

Sermon & Bible Study Helps

Sexual Purity - Anti-Pornography

Emphasis Passage: Job 31:1

SERMON FOUNDATION - THE WORD

Parallel Translations

King James Version

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"

New King James

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?"

New International Version

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl."

New American Standard

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

New Revised Standard

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin?"

New Living Translation

Job 31:1 "I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust upon a young woman."

New Jerusalem Bible

Job 31:1 "I had made an agreement with my eyes not to linger on any virgin."

Hebrew Text

Job 31:1

עַל-בְּתוּלָה	אֶחְבֹּנֵן	וְמָה	לְעֵינַי	כָּרַתִּי	בְרִית
at a virgin	could I stare	so how	with my eyes	I have made	A covenant
' <i>al-b^etûlāh</i>	' <i>etbônēn</i>	<i>ûmāh</i>	<i>le'ênâ</i>	<i>kārātî</i>	<i>b^erît</i>

KEY WORDS (WITH STRONG'S REFERENCE NUMBERS)

בְּרִית (*b^erît*) - noun feminine singular absolute

(1285) בְּרִית (*b^erît*) **covenant**; between nations: a treaty, alliance of friendship; between individuals: a pledge or agreement; with obligation between monarch and subjects: a constitution; between God and man: a covenant accompanied by signs, sacrifices, and a solemn oath that sealed the relationship with promises of blessing for keeping the covenant and curses for breaking it.

כָּרַחַי (*kārāṭī*) - verb qal perfect 1st person common singular

(3772) כָּרַחַ (*kārāt*) cut off a part of the body, e.g. head, hand, foreskin; cut down trees, idols; cut out, eliminate, kill; cut (make) a covenant.

אֶתְבַּוְּנֶנָּה (*’etbōnēn*) - verb hithpolel imperfect 1st person common singular

(995) בִּין (*bîn*) show oneself attentive, consider diligently. In its qal form: perceive, observe, mark, give heed to, consider.

בְּתוּלָה (*b^etūlāh*) - noun common feminine singular absolute

(1330) בְּתוּלָה (*b^etūlāh*) virgin, young woman.

SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

Job has endured several lengthy speeches by his visitors, who are attempting to counsel him on his current problem. They are convinced that Job must have committed some sin for him to be suffering in this way. This verse is part of Job’s final reply to his visitors (Job 27-31). In Chapter 31, Job selects certain accusations leveled against him by his visitors and declares his innocence in these matters.

SUGGESTED SERMON OR BIBLE STUDY OUTLINE

Introduction: Describe how the eyes begin the process toward sin. Speak of God’s greatest gifts to humanity and point to the wonder of the eyes and their ability to see so much of God’s beauty. Then note how the eyes can be used for evil rather than good—they can look with desire upon the wrong things.

Transition: We live in a time when we are being bombarded with sexual images. Advertising and fashion focus on sex. Television programs and movies are filled with sexual activity and suggestive scenes. The lure of these sexual images begins with the eyes. We see a beautiful woman, and before we know it, we are having impure thoughts about her. This danger has never been more pronounced than it is today. While it may be impossible not to notice sexually enticing images, we must learn not to linger on them and let our eyes lead us into impure sexual thoughts. This was the commitment that Job made. The question for us today, is how to follow his example. Job’s statement in Job 31:1 offers three important guidelines for avoiding impure sexual thoughts.

I. We must make a conscious binding decision not to look with lust on a woman.

Job uses the word covenant (*b^erit*) to describe this decision. A covenant requires two parties. Job enters into an agreement with his eyes as part of his body. He commits to not use his eyes in a way that is improper. Just as every part of our body can be used improperly, so can the eyes. They are a gift from God, to be used for good, not sin.

II. We must not let our eyes linger when we see someone who is sexually appealing.

Job says he made a covenant not to stare (*b^ein*) at a virgin. He knows it isn’t possible to go through life not seeing things. The question for Job and for us is what we do once we see a

sexually appealing image. Job says he has made a conscious commitment to not linger over that image and give more thought to it. James says this is where the sin begins, James 1:14-15.

III. We must respect the dignity of others.

Job recognized it was wrong to treat another person as an object for personal pleasure. He says he made a covenant not to stare at a virgin (*b^etūlāh*). A *b^etūlāh* was a young woman who had not yet had sexual relations. Job recognized a purity in such a young woman that his lust would defile. It was inappropriate to treat this young woman with anything other than absolute respect. To lust after her would have been to rob her of her dignity and treat her as something profane, rather than as a person of profound value and purity.

Conclusion: Challenge listeners to make a similar covenant with their eyes and to think of all others as people of worth and dignity rather than as objects. Encourage them to look at people as God would look at them, not as objects for personal pleasure.

SUGGESTED BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

Why is the subject of sexual purity so important today?

We are bombarded with sexual imagery today. Many people are falling victim to sexual sin. Ask the class members to describe some of the ways we are bombarded with sexual imagery. Do not let them spend too much time talking about this. Just have them identify some examples and then move on.

What does Job 31:1 tell us about the problem of sexual impurity?

Lust is nothing new. Even in Job's day, this was a problem God's people had to deal with.

How did Job deal with the problem of sexual impurity?

He made a covenant with his eyes; he committed to not let his mind turn to impure thoughts; he thought of women with dignity and value rather than as objects.

What other Bible passages address the problem of sexual impurity?

See the passages listed in this guide.

What do these passages tell us about sexual impurity?

Look at several passages briefly and identify the key element in each.

How can we put these same practices to work in our lives?

We must accept responsibility for what we look at; we must keep our thoughts submitted to Christ; we must think about all other people as people of value and treat them in our minds, just like we do in our words and deeds, as people of worth and dignity, rather than as objects.

What can we do when we feel we are being tempted to have impure sexual thoughts about someone, either in person, in pictures, or over the internet?

Stop looking; get away from that environment; focus our minds on pure thoughts; ask God to fill us with His Spirit; remind ourselves to treat the other person with dignity.

HELPFUL POINTS TO SHARE

Key principles for dealing with impure thoughts and behaviors

When we stray from God's will for us, Jesus keeps praying for us and protects us as we cry out to Him. (Luke 22:31-32)

Though we have sinned sexually and in other ways, Jesus has paid the price for our sins, and now we can experience victory over lust. (Ephesians 5:3)

To effectively proclaim God's love and win others to Christ, we must be sexually pure. (1 Peter 2:9-11)

The more I put on Christ, the less lust will overpower me; the more I reckon myself dead to sin, the more I will be the man God wants me to be. (Romans 6:9-12)

Conscious dependence on God's promises protects us from our enemy's attacks and brings us moral victory. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

To be pure in thought and behavior, we must hide the truths of God's Word in our hearts by memorizing key Scriptures and obeying them. (Psalm 119:9,11)

Fellow strugglers working together and staying in close communication with God and each other can help one another stand strong in the battle for sexual purity. (Ephesians 4:9,10,12)

Each man must develop a sexual purity battle plan, recognizing the times and situations when he is particularly vulnerable, then exercise that plan with vigilance and perseverance. (Isaiah 32:8)

Only as we submit to God and resist the Devil, relying on Christ, not ourselves, to make us victorious, will we be sexually pure. (James 4:7-8)

Hiding beneath past wounds and present emotional pain makes us vulnerable to sexual impurity; but as we take refuge in God, we can win the battle. (Psalm 62:8)

To experience sexual purity, we must exercise self-discipline, denying ourselves sinful indulgence, and choosing again and again to do what is right, with God's help. (2 Timothy 2:20-22)

Because God loves us, He disciplines us when we sin, to make us more like Christ. (Hebrews 12:5-7)

If men are to be sexually pure, they must have a network of others (including their spouses) who will hold them accountable and will call them to remain faithful and true to God. (James 5:16)

No matter what moral failures we have suffered, no matter how hard we've fallen, God wants to forgive us and make us whole and useful and victorious. (Lamentations 3:22-23)

(Excerpted from Robert Daniels, *The War Within: Gaining Victory in the Battle for Sexual Purity* (Wheaton: Crossway Publishers, 1997).

HELPFUL SCRIPTURE

Bible verses to help people address the problem of sexual impurity

1 Chronicles 28:9; Psalm 101:3; Psalm 119:9; Matthew 5:27; Mark 7:21; Romans 8:6; Romans 12:1; Romans 13:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:1; Ephesians 4:17; Colossians 3:5; 1 Thessalonians 5:22; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Peter 2:11; 1 John 2:16