not married, you need to honor the sanctity and the fidelity of the marriage relationship by keeping yourself pure until such time as you are in that relationship. If you are in a marriage relationship, then this commandment is as though it was the protection to keep you safe.

You know that right now as the holidays come upon us, we are singing a lot of songs about Christmas and about the winter season. It is amazing, I don't care where you go or what your background is, I mean, living right here in Boca, it is great to just lean back and sing, Let it Snow, Let it Snow, Let it Snow. Now do you think we have a half of hallelujah's chance for a white Christmas? I mean, maybe white sand on the beaches but that is about it and I am not sure how white that is. Anyway, just the same, we are not going to have a white Christmas here. But one of the beautiful memories that many of us have had across the years of life is having the opportunity of living in a place, being in a home where we have had a fireplace. Maybe you have one here in your home. Of course, it is a very wonderful, it is a very romantic, it is a very warming experience to simply sit by the fire and enjoy the fire. But, you know, I remember clearly growing up with my mom and dad in a home where we had a fireplace and that sometimes I would get a little over zealous stuffing wood into the fireplace. After a little while as that fire would heat and would burn suddenly through the process of the consumption of the fire there would be a spark, there would be a pop, and suddenly a hot, emberous coal would shoot out of that fireplace and land on the carpet. It didn't take but a minute to burn a nice black hole in that carpet. It was amazing how quickly that fire could pop and could release its power out into the room. Typically, it was just a few sparks. As long as the fire stays in the fireplace it is good. But in any home if the fire begins to get out of the fireplace, if it begins to get into the floor or into the walls or curtains then the entire safety and security of the family is threatened.

What God is saying to us in this commandment is, I have provided something called physical intimacy, sexual union and oneness. The distinctiveness that God has made and God has created for every one of us. The Bible makes it clear, God made male and female and the distinction of the sexes and the drive and the desire for sexual intimacy is something that comes from God. God created it. God designed it. There is nothing wrong with it. But God has put a fence around it. God has built a hearth around it and God has said that if this fire gets out of the home, if the fire gets away from the relationship that God intended, then there is danger for everyone involved. In the past year in our life, from the White House on down to every house on our street, we have seen the injury, the shame, the stigma, the insult, the pain that can be associated with unfaithfulness in marriage. So this morning I simply want to take some time to talk to you about the right passions in your life. God has given you your passions. All that he desires is because of his love, is that you would discover how that passion, how that potential and power that God has put in you is to be complete. It is to be satisfied. It is to be pure as God intended for it to be and I know of nowhere

where we have a clearer and simpler expression of that than the sixth commandment that says you shall not commit adultery.

Let us look at this passage of scripture in several ways this morning because we obviously live in a sex saturated and a sex pervaded culture. It is very important when we live in the midst of a place where there are fields full of wild weeds that we learn how to remove the weeds and to cultivate a beautiful a floral garden that is complete and that is content. In order to do that there are some things we need to understand, some questions we need to address from this passage today. I trust if you are taking notes, whether you are married or single, that you will just capture these concepts. I am going to run through the first two segments of this rather quickly and then I want to slow down and spend time in the latter portion of my message this morning as I share it with you.

The first thing that I want to identify in this message is the precaution – who is at risk? When the Bible says, “You shall not commit adultery” the question is who is at risk? The scripture makes that clear as well. I Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 13 says, “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man.” Literally, this temptation is a temptation that is common to every one of us. The fact of the matter is that it doesn’t matter how old you are. It doesn’t matter whether you are married or unmarried. It doesn’t matter how many years you have been married. The fact of life is this that everyone in this room is vulnerable to the potential of being at risk when it comes to moral failure and temptation in their lives.

Randy Alcorn, a popular Christian writer who lives out on the west coast, has written a little booklet that he has entitled, “Sexual Temptation” and in it he identifies three critical facts that I think are significant. Number one, he says, we are all targeted for moral failure. We are all targeted for moral failure. You need to understand that because you are a moral being and I am a moral being and because God has established the standard of morality for our lives, we need to understand that our adversary, God’s enemy, Satan, is seeking to do everything that he can to bring us into the crosshairs of his scope and to bring us to a place of moral failure. You don’t have to be a preacher. You don’t have to be a president. You don’t have to be a missionary or a Sunday school teacher. I am simply saying to you that to everyone of us in this building the arch enemy of our God, Satan, is seeking to bring us into the crosshairs of his scope and he wants to bring everyone of us down morally. So you need to understand that. You are targeted for moral failure in your life and Satan will do anything he can to try to take a natural God-given drive and to entice you to fulfill it in a god-forbidden way. That is what temptation is. It is the enticement to take a natural God-given drive, something God created, but to fulfill it in a god-forbidden way. He constantly tries to do that in the moral arena of life. What I am saying to you is that you and I are on Satan’s hit list. The reason we are on his hit list is this, he knows that broken homes produce broken humans who produce more broken homes which produce more broken humans. The reason that is so important to him is because nothing so destroys God’s original intent and design for marriage, for family, for society than when the destroyer destroys the home and the family. So you need to understand that you are targeted for moral failure.

Secondly, we need to all understand that we are vulnerable to temptation. That we are vulnerable to temptation. The Bible says in I Corinthians 10:12, “Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.” Don’t assume you are beyond this.

I heard about a young seminary student. He was in a class on Christian life and Christian growth. He went up to the professor who was a visiting professor who had retired many years earlier. He was pushing 80 years of age. That young seminary student looked at that professor and he said, “Prof., I just have to ask you, at what point into your life do you quit being tempted to lust?” That professor just looked at him and smiled and said, “Somewhere past 80, I think.”

I am just telling you that we are all vulnerable to temptation. We need to understand that and none of us needs to be over confident at this point.

Thirdly, we need to see that we are all fully responsible for our moral choices. We are not only at risk but we are all responsible for the decisions that we make. It is important for us that when we talk about this matter of being at risk that we have to understand that the other side of risk is taking the responsibility for purity and for fidelity in your life.

Many of you know the name Dr. Laura, Dr. Laura Schleisinger. Dr. Laura, just within the first few weeks of my arrival here and the beginning of this series in the book of Exodus, the Ten Commandments, had written a new book that became a quick best seller across America on the Ten Commandments. Just as Dr. Laura was really riding the crest of the wave of that book, it seems that a boyfriend from back in the early years of her life produced some photographs of Dr. Laura in a very compromising fashion. In responding to that this is what Dr. Laura has to say. She said, "In my twenties I was my own moral authority yet the inadequacy of that way of life is painfully obvious to me today. At the same time my earlier experiences have taught me how much better it is to live by an objective and absolute standard of right and wrong, preferably a standard that is set by God." Dr. Laura, these many years later in her life, is now saying that I understand I had a responsibility, a moral responsibility, and for a long time I thought I was morally independent. I could do what I wanted to do, go where I wanted to go, act any way I wanted to act, but I am telling you that having experienced the injury of it I need an objective standard." All of us need to understand in our lives that God has provided that standard and that we are morally responsible for our choices in life. There is never an excuse for any man, any woman, to ever say I committed adultery because... That may be an explanation but it is not an excuse. We are all at risk.

Secondly, as we address this issue this morning, I not only want you to see the precaution that we are all at risk but I want you to see the problem. What is it that opens the door to adultery and immorality in our life? What is it that allows this potential point of injury and destruction to get into us and to get close to us? I believe there are several things.

First, I believe that unrestrained curiosity is one of the primary reasons that people fall and fail morally, an unrestrained curiosity. There is an immaturity, irresponsibility, in their life. They have not really surrendered their life to God or seen the importance of wise and faithful decision making in this area of their life. Consequently, they give in to curiosity.

A number of years ago Candid Camera went out into a busy street, in a downtown city, and put up a fence. In that fence there was a hole about that big around and right out beside it there was a sign posted that said, "Warning, Do Not Look Through This Hole!" Well, of course, people would make their way up and down the streets of the city and as they would come by they would stop and notice it. Do you know what they would do? They would look that way. They would look this way then they would look this way and they would right in that hole. Reason being – a curiosity, a sense that maybe they were missing something that maybe somebody knew something they didn't know. Well, I want you to know I know there is a lot of curiosity that comes together with the fantasies of adultery and what it would be like with someone else, somewhere else, some other life. But I want you to know that every time you put your eye up to that hole that your enemy is going to find a way to stick his finger in your eye. There is going to come blindness. There is going to come destructiveness and the Word of God has been given to us. Again not because God is trying to keep something from us but because God knows there are areas where protection is needed in our lives. He does not want us to play a fool. We have to understand that unrestrained curiosity many times is the cause of unfaithfulness, not only in marriage but impurity outside of marriage.

Our young people today are constantly being sold this message that somehow if they haven't ventured into the fulfillment of that curiosity in their life that they have somehow have an innocence that is defiling that is somehow setting them apart from everyone else. You listen to your pastor this morning young people. God is never keeping anything good from you. He is keeping it for you. This whole idea we are trying to sell young people today about safe sex! Let me ask you a question, when did sex ever get unsafe? I will tell you when it got unsafe. It is when it got out of the borders of what God intended for it to be. There is no such thing as unsafe sex inside of marriage. It is when it gets outside all of the deviations and derivations that it becomes an injurious and destruction thing.

Secondly, not only is it at the point of unrestricted curiosity but it can come at the point of unresolved conflicts. If you want to move the door of your married life from being cracked to being wide open to temptation, you live with unresolved conflicts with your mate, because an unresolved disposition, of disharmony in a home is the greatest way to create a gateway for an exit out of the home. You are simply being set up as bait ready to be trapped when you allow unresolved conflict in your life. Anger makes us

vulnerable to immorality. Anger makes us vulnerable to immorality. There is nowhere we need to guard the spirit more than at the point of the attitude of anger.

I found it fascinating just a few days ago to read in one of Dr. James Doubloon's Focus on the Family news bulletins for the month of December. The question was asked, Dr. Dobson have you ever thought about being unfaithful to your wife? He said he is very committed to his wife and has really never thought about cheating on Shirley but listen to this. I want you to hear what James Dobson had to say. Dr. Dobson is probably the foremost authority on the family in America today. He speaks to millions of people by radio every day. He has millions of books in print. I mean, an incredible life and an incredible ministry! But listen to what James Dobson says. He said, even when marriages are based on strong commitment they are not immune to Satan's attacks. He laid a trap for me during a time of particular vulnerability. Early in our marriage we had a minor fuss. That is probably like some of the ones we have had because Connie and I, we have never really had a fight. We have had a few discussions you could hear a block away but we have never had a fight in our home. I like the way Dr. Dobson talked about a minor fuss! Anyway it was minor enough that he was agitated, got in the car, and drove out to cool off so you judge that as you want to. He goes on to say that on the way home an attractive girl drove up beside me and smiled. Obviously she was flirting. She slowed down; she looked at me, and then turned onto a side street. She invited me to follow. I did not take the bait. I just went on home and made up with Shirley but I thought later how vicious Satan had been to take advantage of the momentary conflict between us. Satan knew his best opportunity to damage our marriage was during that hour or two when we were irritated with one another. This is typically his strategy. He will lay a trap for you too and it will probably come at a time of vulnerability. Beautiful, enticing, forbidden fruit will be offered to you when your hunger is greatest. If you are foolish enough to reach for it, your fingers will sink into the rotten mush on the back side. That is the way sin operates in our lives. It promises everything, it delivers nothing but disgust and heartache. Can you imagine today how different things would have been if James Dobson had taken that turn? What an incredible difference faithfulness has made in his life. I want you to know that for everyone of us Satan is looking for that opportunity to find injury, vulnerability, and to bring temptation! Guard against it!

Number three. Unmet needs. When there are unmet needs in a marriage it is making the partners in that marriage vulnerable to lack of faithfulness and fidelity. Every one of us needs acceptance, affirmation, and affection. That is rightfully to be given by your mate. Consequently, if you are a mate, you can reduce the potential for adultery in your relationship 50% by simply permitting yourself to be faithful in affection, attentiveness, and care for your mate in marriage. Don't let them live with unmet needs. Make yourself a servant of your mate and meet the needs of their life because that is exactly what they need. They need you to meet their needs. The Bible says in I Corinthians, Chapter 7, verse 5, don't deprive your mate. You guys hit your wife and say write that one down be sure you get that point would you!

Number four. Undeveloped self esteem. One of the reasons that people fail in their marriage morally is because they do not have a strong sense of self-esteem. What I mean by that is rather than getting their significance from God, rather than living with a sense of security as to who they are in Christ, maybe they don't have a relationship with Christ and, as a result, they are constantly looking to someone else to affirm them, to give them a sense of well being, and consequently, because of really just immaturity and irresponsibility people open the doorways of their life to immorality. I am convinced that very few people get divorces because of incompatibility but many of them get divorces because of irresponsibility and immaturity. Many times when we have an underdeveloped self-esteem and we have emotional craters in our heart; we look to others to fulfill that which is not being fulfilled in our lives. There is a risk. It is a precaution that we must avoid. There is a problem, something that opens the door and we need to be on guard.

Before we go this morning, let me talk to you about prevention because obviously God says you shall not commit adultery. The other side of that commandment is that you shall have a good and faithful marriage. You shall be what I want you to be in relationship for I made male and female together, to operate according to my design and my plan so I don't really feel I have done you justice if I simply tell you what is wrong with it. You know what is wrong. You have seen the injury of it. While the world trivializes it, it is real. This morning before you go I simply want to take a minute and talk to you about how can you affair-proof your marriage.

If you open your medicine cabinet at home today you have bottles of medicine that now have those little caps that are called childproof locks, childproof caps. They are there to keep a child from taking the top off of medicine and taking a lethal dose of something that could damage and destroy their lives. In the same way, God wants you to understand there is a safeguard for marriage. There is a safeguard for purity. I simply want to finish this morning by talking about how you and how I can take away the potential of tampering and affair-proof our marriages. Let us just write them down like a grocery list.

1. Make a commitment to honor God's standard. Whether you are married or whether you are single here is what the Bible says. For this is the will of God. Wouldn't it be nice if everything said that, this is the will of God in the Bible? How many times have you gone to the Bible to find the will of God and you said I am not sure. Well, let me tell you, here it is, plain and simple, black print on white paper. This is the will of God that each of you should possess his own vessel in sanctification and in honor and not in passion and in lust. Whether you are married or whether you are single what God desires in your life and in my life is that we be people of purity, people who understand his standards and who embrace his standards and who understand that when God puts up a fence for prevention that he is trying to protect something for us. Who is our right mind today would get in a car on the parking lot, drive up fourth avenue here, turn down Glades Road, go to the entry ramp on the expressway that says in big bold letters, "wrong way" and accelerate to maximum down on that ramp? Who would do that in their right mind? Yet every day men and women, somehow assuming they are going to get by with breaking this law, this principle in their life, get on the wrong way ramp and accelerate making it just a matter of time until they have a head-on collision with injuries and potential fatalities. Don't you understand? What God is saying is that he has a standard. Just embrace that standard. Make a commitment to it in your life.
2. Manage your mind. There really is no such thing as a one-night stand folks. Every violation, for the unmarried and for the married, purity and infidelity begins with a drifting mind. What we have to do is we have to manage our minds. We have to be sure that what is on the input screen of the mind is that which is good, healthy, and wholesome and promotes the well being of our marriage and our family. Simple behavior comes from the acceptance of sinful thoughts in our lives. I want you to know that everyone of us in this building are just a few clicks, just a few keystrokes, away from the potential of processing damaging and devastating information if we allow it to center in our minds. When a temptation comes you can either nurture it or you can attack it and dismiss it. Every time that comes to your mind what you need to do is hit the delete button and just remove it from the screen.

I love what Martin Luther said. He said you can't always avoid the birds from flying overhead but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair. I believe that is a wise word to us. Manage your mind.

3. Mark places of potential vulnerability. You have to mark the places of potential vulnerability. You have to know when you are in a place where you could compromise the moral standard of your life. If you travel, men or women, and have a tendency to come in dead dog tired to a hotel room that is empty but it has a little bit of entertainment, a little box sitting there for you, and all you have to do is push a few buttons when suddenly you can not only be laughing and smiling. But you can be indulging your mind and your heart in that which would sow the seeds of sinful behavior, you just need to block that out. You need to take a picture of your husband, your wife. You need to put that in front of you to remind you that you would never do anything in that room alone that you would not want them to see and that would not honor the commitment you have made to them and to your children.

If you have interaction with people of the opposite sex in the workplace, or wherever it may be, and you find you are feeding and getting your emotional food from talking and getting attention from them, you have got to recognize you are vulnerable and you have got to begin to send the signal that says I am not available. You have to be clear on this, because every time someone gets in trouble they were walking around the trap before they got caught. You have to mark the places of potential vulnerability. Become a good reader of the signs and signals.

4. Move swiftly in times of temptation. Do you know what the Bible says about when you are tempted physically, sexually to lust. It says to flee sexual immorality. There is a wonderful picture of it in the

Bible. There was a man by the name of Joseph. Joseph ascended to be one of the powerful influential men in Egypt and he worked for a man by the name of Potiphar. Potiphar was so powerful, so affluent. He had a beautiful wife. One day Joseph was alone with Potiphar's wife and she made advances to him. Maybe Potiphar was just too busy with business to pay her any attention. But recognizing that he was in a compromising situation, do you know what Joseph did in that moment? He looked at Paula Potiphar and he said let me take your hand, let us talk and touch, and pray here just a minute. Do you think that is what he did? Let me tell you what he did. The Bible says that when she grabbed his coat he ran out of it. He literally ran away from it. I believe we have to understand there are some things we need to run from and one of them is the potential to fail morally through sexual immorality.

5. Maintain and maximize your marriage. The greatest way inside of marriage to keep yourself from the potential to failure through adultery is to water your grass so much that it is so green that everybody else's grass is brown. You just have to keep mastering the fundamentals of marriage. You have to keep focusing on strengthening your marriage. The Bible is full of marriage maximizers that will help you to learn how to be kind and tender and romantic and caring for one another. But that is what has to happen in a marriage. We have to give attention to that relationship.
6. Magnify the consequences of failure. If you were going to have an affair-proof marriage and if you are going to be pure as a single adult, you must magnify the consequences of failure in your life. Proverbs 6:32 says a man who commits adultery has no sin, he destroys himself. Proverbs 6:26 says adultery may cost you your life. Jesus said if your eye causes you to lust, it would be better to pluck out your eye. Those are strong words! You see, instead of magnifying the consequences we minimize. I will probably slip through, probably nobody will really know. It is okay what I think as long as I don't do. Don't ever buy into that. Listen to me today. When you are tempted to fall morally, when you are tempted to indulge in gratification of the flesh, magnify the consequences. You take a moment and imagine what it would do to your parents. Take a moment and imagine what it would do to your wife. You take a moment and imagine what it would do for the rest of the life to your children. You take a moment and imagine what it would do to the name of Jesus Christ when you trample underfoot the blood of Jesus Christ to fulfill your momentary gratification. Further you look to the moment when the fantasy and the flirtation is gone, when no longer it is just the idea. I am telling you this, and then you will step back and say. Would you hear me this morning? No matter how hard you have to work on your marriage you cannot compare with the energy that would be lost and the life that would be wasted when you violate God's standard. There is an injury from moral impurity whether it is in or outside of marriage.

The last thing I would share with you this morning is that we need to meditate on God's promise to forgive and God's ability to enable us to live a life for him. I love this passage of scripture, Isaiah 1:18, let us reason together says the Lord, though your sins be as what? Remember the Scarlet Letter? Though your sins are as scarlet they shall be as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson they shall be like wool. Satan blinds us. He minimizes the consequences. So many times we are baited and trapped and injured. But I do want you to know that this same book that puts the parameter around the protection of the marriage relationship is the book that tells us that for every failure, whether it be a mental failure or a moral failure, there is an answer. There is a cleansing. There is a protection that can come into your life and it is not by your will power, it is not by your denial, it is by the power of the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse your sin and to give you a clean conscience and to give you the conviction to live a life of purity for God. Today

Because once you are right with him then you are able to make and I want you to know that the cleansing point is that the point of coming to Jesus Christ, who was nailed to a cross on Calvary, who shed his life blood, that he might cleanse and that you might be made clean.

Oh God, give us that are strong and secure. Give us lives that are full and fulfilled because of compliance. Father, in this moment today, I know there are people in this room who come from all walks of life and backgrounds. For some just the mention of the word adultery was like a dagger in the heart

because either a husband, or a father, or a mother one day walked away because of that injury and insult in their life. They know how painful that reality is. I ask you for comfort in their lives today. But I pray that that comfort would begin if they have know it by coming to Christ and trusting in him and finding the healing that he can bring to the injury and the insult and the anger that that has brought to their lives. Father, for others who are here today and no one has a clue what is going on in their mind and heart. I know it is as though you have put a spotlight on them. I know some of them are ashamed and they are struggling with what they have been thinking and what they have been doing. I just ask you, oh God, to call us to purity this morning, to remove from us the sinfulness and the wickedness, and the waywardness that would call us away from you. To think that we could somehow fulfill ourselves apart from you. Oh God, call people to yourself. Father, for that home and that family where people want to be strong and secure, help them to know that it is in deep commitment to Christ and it is in deep involvement in his church that they were able to be strong and secure and safe guarded. So, Father, I simply pray that this morning where there are families who need to get committed and active in a church you would use these moments. We love you and thank you fo that is willing to tell us the truth. We thank you for a Savior who is willing to take our hurts away .

Sermon preached 12/6/98 by Dr. David McKinley