

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Studies on
MORAL ISSUES

**#2 - Decisions About Sexual
Immorality**

- 1 -- Promiscuity
- 2 -- Fornication
- 3 -- Adultery
- 4 -- Live-in Situation
- 5 -- Enticing of Children
- 6 -- Restraints Towards Righteousness

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Lesson One

"Promiscuity (Modest Dress)"

We have previously pointed out that mankind needs a dependable standard by which to make his moral decisions. In most instances, man's judgments in these matters have been greatly affected by his indulgence in sin. So, when it comes to a question of morality, we must let God's Word be the supreme authority in these matters. This would, obviously, include our study in this lesson on "Promiscuity" or "Modest Dress." God helps us in our decision-making process by giving us general statements or terms that identifies the sinful activity and/or general principles by which to identify that which is wrong—and at times, gives us examples in the Bible to help illustrate the matter.

General Command

When it comes to the matter of Promiscuity or Modest Dress, God has given us a "general" command that we want to look at first.

1 Tim. 2:9-10

The Greek word "kosmos" can be translated "orderly," "well-arranged," "decent," or "modest." The English word "modest" carries with it the idea of "that which is appropriate."

Propriety—fitting, becoming, suitable, comely, decent.

Moderation—Properness, correct conduct, not over-done.

Then, he adds "*which is proper for women professing godliness...*" It is obvious that much is left to the judgment of the woman about how she dresses or conducts herself from this general command. God did not specify the lengths, materials, or other details about the apparel of His children. However, this is not all that God has to say on this matter. He has also given some examples, as well as some general principles that help to serve as guidelines on this matter!

Bible Example

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the garden, they were unclothed (naked) and without shame. When they rebelled against God's command in the eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—they immediately realized that they were naked and needed to have some clothing (Gen. 3:7). They made "loin covering" out of fig leaves; but, God made them garments of skin to clothe them (3:21).

Because of the shame, it was natural to want to cover up. God did not tell them to take off their leaf-aprons so as to "recapture their innocence," but rather provided them with proper covering.

General Principles

There are several principles that would be involved in helping to decide about this matter of proper dress and/or conduct.

1. A Christian's body belongs to God and not to us! Our body is the "*temple of God*" (1 Cor. 6:19). We should therefore dress or conduct ourselves in a way that glorifies God (1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31).

2. How others are affected! We do not live to ourselves, but live in the midst of people. Therefore, when we are in the midst of others, we should dress or conduct ourselves in a way that does not affect them negatively. (1 Cor. 14:13, 21; 1 Cor. 10:32-33). We are constantly observed and evaluated by those around us (2 Cor. 3:2). We can make a positive or negative impression by how we dress that can permanently influence the observer. One can negatively affect an individual by inciting sinful lust (Matt. 5:28) by the way they dress (Col. 3:5-6). The negative influence of bodily exposure is clearly exemplified by David with Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:2ff). On the other hand, one can positively influence others so that they will appreciate the church and its standards by dressing decently.

3. We must resist the influence of the world! We are not to give in to the world's standards of dress and conduct (Rom. 12:1-2; Jas. 4:4). God holds us to a higher and purer standard than the world does (1 Pet. 1:14-15; 2:9). We are, in reality, to set the standards for the world, not vice versa (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15).

4. Sowing and Reaping! Whatever we sow, we will reap! (Gal. 6:7-8). If one dresses in a provocative manner, they may invite unwanted attention and even sexual assault (Eccl. 1:8). But if we dress by the world's standards and dress immodestly, we will reap the consequence of such (Rom. 8:5-8; Gal. 5:19-21). If we sow to the Spirit, there are great rewards for such living (Rom. 8:12-17).

The Challenge of Christian Women

The world is in rebellion against God. When it comes to clothing, do you expect them to suggest that which is modest or that which is immodest? When their clothes are advertised as "daring," "sexy," "naughty," and "slightly wicked," are you surprised? But more important, do you go out and buy such? Is such clothing a legitimate consideration when they are advertised as such? God tells older Christian women to "*Train the young women to love their husbands, to*

love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." (Tit. 2:4-5). To be discreet and chaste are important words in this context in regards to our study. Women must make a decision about such things as "short shorts," "bikinis," "halter tops," "short skirts," "low necklines," and a long list of things that could be given. Their decisions must reflect "modesty," "propriety," "moderation," "and women professing godliness."

While the Scriptures primarily speak about women in regards to dress or conduct—the same principles apply to the men. When a man parades his body to express his "sexiness" and a woman uses her indecency as a sexual come-on—what is the difference?

Concluding Thoughts

While much more could be said and probably should be said, the above thoughts should be helpful for both men and women to decide how they should dress and conduct themselves before God and man.

Ultimately, the issue of dress and whether one adheres to the guidelines provided in the Bible or not **is a matter of the heart!** (Lk. 6:45). If one loves God and wants to impress Him, they will think about what they are wearing, and dressing appropriately is not a problem. However, if one does not care so much about God and is more determined to impress the world—then, their dress will certainly reflect such, no matter what the Bible says. **Now, what does your dress code say about your heart?**

Questions for Discussion

1. How would you define Modest Apparel?

2. Does the way one dresses identify one's character? Explain your answer.

3. How knowledgeable is a male of the effect of immodest dress?

4. How knowledgeable is a female of the effect of immodest dress?

5. How knowledgeable are young men and women of the effect of immodest dress?

6. What responsibility does a Christian home have in regards to teaching on this subject?

7. What is the purpose of dress designers?

8. What does Proverb say about immodest dress and the immodest woman?
Prov. 6:23-26—

Prov. 6:27-35—

Prov. 7:1-27--

Lesson Two

"Fornication"

God created a man and a woman and brought them together to be joined to one another as "husband" and "wife" in what is called a "marriage." This was God's doing, not man's! (Matt. 19:4-6). Our sexuality (male and female) is a gift from God and not something to be ashamed of in a marital relationship (Heb. 13:4). It is when the sexual activity takes place outside of marriage that it is called "SIN!" **Fornication** is our English word that we generally use to denote this "illicit" activity or "sexual permissiveness!" Some of our later English Versions use the expression "sexual immorality" instead of the old word "fornication." There are all kinds of "sexual immoralities" or "perverted sexual immoralities" that we will be studying about in Book #2 and Book #3 on Moral Issues. We are using the word "fornication" to indicate sinful sexual activity outside of the marital relationship. Because the **desire** for **sexual activity** is built into us by God, it is important that we restrain from such until we are married and are able to engage in such activity without shame or guilt. Any sexual activity before marriage or outside of marriage with anyone other than one's marriage partner is condemned by God.

1 Cor. 6:18 _____

1 Cor. 6:9-10 _____

Gal. 5:19, 21 _____

Eph. 5:3 _____

Col. 3:5 _____

1 Thess. 4:3 _____

Major Problems in Our Society

We are facing today at least three major problems in our society: **Divorce, Unwed Mothers, and Abortion.** All three of these problems stem from a common source—"fornication" or "illicit sex" or "sexual immorality!" If we could stop illicit sex, we could rid our society of these three major problems! We could save marriages and save lives—but even more, we could save an awful lot of **MONEY!** Our society has gone about these

problems in the wrong way; and now, churches who once preached the Bible truths on such are condoning or keeping quiet about sin in their midst. Thus, the problems will only get worse and our children and grand-children will be greatly affected by such unless we do some strong teaching and persuading on this topic!

Intensification of this Problem!

Many things contribute to the problem of "illicit sex" or "sexual permissiveness."

1. **Liberal Theologians** that advocate that the Bible is not really the inspired Word of God, and thus, AUTHORITATIVE!
2. **Situation Ethics** has helped to blur the lines between Sin and Righteousness. Love is promoted as the determining factor of wrong. If the act was motivated out of love, it is okay!
3. **Modern Art, Music, and Drama** have been brought into our homes by radio, television, and the print media, etc., that encourages sexual promiscuity in many subtle ways!
4. **The philosophy of hedonism and humanism** have also of late added their part to the downward spiral of immorality in our midst.
5. **A lack of strong teaching by the Lord's Church** has not helped the situation either.

All of the above (and possibly more) has helped to produce a society that looks with tolerance and even approval on **Adultery, Fornication, Pornography, easy Divorce, serial Marriages, and all the vile forms of Homosexuality and bestiality, etc.** Thus, young people find approval for promiscuity in the consent of society and the public media. And.....an overpowering desire for sexual activity is thus multiplied in strength as constraints are taken away.

Mark 7:21-23 _____

Finding a Solution!

If we do not find a solution to this problem, our society will only go deeper into unrighteousness. Will you look at and evaluate the following thoughts as some means of trying to help correct the situation we are in as a nation. Some drastic changes need to be called for and put into action by people who are strong, but concerned for the welfare of others.

1. **Stronger Homes.** As goes the home, so goes the nation! God's Word gives us the solution to stronger homes if we would only listen. Young people need a home where there are adult role models of a life committed to Christ.
2. **Stronger Churches.** Pulpits, Members, and Leaders who will expose and condemn sin, but who can also show compassion and the grace of forgiveness for those who have been caught up in sin.
3. **Stronger Youth Programs.** Our youth need to have association with one another in activities that are good and uplifting. Also, coupled with this—a strong appeal to give their lives to God. One of the great defenses against the terrible temptations of the flesh is to be found in a daily walk with God.
4. **Stronger Nation.** We need public officials who will take their blinders off and see the degrading of a great nation and strive to enact laws that will help to bring us back to a more moral and ethical people.

Concluding Thoughts

While we cannot stop or put an end to the sexual drive and desires within our minds and bodies, we can strive to exercise self-control over all of our desires and keep them from destroying us or causing us to be lost eternally. Those who practice such things as "fornication" or "illicit sexual activity" cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Those who have been guilty can be forgiven if they will turn from their sinful activities and turn to obedience to God.

Questions for Discussion

- 1. In what sense is our sexuality a gift from God?**

- 2. Is a strong desire for sexual activity a sin?**

- 3. What would be better terms to identify the sin of fornication?**

- 4. What are three major problems that come out of sexual promiscuity?**

- 5. What has caused the changes in attitude about fornication in our nation?**

- 6. What are some possible solutions to sexual promiscuity?**

- 7. If people can be forgiven of illicit sexual activity; then, why be so concerned about it?**

- 8. What is a major stumblingblock to our being forgiven by God of sexual promiscuity?**

Lesson Three

"Adultery"

In the previous study on "fornication" or "sexual immorality" we mentioned that sexual activity can only be engaged in correctly in an acceptable marriage before God. Outside of marriage it is called sin and is condemned by God! Sexual activity with anyone else but your wife is looked upon as illicit or wrong (sinful). However, when a person puts away (divorces) their mate and marries another; then, a different term is used to identify this sinful activity—ADULTERY. Even though the person is having sexual activity with his or her wife, it is wrong, sinful, or illicit! Why? Because God does not sanction such a marriage relationship nor the sexual activity that is involved!

Exceptions to the Rule!

There are two exceptions in the New Testament to a second marriage being sinful.

Rom. 7:1-3 _____

Matt. 19:9 _____

All other second marriages are sinful (adulterous). As long as the two continue in this second marriage, they are guilty of Adultery. The first marriage of a couple is right in the sight of God; but, a second marriage is called Adultery (sinful, wrong, illicit) unless one of the two exceptions are met. The consequences of continuing in adultery are plainly stated:

1 Cor. 6:9-10 _____

Gal. 5:19, 21 _____

Heb. 13:4 _____

Jas. 4:4 _____

What the Bible says and doesn't say!

1. The Bible does say that *"marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled."* The Bible does not say that *"fornicators and adulterers"* are honorable and the bed undefiled! (Heb. 13:4)
2. The Bible does not say that *"adulterers"* can enter the Kingdom of God (the Church). But the Bible does say that those who *"repent... and are baptized"* can receive remission of sins and be added to the Church. (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Acts 2:38, 47). It says that *"such were some of you."* They were no longer an adulterer.
3. The Bible does not say *"If you are divorced, you will not sin if you marry."* But it does say *"Whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery."* (Matt. 19:9).
4. The Bible does not teach *"every man and woman should be married."* It does teach that some should not marry because of circumstances or that it would be sinful (1 Cor. 7:2; Rom. 7:3; 1 Cor. 7:11; 1 Cor. 7:26-28; 1 Cor. 7:39; Matt. 14:4).

Strong Warnings against

The Bible (both Old and New Testaments) has some strong warnings against the sins of "fornication" and "adultery." *"Whoso commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding: he that does it destroys his own soul."* (Prov. 6:32). The reasons should be obvious! These sins strike at the very foundation of the home, the country, the church, and the salvation of souls! There is a grave danger of shutting our eyes to the deep effects of sexual immorality that has already taken a large toll. Ignorance of Bible teaching, a "don't care attitude," and a selfish, indulgent outlook is fast taking us down the road of destruction. Just like the Roman Empire, we will not be destroyed as a nation by another nation; but, we will destroy ourselves from within.

Four Ways to Commit Sexual Immorality

1. **Spiritual Immorality.** This deals with the Christian's lack of faithfulness to Christ.

2 Cor. 11:2 _____

Jas. 4:4 _____

The Christian who continues to love the world and/or wants to hold on to false doctrines or teachings is being spiritually unfaithful to Christ!

2. Mental sexual immorality. This immorality can be committed without any other person (including the one who has prompted evil thoughts) ever knowing about it. Unless the thoughts are expressed in words or lead to overt actions, only God and the guilty one will know of the sin.

Matt. 5:28 _____

Prov. 6:25 _____

2 Cor. 10:5 _____

Beware of going to extreme positions in regards to this concept.

3. The Act of sexual immorality. God designed marriage of a man and a woman in which the sexual union can be engaged in without sin or guilt. But the same act outside of marriage is said to be immoral.

1 Cor. 7:1-2 _____

Heb. 13:4 _____

There is no exception to this rule! Any premarital or extramarital sexual act is sinful!

4. The State of sexual immorality. This sinful condition or state occurs when two people who are not marriageable in God's sight enter into a legal marriage relationship.

Matt. 5:32 _____

Matt. 19:9 _____

All sinful activity is to be repented of—turned from.

Acts 17:30 _____

Rom. 6:1-2 _____

Prov. 28:13 _____

Impure thoughts, over actions, and unscriptural unions put lives and souls in

jeopardy. All sexual immorality must be turned from.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is there a difference between "fornication" and "adultery?"

2. What are the consequences of remaining in an adulterous union?

3. Does the Bible say that an adulterer cannot become a Christian?

4. What makes a second marriage sinful?

5. Is it possible for a person to live the Christian life without being married?

6. How does a person commit "spiritual sexual immorality?"

7. How does a person commit "mental sexual immorality?"

8. What makes a person an adulterer?

9. What makes sexual activity wrong between two people?

10. Can a person continue in a sinful activity and be acceptable to God?

Lesson Four

"Live-in Situation"

A number of years ago, a leading magazine in this country asked its readers "*Are there any virgins left out there?*" They were somewhat surprised when they received a couple thousand letters from young women who said they were virgins and proud of it! These young women were not social misfits, but attractive, articulate, intelligent women who know what they want, and have simply chosen to abstain from sex until marriage. Many of them gave reasons, such as:

1. Fear of AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases;
2. Unwanted pregnancy;
3. They would not be pressured into having sex by peer pressure or media publicity;
4. Sex is too meaningful to be abused by casual relationships;
5. Or, sex loses its significance outside of the commitment of marriage.

God does not forbid sex outside of marriage because He wants to impose harsh rules and keep us from having any fun! He knows us well because He made us and wants what is best for us. It is impressive when young people have figured this out for themselves!

Unmarried Couples

In stark contrast to the above, some young people just start living together but not as husband or wife (marriage)....but as "live-ins." In fact, this condition of "co-habitation" has accelerated in the last 20-30 years. Terms are used not only for identifying the relationship, but to also justify such in the eyes of the "religious!" These unmarried couples also bring children into the world that need a stable home environment in which to grow up. There is usually no commitment to marriage nor to each other. Either can feel free to leave at any time—they are not "Locked in by a Marriage Contract!"

How does God look upon such people?

1. He condemns them. (Heb. 13:4).
2. They bring "illegitimate" children into the world. (Heb. 12:8; 1 Cor. 7:14).
3. They are in rebellion to God's Law about Marriage. (Gen. 2:24).
4. They are self-deceived about their relationship being right in the sight of God. (Prov. 16:2; 14:12).
5. Such is called immoral. (Prov. 5:18-20).

Some sad insights about "Live-in" situations:

1. Men generally do not respect their "live-in" mate. Surveys have shown that a "co-habiting" woman is 56 times more likely than a "wife" to be assaulted!
2. A recent survey showed that out of 100 "trial marriages" or "live-in" situations—only 15 became lasting "marriages!" Pretty lousy odds!
3. Those who go this route in their relationship:
 - a) Do not respect God nor His arrangement for Marriage and the home. (1 Tim. 5:8; Tit. 2:4-5; Ps. 127:3-5).
 - b) Do not have a sense of permanency. (Rom. 7:1-4).
 - c) Only a small percentage wind up getting married and staying married.

Scriptures that condemn such

1 Cor. 6:9-11 _____

1 Cor. 6:18 _____

Col. 3:5 _____

1 Cor. 10:8 _____

1 Cor. 5:9-11 _____

How do you help people in this situation?

1. They must see the need for humility before God!

Prov. 28:26 _____

Prov. 29:23 _____

Prov. 28:13 _____

Prov. 28:14 _____

Prov. 16:18 _____

2. They must realize that God knows best!

Prov. 26:12 _____

Prov. 22:4 _____

3. They need to turn to God for wisdom!

Prov. 15:29 _____

Prov. 15:32-33 _____

Concluding Thoughts

The Fall of Satan is attributed to his great pride! But since man is also a being created by God, he is susceptible to this same great evil—pride and haughtiness! Man wants to be his own "god" and to direct his life the way he prefers to go! But what he does not realize is that there are very bad and undesirable consequences to the way he wants to live (Gal. 6:7-8). We need to humble ourselves and accept God as who He is—God! Then, we can realize that it is great wisdom—not only to listen and learn from God, but to do His bidding just like He gave it!

Lesson Five

"Enticing of Children"

The sexual molesting of children is not only a breaking of the Law of the State, but it is a terrible crime against the child. We want to touch on this sexual sin briefly in this lesson. The sad thing is that so much of this goes on, but so very little is often done about it until it is too late—and the grave damage is done.

The duty of parents toward their children is more than food, clothing, and shelter! It also involves teaching, training, and **Protection** as well!

Prov. 23:13-4 _____

Eph. 6:4 _____

Bringing children into the world is a privilege that God has blessed us with; but, it has its responsibilities, challenges, and the need of protecting them until they are capable of making decisions for themselves properly. They need protection not only from physical dangers, but emotional or mental dangers, as well as spiritual dangers. Parents must be aware of these dangers! It is our duty to protect our children from all of these kinds of dangers. This protection is shown by:

1. Proper teaching and training that helps them to see the potential dangers themselves;
2. But also to help them make good decisions for themselves.

As parents, we need to be "on guard" at all times concerning the possible dangers that they may face.

1 Cor. 15:33 _____

Prov. 6:23-24 _____

A Pedophile

One of the grave dangers that children can be faced with is a Pedophile. A pedophile is an adult who has sexual desire for children or who has committed the crime of sex with a child. The Pedophile will take advantage of the ignorance of children or their curiosity to lure them into sexual activity. Children have been stolen and sold into sexual slavery to Pedophiles. This

terrible crime is often committed by a grandfather, father, or step-father, an uncle or cousin, or someone known and trusted by the family. When the news comes out into the open, it is often "swept under the rug" because of who is involved or they don't want to see them go to prison.

The Damage to Children

The extent of the damage may depend upon several factors: the length of the activity, the persons involved, or how the child feels about what has taken place. We have personally known of people who have been affected in different ways and to a lesser or greater extent than others. Some are able to come out of the problem with some effects while others are greatly affected for a longer period of time. Some times the activity is put away into the sub-conscious in a way that the person may even forget that such happened—but is still showing signs of depression or odd actions. It is believed that this may be one of the reasons for Homosexuality or Lesbianism. Sexual problems in marriage is one of the damages—probably more for the woman than for the man. The continual feelings of guilt that seemingly cannot be dealt with by the person is a definite damage to the emotional well-being of the person. The guilt is so strong that they do not feel "worthy" to be forgiven by God and become a Christian.

Two Dangerous Areas to Watch

Most parents have learned from others misfortune to watch their children when they go shopping. They should not let them out of their sight or they might be stolen or taken by a Pedophile. However, there are two other things that need to be watched carefully.

Television. There are many good things that can be said about Television:

1. It has a great potential to teach.
2. It can depict history as though it is happening again.
3. It can present major events that are taking place.
4. It can teach all kinds of subjects.
5. It can be a good source of entertainment.
6. It can open up a world of beauty, activity, and travel.
7. etc.

But, Television can also have many bad things that can be said about it:

1. It can replace the parents in the eyes of children.
2. It can influence people in the wrong direction.
3. It can present immorality as an acceptable way of life.
4. It can present a perversion of righteousness.
5. It can present the standard of the world—impure speech, immodest dress, and unrighteous acts.

6. Most of the writers for the programs have little or no "Christian" principles to guide them in their writings.
7. It can sensitize us to the wrong.

Rom. 12:2 _____

Gal. 6:10 _____

1 Tim. 2:9 _____

Television can directly or indirectly promote Pedophiles by what it shows on its programs.

The Internet. The latest dangers are connected with the internet and the avenues by which the Pedophile can promote their efforts to find children that they can deceive and persuade to allow them into their lives for their own gratification. Parents MUST get involved to block this avenue of invasion to gain their children. One thing that parents can be assured of that Pedophiles will keep trying to find ways to satisfy their sexual urges with others' children.

Concluding Thoughts

It should be obvious that we have only touched briefly on this subject. It should be pursued further by parents. The dangers are real. Pedophiles have been around for a long time and they will not soon go away! Such activity has certainly not been designed or desired by the God who made us in His image.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is sexual molesting of children is a crime!
2. Why is protection of children a duty of parents?
3. What is the value of teaching and training of children?
4. How is a child emotionally damaged by a Pedophile?
5. What is one of the dangers of bad companions?
6. What does the word "pedophile" mean?
7. What determines how much damage is done to a child by a Pedophile?
8. How does Television promote Pedophiles?
9. How does the Internet promote Pedophiles?
10. Why is the action of Pedophiles wrong?

Lesson Six

"Restraints towards Righteousness"

God rebuked the High Priest of Israel for his failure to restrain his children. Eli was generally a good High Priest and even seemed to have a good attitude when he heard God's punishment that would come upon his children (1 Sam. 3:16-18). What was his failure? His sons had so profaned the sacrifices and the assembly gatherings, that the people despised to offer sacrifices to God. God sent Samuel to warn Eli to restrain his sons (1 Sam. 2:27-29). He talked with them, but did not restrain them from their evil deeds.

What are Restraints?

They can be violent, strong, and forceful. Such is often needed because people have lost control. Some are even restrained by a "Straight-Jacket" to keep them from either hurting themselves or others. It is often the last resort. This may have been Eli's only resort and was unwilling to take it. But restraints can be also non-violent, voluntarily accepted, and even mild. Most of these are considered good and serve good purposes. Most people have a certain amount of these in their lives. There are many good restraints to help people walk in the right way. They serve their purpose, but may only be a limited one. However, the real test comes when the exterior props (restraints) are taken away; it can often bring some startling surprises. The true conditions of the heart are revealed!

Four Types of Restraints**1. Physical restraints.**

Prov. 19:18 _____

Prov. 22:15 _____

Since God advocates such, it must have a value! With some children this kind of restraint may be more necessary until they learn or grow older. However, physical restraints can back-fire if not properly administered. The child may do what he is told while at home, but look out when he is away from home. He can even put on a show of submission to parents, but totally change when he gets away. The heart needs to be affected so that when the restraints are removed, the action will still be proper.

2. Restraints of the home environment.

The home is generally one of the greatest restraining influences in our society for good. Such can and should have an impact for good on our children.

Prov. 22:6 _____

Eph. 6:4 _____

Even non-religious homes can serve as a restraining influence for good. When the restraints are removed and the heart has been affected, their actions will be the same.

3. Restraints of Associates.

1 Cor. 15:33 _____

2 Cor. 6:17 _____

Good friends and loved ones are wholesome influences for good. They make living right much easier. Again, the test will come when they are no longer there to influence us. Would we stand just as erect in righteousness by ourselves? How much do we depend upon our external restraints?

4. Restraints of Task.

1 Cor. 15:58 _____

We all know that idleness has its subtle dangers. King David found that out from the troubles he got into. Being busy has its value as a restraining influence. But sooner or later, when we are idle, the test will come—will we still do right even when the restraints are removed. Some judge people by the "greatness" of the job that he does. But it is more accurate to see what happens when the job is taken away.

Concluding Thoughts

External restraints are limited in what they can do, but needed to a greater or lesser degree by all of us. They are mostly temporary holding actions until our hearts are sufficiently grounded in God. External righteousness sooner or later will be tested and seen for what it is—a veneer! Only a change of heart can sustain righteous living.

Matt. 18:3 _____

Jn. 3:3 _____

Have our restraints led to deeper convictions and devotion to God?

Questions for Discussion

1. Why was Eli Rebuked by God?
2. What could Eli have done to restrain his sons?
3. What are two types of restraints?
4. What is the draw-back of the more forceful types of restraints?
5. What has to be accomplished that the restraints may not be able to do?
6. Does God advocate physical restraints for children?
7. How does the home environment help to restrain children?
8. Why do we have a saying that indicates that idleness is an open invitation to the Devil?
9. If restraints are not very beneficial, then why do we have them?
10. What has been a beneficial restraint in your life?

To Take Notes

