

## Purity Starts With Love

Bubba Ingram

This month we continue with a series about sexual purity in the Church. I want to thank the editors for their direction to investigate those things that are pressing in our lives rather than those things that our “itching ears” want to hear as 2 Timothy 4:3 warns. The problem of sexual purity is warring against the homes of people across the world and is no respecter of religious affiliation. In many ways, we are not even cognizant of the issue and its full ramifications. I don’t believe that I am taking any risk at all in conjecturing that it is Satan’s number one tool for separating the hearts of men and women from their God in today’s world, maybe even throughout all of history. Last month I ended my article with the phrase, “let’s get to it.” “It” is the work of purging this blackness from the minds, hearts and lives of families in the church. It, the purging, starts with love.

My mom dropped me off and picked me up in the station wagon every day from school like clockwork. My mom slept at the foot of my bed many nights growing up when I had nightmares. My mom cooked all six meals of the day for me (yes, six) without the slightest grumbling and seemed to get more pleasure out of the giving than we did receiving it. Mom took time to ask about and listen to the minutiae of each day from school, sports, friends, etc...seeming to hang on every word like it was that favorite book she couldn’t put down or her favorite song on the radio. I didn’t appreciate that effort from her appropriately and never will. I cannot repay her for her sacrifice for my life. Though I have told her that the life I lead now is my thank you to her, it will still never be enough even if I live to be 120 years old. She gave too much to ever hope to match it. Would I live for her? I do. I still consider often how my actions will reflect on and bring honor to her.

My heart aches for my boys when I am out of town for work. At 7 and 10, they are basically half way through their stay at home with us. That even hurts to write. There is so much I need to help them with and prepare them for. There are so many “I love yous” left to say and show. Hugging them before leaving for work and when I get home, kissing them and praying with them before bed, throwing football, playing pool, doing homework, answering questions and just talking – I wish I could have a little longer to fill them with security, faith, instruction, patience, gentleness, and love than my allotted time with them. God knows I love them with all

my heart. Would I live for them? I do. I will throw ball when I'm tired. I will answer all of their questions. Not one of them is too silly, small, or simple. I will work all day and all night to provide for them. I will do anything for them that is in their best interest.

I feel strongly that the majority of you can relate to the level of dedication and sacrifice of your own moms and for your children (if you have them). Think about what you would be willing to do for your moms and children. Is your love for them sincere? Is it strong? Is it unconditional? Is it sacrificial? Are their needs more important than your own? I believe most of you will be able to answer an emphatic yes to all of the questions above.

Do we love God? No, I don't mean the kind of love that misses worship to fish or play golf. I don't mean the kind of love that won't say a prayer in public because it's "fanatical." I don't mean the kind of love that leaves the Bible on its shelf between Sundays. I mean the kind of love that tells God, "Yes, I understand You made me" and then asks Him for help when we need it multiple times daily. I mean the kind that has your face in your hands at your work desk asking for wisdom to deal with the next task or the difficult client or thanking Him for the big sale. I mean the kind of love that would lead us to purpose quiet time to think about our relationship with Him and to consider how He has given us **all** that He has to give. The kind of love that screams out after such a consideration, "Why do You still care about me?"

When we have taken time to consider the love that God has shown us by leading us to friends, families, churches, careers, health, wealth, and the beauty of His creation, we might begin to take time to consider how sin, particularly the sin of sexual impurity, hurts Him. We know for a fact that it hurts us (1 Corinthians 6:18). But do we feel it emotionally when we realize we have sinned? Have you ever done something that made your mother cry? Have you ever felt like more of a degenerate? We ought to feel that way every time we sin. Does God care as much as our mothers do? It's God that blessed us with our mother, father, grandparent, foster parent, or whoever else filled that role for you growing up because He loves us. Of course, He cares. We're made in His image.

There is a conspicuous absence of any mention of wives in this article. It is purposed. Next month we will explore the wisdom of God in giving us wives as the answer for the pure desires He gave us. There is a misconception that the problem of sexual immorality is one between the guilty party and their spouse. The problem is actually a lack of love, obedience,

honor, and respect for God our Father—Joseph described it as a sin against God (Genesis 39:9). Meanwhile our relationships here will suffer because this sin breaches the trust of many to whom we have commitments.

I still remember the first time I ever read Psalm 51. The sincerity of David's words to his, and our, Father, after his sexual sin with Bathsheba, should be used as a pattern for us when we sin. David recognizes which relationship is the most critical to repair and how important it is that it be repaired quickly. Psalm 51:3, 4 says the words that are needed so desperately in our homes today. "For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Your sight—that You may be found just when You speak, and blameless when You judge." Verse 17 sums it up with "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart—these, O God, you will not despise." To heal this great wound in the hearts of men (and women) we must first acknowledge against Whom we have sinned and confess those sins. Only true love will enable us to do this. It starts with love for God.