

THE PURITY PURSUIT

By
Andrew Roberts

© SPIRITBUILDING, 2005, All Rights Reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of the publisher. Printed in the United States of America.

www.spiritbuilding.com for more tracts and study helps



SPIRITBUILDING PUBLISHING
15591 N. State Rd. 9, Summitville, Indiana, 46070
Helping build your spirit for the contest of life.

Cover: Cover photography is by Lenard Sanders. Mr Sanders can be contacted at 4598 Silkie Rd., Prince George, BC, V2N 6C6, or at his website www.mustseepotos.com

The Purity Pursuit

Table of Contents Page

Lesson 1	A Plea for Purity	5
Lesson 2	Purity of Heart	11
Lesson 3	Purity of Speech	17
Lesson 4	Purity of Body	24
Lesson 5	Purity in Attire	32
Lesson 6	Purity in Friendships	38
Lesson 7	Purity in Your Work	44
Lesson 8	Purity in the Home	52
Lesson 9	Purity in Dating, part 1: Intentions	61
Lesson 10	Purity in Dating, part 2: Dating Behavior ..	68
Lesson 11	Purity in Worship	76
Lesson 12	Purity through Christ	84
Lesson 13	Personalizing <i>The Purity Pursuit</i> (review)	89

Author's Note

This work is dedicated to the 2004 Jackson Heights church of Christ high school Bible class. They were a special group of young Christians who made a difference for the Lord in their circle of friends and the local church. It was my privilege to develop this material and spend a quarter working through it with them. Their maturity, zeal for the Lord, and love for each other encouraged me about the next generation of Christians. May their example be as pure in the future as it has been in the past. May they continue the pursuit!

I want to thank my brother Jonathan for his collaboration.

And I want to thank my brilliant wife Julie. She has given me so much, including our daughter, Erin Elizabeth. There's nothing purer than a newborn child. I love you both.

Andrew Roberts
November 2005

A Plea for Purity

Question: What's your idea of the perfect life?

Have you ever dreamt of having the perfect life? Our imaginations might picture the perfect existence as simply doing nothing, soaking up rays on a beautiful tropical beach, or freely spending our endless supply of money on whatever our heart desires. Sounds like paradise, right? Not exactly. Adam and Eve are the only two people on earth who have ever truly lived in a paradise, Eden. In fact, Eden was what God intended for man's existence, a perfect existence where man is free from sin. Genesis 2 is God's ideal for mankind, and God always wants what is best for His people. However, consider the aspects of God's ideal existence.

7 Aspects of God's Ideal Life for Man (Genesis 2)

- God's Provision for Man – the Garden for shelter and food (2:8-14).
- God commanded Labor – tend the Garden (2:15).
- God gave Law – just one rule to keep (2:16-17).
- God gave a Helper – a comparable companion, unique to all of creation (2:18).
- God gave Domain – authority and accountability over the earth (2:19-20).
- God instituted Marriage – one man and one woman joined together for a lifetime as a single family unit for procreation, companionship, and fulfillment (2:21-24).
- Unbroken Fellowship with God – Man was innocent, pure, and holy before God and each other. Thus, God walked among them (2:25; 3:8).

Working, following rules, and maintaining relationships may not sound like your idea of the perfect life, but this is God's ideal. This is the best way, the pure life. Following the Bible will always lead people back to the lifestyle of Eden. God wants His people to be pure and enjoy untainted blessings and fellowship with Him. Throughout His word, instruction is given to lead His people down a path of purity.

God's intention is for us to know and enjoy all the things listed above. That's the ideal life, and you can have it. But not by accident. You enjoy that life by committing to follow God's word. By your seeking God's will and obedience to the Bible, you will embark on *The Purity Pursuit*. Only by consciously seeking God's ideal in every situation will you realize the pure life God intended for mankind from the beginning.

A Pure God

The Purity Pursuit starts with God. Mankind was created sinless and pure. They were made in the image of God, Genesis 1:26-27. But unlike the wicked and easily swayed personalities of men, God's nature has always been the same, and always will be. God does not change, Malachi 3:6; Hebrews 13:8.

Read 1 John 3:3. It says that God is _____.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon gives the following definition for "pure" from the Greek word HAGNOS¹: "Pure a) pure from carnality, chaste, modest: Titus 2:5; b) pure from every fault, immaculate: 2 Corinthians 7:11; Philippians 4:8; 1 Timothy 5:22; 1 Peter 3:2; 1 John 3:3."

Some Unchangeable Attributes of God

God is love, 1 John 4:8.

God is just, Isaiah 45:21.

God is jealous, Exodus 34:14.

God is gracious, Psalm 145:8.

I like how Joshua Harris defined purity.

"True purity...is a direction, a persistent, determined pursuit of righteousness. This direction starts in the heart, and we express it in a lifestyle that flees opportunities for compromise."
 – I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris (Multnomah, 1997, p.88)

Typically, we think of purity in terms of chastity, but it actually applies to every aspect of life.

Read 1 Peter 1:14-16. It says that God is _____
_____.

Thayer's Greek Lexicon gives the following definition for "holy" from the Greek word HAGIOS²: "1. properly reverend, worthy of veneration: Luke 1:49 ... b) of persons whose services God employs 2. set apart for God, to be, as it were, exclusively his; ... 4. in a moral sense, pure, sinless, upright, holy: 1 Peter 1:16."

God is pure, and God is holy. These words are closely related and communicate similar ideas. But please note:

Not everything that is pure is holy. However, everything that is holy is pure.

For example, snow may be pure (free from pollution, immaculate), but that does not make it holy (set apart for God). The same can be said physically for water, or morally/ spiritually for a newborn baby. Well, what was the key to maintaining purity and holiness before God? It was humbly keeping His law and pursuing the lifestyle He prescribed, provided, and blessed, Genesis 2:16-17. When Adam and Eve departed from God's ideal and broke His law, it was sin. From then on the world was tainted by the consequences of sin. Christians must be holy and pure (in a moral sense, sinless, upright), just like their God.

Read 1 Peter 1:15. What are Christians told to BE? _____

Read 1 John 3:3. What are Christians told to DO? _____

The Purity Pursuit is determination to make a righteous choice that glorifies God in every decision and situation. Go after what the Bible reveals to be right and pure. Obey God's commandments and seek to live the life consistent with His word, Psalm 1:1-3; 119:9-11; Ephesians 4:17-24. By seeking forgiveness from Jesus when we err, and determining not to flirt with temptation, we can be the holy vessels God intends for us to be, and ones which He can use for His honorable purposes, 2 Timothy 2:20-22.

Instead of living for our vision of the easy life, we should chase after God's vision – we should embark upon *The Purity Pursuit*.

A Preacher in Pursuit

Timothy was a younger man (probably in his 30s or so) when he received inspired writings from the apostle Paul. These epistles instructed him in his work as an evangelist, 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy. Though he was a young man – a mere “youth” in the eyes of many at Ephesus – he was to be a powerful example to them.

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” 1 Timothy 4:12.

Timothy’s youth was not a handicap in the eyes of the Holy Spirit. Nor was his age to be used as an excuse for poor judgment, filthy language, or experimentation with sin. To help Timothy harness the virtues of youth for God, Paul told him some things to run away from (flee), as well as some things to run toward (pursue). Read the following verses and fill in the chart.

What should Timothy flee? What should Timothy pursue?

1 Timothy 6:10-11

2 Timothy 2:22

1 Timothy 5:22

Timothy was told to pursue purity, 1 Timothy 5:22. You may be younger than Timothy, but if you’re a Christian, the Scriptures call you to the same pursuit. Youth shouldn’t be squandered on selfishness, drunkenness, and sin, Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:1; rather, young lights should shine bright as Christ-like examples to their families, friends, schoolmates, sweethearts, teachers, and employers, Philippians 2:15.

“If we truly want to pursue purity, then we need to point ourselves in God’s direction. We cannot simultaneously explore the boundaries of purity and pursue righteousness – they point us in opposite directions. True purity flees as fast and as far as it can from sin and compromise... The path you take with your feet should never contradict the conviction of your heart.”

– **I Kissed Dating Goodbye by Joshua Harris**
(Multnomah, 1997, p. 91-92)

Are you pursuing purity? Are you chasing God’s desire and will for your life? Are you fleeing from temptation and sin, or do you like to see how close you can get to unrighteousness? If you will strive for God’s ideal life, then you will be on *The Purity Pursuit*.

The Plea

I know that the teenage years are the most confusing times you’ve ever faced in your life. The decisions you make everyday are forming your future. There are the big decisions in front of you like “Should I become a Christian?” (If you haven’t already done that), “Where do I go to college?” or, “Who will I marry?” But then there are little decisions that you don’t think much about at the time. For instance, getting into a car when the driver has been drinking alcohol, or taking a hit off the joint your buddies are passing around, or going to bed with your boyfriend one time because all your friends say they’ve already had sex. Those decisions are often made quickly, and no one dreams about the far reaching consequences!

As we study the Bible together, I want to help you get on God’s page for your future. You don’t need somebody to make up a bunch of arbitrary rules – build a bunch of fences that God never built – to keep you out of trouble “for your own good.” What is needed is someone to show you God’s way: purity. You need to see a pure direction for living and everything that vision entails. Through this, purity can guide you in all your decisions! This study calls us to a life pursuit – *The Purity Pursuit*.

Your sweetheart is pleading for you to make pure choices, choices that won’t result in STDs, unwanted pregnancies, or emotional scars. Your parents are pleading for you to make pure choices in regards to your friends, work ethic, and in everything which affects your future. The Holy Spirit is pleading for you to make pure choices. Thus the Scriptures contain the

following precepts and admonitions:

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity,” 1 Timothy 4:12.

“...Keep yourself pure,” 1 Timothy 5:22.

“Pursue peace with all people and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord,” Hebrews 12:14.

“To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled,” Titus 1:15.

“Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,” 1 Peter 1:22.

We see that *The Purity Pursuit* is a biblical mandate for all who follow Christ. Purity is what God intended and what His word commands. So I plead with you, give yourself to studying the Scriptures and the following lessons with an open mind. Make purity the pursuit of your life.

In Your Pursuit of Purity...

- Seek God’s ideal life.
- Consider God’s instructions in any situation or decision.
- Direct your life toward righteousness. Don’t see how close you can get to sin.
- Don’t use “youth” as an excuse to sin; rather, harness that blessing and devote it to God’s glory.

(Footnotes)

¹ Strong’s NT #53

² Strong’s NT #40
