

# Ephesians 5:1-14 The Wonder, Power and Danger of Sex

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**Bible Text:** Ephesians 5:1-14  
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Our sermon this morning comes from Ephesians chapter five, continuing our study on Ephesians. And we are now leading up to Easter. We are talking about ways of life that come out of the flesh, that come out of a heart that is dissatisfied, ways of life that come out of a heart that is craving for more and how that is the opposite of and healed by a heart full of thanksgiving which is nice because we are leading up to Thanksgiving.

So please hear the Word of the Lord from Ephesians verses one through 14.

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not associate with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of the things that they do in secret. But when anything is exposed by the light, it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."<sup>1</sup>

This is the Word of God.

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<sup>1</sup> Ephesians 5:1-14

All men are like grass and all of our glory is like the flowers of the field. The grass withers and the flower fades, but not the Word of God. The Word of God stands forever.

There is a television show that many of you don't know about, but your children do. It is on MTV. MTV no longer shows music by the way. Don't be shocked by that. And it is called "Sex with Mom and Dad." And this show is about a sex counsellor of the day, Dr. Drew, who, though he is an unbeliever tends to speak sanity into our insane world. And he counseled these parents and their children who are having trouble communicating about sex.

And in this one episode a woman is dealing with her daughter and her daughter is just completely immoral and won't even practice safe sex, has just totally gone off the deep end with just different men, you know, two and three times a week and is trying to explain to her mom that her mom is old fashioned and doesn't get it and that they are bickering back and forth.

And so Dr. Drew steps in and intervenes and he says, "I want to give you an assignment. This is what I want you to do. I want you to go into separate rooms." He gives them a post it note pad and a pen. And he says, "I want you to write a factual name for every person that you have had sex with and put a post it note with that name on it somewhere on your body.

So they go off into separate rooms and the girl comes out and her body is covered with post it notes. And the mother comes out and her body is covered with post it notes.

And they look at each other and the mom bursts out into tears. And then the girl turns and looks in a mirror and bursts in tears.

And Dr. Drew asked her. He said, "How do you feel about your sexual activity now?"

And she said, "I hate it. It makes me so ashamed," she said. "And yet I am addicted to it. I feel like I am addicted to the shame."

[?] sex like that.

What makes sex different? It really is different from the other commandments in the Bible in some very interesting ways when you think about it. Every single list that says those who practice these things will not inherit eternal life, every list it says very clearly, "These people are out." You cannot be this and be in the kingdom of God. Every one of those lists includes sexual immorality. Every place in the Bible... Sex shows up in the Bible in places where you would never expect it. It seems out of place.

The apostles were written all gathered together in Jerusalem for a counsel and they were sitting there talking about whether the converted Gentiles had to keep the Old Testament laws. Did they have to be circumcised, did they have to be kosher. And they got together and they said, "No, Jesus has saved us. And all they have to have is faith in Christ."

And so they sent out this circular letter saying, “You don’t have to keep the Old Testament Jewish laws. You don’t have to keep the ceremonial laws. Just believe in Jesus and abstain from sexual immorality. Just do that.”

Just in case you were missing it. Jesus is going through the Sermon on the Mount and he gives... and he talks about basically every commandment in the Bible, you know, hate and anger and killing and stealing and coveting and he teaches us how to pray. He is telling them through the entirety of the spiritual life and he is just kind of doing it in bullet form. Just, you know, bam, bam, bam, bam. But when he gets to sex he says, “Oh, by the way. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off. If your eye is causing you to sin pluck it out.”<sup>2</sup>

He doesn’t say that about anything else. Isn’t that interesting?

Sex is different. It is different. We need to acknowledge that. Sex is different because it is so wonderful. The first thing the Bible teaches us about sex is that it is wonderful for two reasons. It is wonderful because it is a place of ultimate vulnerability and intimacy. It is wonderful because of the relationship.

Listen to the first honeymoon, how it is described. Genesis two verses 23 through 25. Adam is looking for a mate and God brings every animal on the earth to him and he spends years looking at these animals and he just kind of looks at them and goes, “Well, that’s a nice dog, Lord, but it just doesn’t get it.” The cow just wasn’t doing it for him. The bear was fun to look at, but it wasn’t doing anything for him.

And so finally God puts him to sleep and he takes a rib out of Adam and he creates a woman for her and he wakes up and he says, “Now, that’s it. That is it. This is what I am looking for.” That is actually a pretty accurate depiction of the Hebrew. “This is it. Now I get it. This is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. I understand myself now.”<sup>3</sup>

And the two came together and were one flesh.

Now that means more than sex, but it does not mean less.

And the text is ending by saying, “And the two were naked and unashamed.”<sup>4</sup>

Here I am. And they were loved.

The Bible does not even contemplate relationships without sex. It is part of the program. God has created us with a wonderful capacity for intimacy. We are built with this need for a sanctuary where I can be alone with someone and they can totally completely see me and they can see me in all of my non glory and love me anyway and love me anyway.

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<sup>2</sup> See Matthew 5:29-30

<sup>3</sup> See Genesis 2:23

<sup>4</sup> See Genesis 2:25

In this sanctuary we have all of our needs met. What is the world like? All the things that we hate about the world are met in the sanctuary of the marriage bed. We feel vulnerable in the world, but in the marriage bed we feel safety. We feel ugly in the world, but in the marriage bed we feel beautiful. We feel weak in the world, but in the marriage bed you feel powerful. We feel unwanted in the world, but in the marriage bed we feel cherished. It is a precious sanctuary to us. It is a place of worship that takes place in that sanctuary.

It is wonderful because it is a place where we are known and loved.

The Bible's euphemism for sex captures that better than anything, doesn't it? "Adam knew Eve and she conceived."<sup>5</sup>

Abraham knew Sarah and she conceived. They knew each other. They knew each other in a way that nobody else knew them and a baby was formed.

God designed sex to be a place of knowledge where two people give themselves to each other, where they know they are known. That is why sex brings such shame. That is why sexual immorality brings with it such shame.

What are you doing when you are being sexually immoral? You are revealing yourself to someone and they see you and they do not love you. They see you and they reject you. They see you and they move on. That is why it brings such shame. It is confirming all the worse things we believe about ourselves. We believe that if you knew me you would reject me. And do you know what? I reveal myself to you and you did reject me. That is why it hurts. That is why it hurts. That is why... it is because of this relational aspect of it that if you want to know how someone's marriage is doing you really only have to ask them one question.

I was talking to a very good friend of mine this weekend. We were just kind of... we had eight hours of meetings and then we had a 30 minute break while we drove to a meeting that we were already an hour late for. And so when we were in between the eight and the three hour meeting I asked him how he was doing and he was talking about he is in a new job. It is very stressful and he is gone a lot. And he says, you know, they are going through buyer's remorse. They just moved and all those kind of bad things that come with that.

And so he says, you know, "My wife and I, we love each other and the sex has never better."

And I said, "Well, then you are doing ok, aren't you?"

"We're doing ok. She loves me enough to give herself to me. I love her enough to give myself to her. We are doing ok. We are intimate."

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<sup>5</sup> See Genesis 4:1

And it is for this reason that nothing you do outside of the marriage bed can possibly be satisfying.

Single people, I want you to understand this. I haven't been single... I haven't have been married so long I forgot. And I know what it feels like to burn. But nothing you do short of sex will satisfy you.

Do you know what the best part of sex is? I am about to tell you something that is going to titillate the heck out of you. Do you know what the best part of sex is? When it is over, when it is over and you are lying next to somebody who loves you and you go to sleep.

Married people don't make out for four hours. Married people go to sleep because we are at rest, because we are at peace, because we are complete and that is the best sleep that you can get. That is why pornography can never satisfy you. Sex with your wife at longest... Well, I'm not going to go into how long it takes, but it doesn't go all night. But, people you stay up looking at pornography all night. Why? Because you always looking to be completed. You are looking for fulfillment. Maybe one more picture will get me there. It never gets you there. It couldn't possibly get you there.

Well, what is the best possible thing that could come to you if you are living in the pornographic world? The best thing that could possibly happen is if you actually got to have sex with that person that you are looking at. And you know what? Even if you did, you wouldn't be satisfied because you would want to do it again the next day and the next day because you are not created for sex. You are created for a relationship. And only a long term relationship can satisfy you. And nothing short of that can satisfy you. That is why the Bible teaches us very clearly, "Do not arouse or awaken love until it is time."

And because we do awaken love before it is time, we become calloused in our sexual immorality is shameful. And that is why we completely lost the idea of intimacy. The world wants to be rid of it.

As you read writers... I read an article in [?] magazine not too long of a young woman, 25 year old, terribly immoral and she is just throwing scorn on the idea that sex is anything intimate. It is just for pleasure. The world wants to be rid of it. You can see that the most clearly by looking at the euphemisms for it.

Now, I know none of you are... speak badly or ever use bad language, but listen to your unbeliever friends? What do they say? They got a parking ticket they didn't think they deserved. They say, "Ah, screwed." Does that mean the policeman and I just had an intimate experience? They knew me?

Someone cuts you off, cuts off an unbeliever because none of you speak this way, but someone cuts off an unbeliever in traffic and they yell, "FU." Are they saying, "Come here, let me know you. I want to be intimate. I want to give myself to you"?

If we have been exploited, if we have been hurt, if we have been cheated we use a euphemism that describes sex. Isn't that terrible? That is how far sex is fallen.

In my generation in the 80s one of the movies that kind of depicted our attitude towards sex was *Fast Times from Ridgemont High*. And there is this scene where they are walking through the mall and one girl, Phoebe Cates says to the other girl, "It is no big deal. It is just sex. That is what we want." We wanted sex to become no big deal. And by this time it has become even a step lower. Not only is it no big deal, it is actually not even positive.

Sex is wonderful the Bible teaches because it is intimate. And sex is wonderful because it is pleasurable. That wasn't an accident.

How does the Bible describe it? Proverbs five. "Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times and always be intoxicated with her love."<sup>6</sup>

It is pleasurable. You should enjoy it. I mean think about this for a second. God made sex. If you are in this room I am assuming you believe there is a creator. If you don't believe there is a creator then I understand that you have already tuned out. Thank you for hanging in there and not leaving yet.

But if you believe there is a creator then ask yourself this. All right. God is trying to create sex, right? He is thinking to himself. All right. Adam and Eve, they need to eat. Well, he could have just given them muck. But he didn't? He gave them chocolate. He gave them steak and he gave them taste buds and the sense of smell so that they could enjoy it.

He is thinking to himself, Adam and Eve, I guess they need to breathe. He could have just put holes in them, gills and let them take in air. But instead he gave them noses and he gave them rose petals to smell and perfume.

The need to be able to feel so they don't put their hand in fire and just kind of leave it there. But he had to give us the ability to feel, but he didn't have to connect our sensory organs, skin to these nerve endings so that if when we touch, are touched in certain places endorphins fire in our brains and it feels good.

God didn't get finished creating us and have a bunch of nerve endings left over and go, "I don't know, what am I going to do with these? I'll throw them down there. Who knows? They'll never get used."

It wasn't an accident. It was not an accident. He wants us to enjoy it. He could have made sex painful. He could have said to Adam, "Come here. You all are going to need to have babies and so once a year I want you to do this. Sorry, I couldn't think of a better

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<sup>6</sup> See Proverbs 5:18-19

plan. Go stick your fingers up her nose and I'll let you implant something in there. It is going to hurt and be miserable, but you have got to do it to have them babies."

He made it wonderful. He made it wonderful on purpose because he is a good God who enjoys us. That is important for us to understand. He actually designed us so that when we are in the act of sex our brains secrete a hormone called opioid and is a hormone that is so strong it has been compared in its effects to heroine.

Because of that it feels euphoric and because of that sex is addictive. Because of that we cannot—listen to this those of you who are still dating—you cannot use sex to pick out the one God intends you to marry because you are hard wired to respond certain ways to certain touches and if you think, "This is going to be the one because it feels so good." I want you to know you will feel that way no matter who it is. That is the way God designed you to respond.

He also designed you to respond with your brain before you gave yourself away to somebody. You are hard wired to act that way and it is addictive. It feels good and if you just get the feeling without the relationship you steadily destroy yourself. God created sex good because it is intimate and because it is pleasurable. And because it is so good, it is powerful. It is powerful. It resonates very deeply within us.

I want you to understand this. Genesis one says this. God got together with... The Father got together with the Son and the Holy Spirit. The three are one. The three get together and they say, "Let us make man in our image, male and female after his image."<sup>7</sup>

What does that mean? The fulness of God's image is only realized in a marriage, in a couple, male and female. He created them in his image after his likeness. And then the two came together in Genesis two and it says this, that man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two will become one.<sup>8</sup>

Now that language doesn't resonate with you, but it would if you were Jewish because if you were a Jew three times a day you would pray, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."<sup>9</sup> And when a man and woman are in the love embrace that God has created them to enjoy, they are the most godlike they will ever be.

It is powerful that resonates deeply within you. You feel complete. That is what you were created for. That is a powerful thing and puts a button within your brain that changes everything. It makes sex powerful.

And the problem with our culture is this. They know that it is powerful and they know how to press that button.

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<sup>7</sup> See Genesis 1:26-27

<sup>8</sup> See Genesis 2:24

<sup>9</sup> Deuteronomy 6:4

Why is it that when Cadillac is trying to sell an Escalade and they know that gas is four dollars a gallon and nobody with half a brain in their head is going to buy a car that gets 10 miles to the gallon the highway, so they have got to do something desperate to sell this car, what do they do? They put a sexy redhead behind the wheel. And she says, "The only thing that matters is when you turn your car on, does it return the favor?"

Why are they doing that? Because so women will drive it. Of course not, no woman buys those things. So that men will have that button pushed in their brain. And it works. That's why sex sells everything from Doritos to *Sports Illustrated* because it works. You will remember it. It is pressing that button.

And we have become absolutely, 100% desensitized to having that button pushed. And that is why I am going to ask you to do something this week. Next week I am going to talk to you about how much sexual immorality is too much, how much greed is too much. Where is the line?

You are not ready to have that conversation with me yet. You are not ready to have that conversation with me yet because you are desensitized to the question. Before we can have this conversation I need you to do something. I need you to go home this week and unplug your television and unplug your internet. I need you to spend a whole week without having that button pushed. I need you to reboot the hard drive inside your brain so that the only... if you are married the only person you see in your underwear... in her underwear this week I want to be your spouse. I need you to have that button reset so that we can talk about it. I need you to do that for me.

Because sex is powerful it changes things. There was a movie out last year by yet another alien that comes to eat New York. It is called *Cloverfield* and the... kind of the story under the story which is kind of dumb, but it was told in a neat way so you watch it is about this guy who risks, literally... You know he is going to die. Sorry to ruin it for you, but everybody dies. He is going to die because he cannot leave this girl alone at home in her apartment. Why can't he? Because they have had sex. She is not just a friend anymore. He is going to die for her now because they slept with each other.

Sex changes relationships. It changes everything. God made sex wonderful and therefore sex is powerful. The power comes out in different ways. It comes out in a lot of... in effects and changes.

Well, therefore what? When you have something that is wonderful that you crave and we were talking a minute ago about how sex is different? Think of it this way. How many sins did you wake up this morning wanting to commit? Did you wake up this morning just dying to steal? Did you wake up this morning going, "I need to kill. Man, I haven't killed in a week. I need something to kill"? Do you remember how to felt to wake up in the morning wanting to have sex?



It's different, isn't it? It is hard wired into us. When you have something that is hard wired into you that is wonderful and powerful, it becomes very dangerous. It becomes very dangerous. Think of it like electricity.

Do I like electricity? Oh, yeah, man. I love it. I hate walking around in the dark. I love air conditioning. It is the most important... There is no question in my mind what is the most important appliance in the house. The refrigerator and the air conditioner. If one goes out you can get the other one hyped up and you'll fix it, right?

But, you know, electricity is great. It is wonderful and it is powerful and it does not hate me. It wasn't a bad thing for my uncle either. My Uncle Richard was a well driller. And Uncle Richard needed to go down into a well one day and so he is standing in the back of a truck backing up so he can lower the ladder that is attached to that truck into the well. And he had his hands on that aluminum ladder. And he backed under a power line and tens of thousands of volts of electricity went through Uncle Richard's body, melted the soles of his boots to the truck and killed him immediately.

Electricity didn't hate Uncle Richard, but it killed him. Electricity is not evil, but it can kill.

Sexual immorality is a good... Let's take that out of the tape, won't we? Sexual immorality is a good thing. I didn't say that. Sex is a good, wonderful and powerful thing and it can destroy. It can destroy. That is why Jesus warns us.

"You have heard it said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."<sup>10</sup> "If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. For it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell."<sup>11</sup> "And if your right hand causes you to sin cut it off and cast it from you for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish than for your whole body to be cast into hell."<sup>12</sup>

Sin reaches... sexual sin reaches down and grabs a hold of a created desire and it gives it a hold on you. It makes it powerful. And it has effects on us. It effects our relationships. The only safe context... Powerful things need to be kept in the right context. The only safe context for sex is in a committed relationship where you know this person loves you and will be with you forever. That is why the consequences of sex and sexual immorality outside of that relationship are fierce. A man loses respect for the girl who gives away her virginity.

I was counseling one young man, he was a college student, a sweet little youth group president kind of boy. And he could not stop sleeping with his girlfriend. And I said,

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<sup>10</sup> See Matthew 5:27

<sup>11</sup> See Matthew 5:29

<sup>12</sup> See Matthew 5:30

“Well, what does Satan whisper in your ear when you decide that you are going to go over there and do that?”

And he said, “Satan tells me I have a slut for a girl friend. I might as well use her.”

Totally lost his respect for her.

It happens in the Bible. In 2 Samuel 13 there is this disgusting story of a brother Amnon who tricks his sister into being alone with him and he forces himself on her. And it says this. It says, “After he had violated that Amnon hated her with a great hatred. And the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And he said, “Get up and go away.”<sup>13</sup>

You lose respect and you begin to hate the person you claim that you love.

Syracuse University did a study a few years ago and they surveyed men on why they choose to live with their girlfriend instead of actually marrying her. The number one, by far and away, the number one response was this. “We cohabit instead of getting married because I am still waiting for my true love.”

Don't you think those guys were glad it was a confidential test? Don't you think those girls would have been interested in that? A girl loses respect and trust in a husband who displays no self control. “Why can't I trust you now when you didn't prove that you were trustworthy then?”

Sex is dangerous not only in immorality. It is dangerous loneliness and addiction. The greatest temptation for us right now is how easy it is to get access to sexuality, to get that button pushed by something outside of a relationship.

Pornographic movies alone, pornographic discs alone turned a profit of six billion dollars last year, far and away the most profitable industry in our country is the pornography and sex industry. There are over 20,000 sex clubs, strip joints in this country. There are some 10,000 new pornographic websites go up weekly. It is far and away the most addictive and profitable industry in our country.

Why is that? It is because it cannot satisfy.

I have told you probably too much about my friend who was a cocaine addict. But I asked him one day. I said, “Well, how does it... how long does a cocaine high last.”

He said, “Well, it depends on how much you take.” He said, “You know, about an hour.” He said, “Then you feel awful, just terrible.”

I said, “Really? Is there a kind of time of remorse then? Do you think, ‘Ah, I'm never going to do that again’?”

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<sup>13</sup> See 2 Samuel 13:15

He looked at me and said, “Are you crazy? Of course not. All you can think is, ‘Man I got to get more. I got to get more.’”

That is what sin does to you. When you lose the high, the euphoric high of self gratification in pornography you don’t think, “I’m never going to do that again.” You think, “I’ve got to get more. I need a better picture. I need something else to look at.”

And it is affecting you, men. You think it is not. You think you are not hurting anybody. And I just... I wish I could sit down with you. I wish I could introduce you to my good friend... If RUF had had officers he would have been the president of RUF at Vanderbilt, never spent any time in his life outside of a church. He confided to me three years after he was married he confided to me. “I can no longer get an erection around my wife. The only thing that gets me aroused is pornography.”

It broke up his marriage. It broke him up. It is affecting you. It is not a victimless crime. You are the victim. Your wife is the victim. Your future children are the victims.

Sex is powerful. It affects our relationships. It effects us and that is why sexual abuse is so deeply affecting. And I have got to talk about that just briefly enough to say this. There is nothing that will bend you more than having a family member or a trusted person affect you, touch you sexually when you were a child. If you have experienced that I know you are surrounded by shame and denial and you want to say it hasn’t really hurt you. And I am begging you, please come to me and tell me. Every time I have ever given this talk somebody has come to me and told me. Somebody in this room needs to come to me and tell me. And we need to help you. You can be healed, but you won’t be if you are alone.

So what do we do? Sex is great. Sexual immorality is equally bad. We are all stuck in it in one level or not. We are all tempted by it daily whether we like it or not. What do we do? How do we get out of it?

The first thing we do is we have to fill this need for intimacy with something that is healthy. Look at Ephesians five verse two. I would if my Bible weren’t shut. Oh, it was in the announcements, bulletin. Look at the bulletin. What does verse two say? “Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”<sup>14</sup>

What do we do? The first step that you have to do is you have to understand this. Yes, you are created with a need, but that need is greatly and terribly exacerbated by sin. And the only way to deal with that need completely and wholly is to have this vast void within you filled. And the only thing that is going to fill it is the love that you find in Christ.

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<sup>14</sup> Ephesians 5:2

Isn't that a fascinating conversation we read about in the call to worship? It is the most confusing conversation in the entire Bible and the Bible is confusing. I don't care what you say.

But I mean think about this. Jesus is sitting at a well. He talks to this woman. The woman comes up to him and he says, "Can I get a drink of water?"

And she says, "Why are you talking to me? Men don't talk to women. Jews don't talk to Samaritans. Why are you talking to me?"

And he said, "If you knew who I was you would asking me for a drink."

She said, "How can you get a drink? You haven't even got a bucket."

And he says, "Well, you see, if I drink the water you give me out of this well I am just going to get thirsty again in a few minutes. You drink my water you will never be thirsty again.

And the first thing that kind of makes sense. She looks at him and goes, "Well, give me some of that water. I'm tired of coming here every day."

And then he says the thing that obviously flows out of that conversation about buckets and water. He says, "Well, go call your husband."

And he puts his finger on something because she quickly covers up, "I don't have a husband."

"Well, you're right. You have had five husbands. The man you are living with now is not your husband."

"You have spoken truly."<sup>15</sup>

What is he saying? He is saying there is a deep craving, an urge within you that you are filling with sexual immorality after sexual immorality and none of them fill you. And if you would just drink what I have to offer, if you would just let me satisfy you then you wouldn't have to keep being immoral, trying to satisfy that need.

And we have to understand that especially when it comes to this sin, when it comes to any sin, but especially when it comes to this sin it is as if we are in a boat out in the middle of the ocean and all around us is water and we are hot and the water that is around us is poisoned. And if we drink from it, it will make us sick and it will dehydrate us and ultimately kill us. But we are thirsty and it looks good. And all we can do is turn our buckets toward the heavens and drink daily what God gives us.

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<sup>15</sup> See John 4.

And I am begging you. You are trapped in sexual immorality and you can't get out of it. When was the last time you prayed, you honestly... Not some, "Now I lay me down to sleep," talked to Jesus? When was the last time you filled yourself with the gospel?

If you are struggling with sexual immorality and you just can't get away from it, here is a tip. Turn the computer off and open your Bible.

You just can't get away from it? Get rid of cable and open your Bible.

If you are unwilling to do that at least admit that you are unwilling to do that and receive grace there.

You want to know the best time to get grace is? Is when you feel terribly guilty after being sexually immoral. And right then, don't run from God. Right then go to Ephesians two and say, "When I was dead in my trespasses and sins God, because of the love with which he loved me, while I was still dead made me alive together with Christ."

He loves you right then, covered with shame and guilt and embarrassed. Receive his love right then.

When you go off to that computer and you say that you are just going to go do email and you know you are going to look at pornography take Jesus with you. Invite him with you. Receive God's love then. Receive it then.

We have to repent. We have to fill ourselves with Christ. And then we have to repent.

What do the verses chapter five verse three and verse 11 say? Verse three says this. "Sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper for the saints."<sup>16</sup>

In verse 11, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."<sup>17</sup>

We have to do what is called radical repentance. Some of you today, while you are feeling strong, after you come to this table and you have strength you need to look at a friend and say, "Come to my house. Destroy my pornography and put a filter on my computer. Or, better yet, take my computer away. I don't really need it."

You need to do that at a time of strength. You will not do it tomorrow. You need to destroy what ensnares you.

What does Jesus say? Pluck your eye out. Cut your hand off. And usually we are quick to say, "He doesn't mean it. He doesn't really mean pluck your eyes out." I am not really

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<sup>16</sup> See Ephesians 5:3

<sup>17</sup> Ephesians 5:11

worried about you all coming to church with seeing eye dogs next week. I don't think you think he means that.

What does he mean? He means, "I don't care what you have to give up. I don't care how bad it hurts to break up with that guy. I don't care how bad you would be debilitated by giving up that cell phone that has internet access. I don't care how bad it would debilitate you. Cut it off."

I know it hurts. You know, but isn't it frustrating to have a conversation with people?

I was talking with a guy one day and talking about sexual immorality and whether or not he was really a Christian and he said, "Well, this all sounds good now, you know. We are in the cafeteria. But my girl friend is coming this weekend and I know no matter how hard I try we are going to end up being immoral."

I said, "Really? No matter how hard you try."

"I'm going to try hard."

"Really? Where are you planning for her to sleep?"

"Well, in my apartment."

"That's trying hard."

Isn't that trying hard? Where do you draw the line? Where do you begin repenting? Destroy it. Cut off the relationships. Cut off the access.

And, finally, confess your sins. Look at how what... What does Paul say the answer is?

Verse seven. "Do not become partners with them. For at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light. For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true. And try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them."<sup>18</sup>

Sin and shame grow in darkness. And as long as you... If you be in God we are going to handle it. As long as it is just you, it will grow. And the second you bring it into the light you realize just like they boogeyman in the closet, it wasn't nearly as big as you thought it was. And the light kills it.

But you are going to have to kill something first. You are going to have to kill your pride. You are going to have to be willing to say, "I am not what I pretend to be."

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<sup>18</sup> See Ephesians 5:7-11

It is your pride that keeps you addicted. It is not the power of the sin even though it is powerful. It is your unwillingness to let anybody know. And as long as your pride is there keeping anybody from knowing, you will remain addicted.

When you let us know, when you let us pray for you and care for you, then and only then the Lord will heal you.

I want to talk to you just briefly, give you one final illustration. It's a long sermon. I knew it was going to be. But some of us get so distraught by sexual immorality. I have struggled with it my entire life. And you begin to think there is just nothing you can do. You are never going to win.

And for those of you who believe that I want to remind you of something that happened on Tuesday. And you were probably so angry about it like many of us were that you didn't even rejoice about it. But I want you to recognize something.

My son was asking me why Tuesday, why the election was one of the biggest events in world history. And I told him this. I said, "Son, do you know how black people got to this country? White people went and found them as children and teenagers and threw nets over them and beat them and stacked them in boats and made them lie flat in their own urine and feces bringing them out maybe for 30 minutes a day and they were beaten and raped and then when they got here they were continually beaten and raped and enslaved."

And those same white faces that were doing those evil atrocious things to them, some of those white faces preached the gospel to them. Some of them believed it. And the church became the center of the black community. And when they were alone they would sing spirituals and they would pray for hours and when the Lord delivered them from slavery they thought they believed it was the new Exodus. And yet they found that the racism that came after slavery maybe was worse than the racism before and they endured lynchings and beatings and they were hated. And they kept going to church.

And without shedding a drop of blood, without shedding a drop of blood one of the greatest revolutions I would say in world history is that black people have gone from that to the White House without a violent coup. And the first thing... The networks cut away from it immediately so we couldn't hear what was said. But the first thing that was said from the stage in Chicago on Tuesday night was, "Let us pray."

We heard that. And it was a victory for the gospel. And one writer that I read this week just summed up how in the world could this happen? How could we have come so far? And he finished it by quoting the words from *Amazing Grace*. "How sweet the sound..." A song written by a slave trader who was converted and gave his life to ending the slave trade.

If the gospel can do that, if the gospel can overcome slavery and racism and hatred for centuries your porn issue just doesn't seem like that big of a deal.

There is nothing that cannot be overcome. Let us go to the overcomer and pray.

*Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would free us. Father, we are the slaves. We are slaves to our idolatry. We are slaves to our wealth. We are slaves to our immorality. Will you free us? Will you heal us?*

*Father, we confess that we have sinned by withholding the wonderful gift of sex from our spouses. We have sinned by using sex to manipulate our spouses. We have sinned by seeking sex with other sources. And we have sinned in a myriad of other ways.*

*We ask you to heal us, to free us, to raise us up in Christ. Amen.*

Please look up and receive these words of assurance for all who would confess their sin that God who is rich in mercy, because of the love with which he loved us has made us alive together with Christ. For it is by grace that you are saved.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Ephesians 2:5