

**Our Topic:**

Purity in a Sex saturated world. A frank discussion about the blessings and dangers of being single and the strategies to fight for sexual purity.

**For:**

For: Single Men. Be that helpful for the person themselves or for mates that they might be trying to assist.

**Aims:**

- To consider the culture that we live in and recognise some of the unhelpful trends which impact a single Christian bloke.
- To consider what the Bible says about singleness and purity.
- To rightly recognise the many blessings of being unmarried.
- To openly discuss sexual purity and consider our sexual nature, pornography, defeatism, masturbation and then some practical strategies for purity.
- To list some books and resources that may help.

---

**Outline**

Introduction

Culture Norms

Christian Singleness

Single Blessings (and dangers)

Sexual Purity

Sexual Nature

Pornography

Defeatism

Masturbation

Tools for Battle

Books and Resources

---

**Introduction**

**Our Topic:** Celibacy, Purity and Sexuality for the Single Man.

## **Culture Norms**

### **Our society**

- *Increasing population.*  
In Jan 2013 there were 22.89 million people in Australia 16.55 million of marriage age.  
Largest number on record.
- *Increased wealth, but also increased debt and increased cost of living.*  
Pressure to place work before relationships. Longer hours, more days so less time for people socially.
- *Increased unemployment*  
Financial pressure and relationship pressure.
- *Media* has moved to report news driven by either a. celebrity agendas or b. sensationalism (i.e. seeking the reaction – e.g. pro-homosexual and same-sex agendas)

### **Singleness and Marriage**

In Australia it is observed<sup>1</sup>:

- *Single rate increasing while Marriage rate is declining.*  
In 1940 the crude marriage rate (number of marriages in the year per 1000 people) was at its highest at 9.3. In 2001 the crude marriage rate hit its lowest point at 5.3 and it has hovered around that rate ever since.  
  
In 1986, 18.8% of people lived on their own with 4.1% in shared (non-related) living arrangements. 77.1% lived in a family arrangement. By 2011, 24.3% of people lived on their own with 4.1% in shared (non-related) living arrangements. 71.5% lived in a family arrangement.
- *The age of getting married is increasing.*  
From 1921 to 1970 men typically married at age 25-29. By 2000 men typically marry for the first time when aged 30-34.  
From 1921 to 1970 women typically married age 20-24. By 2000 women typically marry for the first time when aged 25-29.
- *Living together (Co-habitation) before marriage is increasing.*

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.aifs.gov.au/institute/info/charts/marriage/index.html#numbers>

In 1975, 16% of marriages were preceded by cohabitation. By 2000, the percentage rose to 71% and in 2012 it was 78%.

The new norm is in fact cohabitation.

- *Same-Sex de-facto relationships increasing*

In 2001 it was 0.5% of all persons living together – but the examination is limited given the reluctance of many (at the time) to identify as being in a same sex de-facto relationship.

- *The divorce rate is stable, but significantly higher than for our parents/grandparent generation.*

The crude divorce rate (number of divorces in the year per 1000 people) was at its highest in 1976 at 4.6 (where it was more than double the average rate). By 2007 it was 2.3 and has largely been stable at this number since then.

That means if the crude marriage rate is at approx. 5.3 p.a, then around 43% of those who get married later get divorced. When compared with 1940, when the crude marriage rate was 9.3 p.a. and the crude divorce rate was 0.5 p.a. then around 5% later got divorced.

### **Sexual Practice**

- *Sexual activity during the teen years is now considered 'normal'. 25% of Year 10 students. 50% of all Year 12 students have engaged in intercourse. Between 15 and 19% have had more than one partner in the last year.<sup>2</sup>*
- *Celibacy is now seen to be abnormal*
- *Pornography is more readily available, affordable, assessable and unregulated (compared with its prevalence say 10 years ago). In 2004 there were 420 million pages of pornography on the web.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Moral Consensus**

Gary Inrig suggests 5 statements summarising a new moral consensus (the new norm)<sup>4</sup>:

1. Moral standards especially sexual ones are personal and private.
2. Any or all sexual relationships are legitimate as long as they are consensual.
3. Sexual expression is essential (there is something wrong with someone if there are not sexually active)

But paradoxically

4. Sex is recreational but not all that important (not meaningful or expressed in a meaningful relationship)

5. Sexual freedom is paramount.

<sup>2</sup> 2002 results of the National Survey of Australian Secondary Students - [http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Teenagers\\_sexual\\_behaviour](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcarticles.nsf/pages/Teenagers_sexual_behaviour)

<sup>3</sup> LaRue, J., 'Obscenity and the First Amendment'. *Summit on Pornography*. (Rayburn House, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Inrig, G., *Pure Desire: Moral Sanity in a Sex-Saturated Culture* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishing, 2010).

### **Christian Singleness**

- What does this mean for the single Christian bloke?

### **The Corinthian World**

- 1 Corinthians is all about the power and redemptive work of the Gospel

### **1 Corinthians 6:9-20**

**1 Corinthians 7:1-11, 25-40**

- a. It is good not to marry (7:1, 7-8, 26, 27b, 32, 34, 37-38, 40)
- b. Given the culture of immorality – get married and have sex (7:2-6, 9, 36), but recognise that getting married will bring troubles in life (7:28, 33-34)
- c. Don't divorce and try not to separate (7:10-11, 27)
- d. Regardless, live for the Lord (7:29-35, 39)

Some other key passages we should consider

**Mark 7:21-22/Matthew 5:28**

For from within, *out of men's hearts*, come evil thoughts, **sexual immorality**, theft, murder, **adultery**, greed, malice, deceit, **lewdness**, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

28 "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman **lustfully** has already committed **adultery** with her *in his heart*".

**Galatians 5:19-21/Ephesians 5:3-5/Colossians 3:5-6**

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: **sexual immorality**, **impurity** and **debauchery**; 20 **idolatry** and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21 and envy; drunkenness, **orgies**, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

But among you there must not be even a hint of **sexual immorality**, or of any kind of **impurity**, or of greed, because these *are improper for God's holy people*. 4 Nor should there be **obscenity**, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5 For of this you can be sure: No **immoral**, **impure** or greedy person-- such a man is an idolater-- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: **sexual immorality**, **impurity**, **lust**, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.

### **1 Thessalonians 4:1-8**

Finally, brothers, we instructed you how to *live in order to please God*, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. 2 For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. 3 It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid **sexual immorality**; 4 that each of you should learn to **control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable**, 5 not in **passionate lust** like the heathen, who do not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. 7 For God did not call us to be **impure**, but to *live a holy life*. 8 Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you his Holy Spirit.

Our task as Christians (single or married) in the area of sexual purity, is to ....

Does that mean it will be easy?

### **Single Blessings (and dangers)**

blessings to being single:

- More time and flexibility (though not for everyone!)
- Greater freedom in deciding how to use time and money.
- Less responsibility – i.e. able to make decisions for one.
- Greater capacity to invest in other friendships.
- There can be more space for maintaining personal devotional life.
- More time and energy to put into ministry.
- And the blessing of alone time (for the introverts!).

dangers to being single:

- And I (Shane) think this often boils down to the issue of accountability.
- There is (generally speaking) greater freedom in the single life, but less accountability.
- Because accountability is in a sense, built-in to the marriage relationship.
- This means that single people need to be especially diligent when it comes to making decisions about how they spend their time – especially when no one's looking.
- This can be a big danger for single men in the area of sexual purity.
- It's not just the big sins – it's a question of how treat our minds and our bodies.
- So it's important to establish accountability in other ways (but more on that later).

## **Sexual Purity**

### **Sexual Nature**

- There was *an ideal context* for our sexuality to be expressed – that was in the garden of Genesis 1-2.
- It is there we see that in it is in the marriage relationship that our sexual nature is most expressed – the man leaves his father and mother to be united to his wife and they become one flesh – they were naked and felt no shame (Gen 2:24-25)
- Gender is part of God's created ordinance – and he made us male and female (this is not a human construct).
- And sex is part of God's design and as such is to be exercised in his given context – between 'the man and his wife'.

BUT – we no longer live in that ideal context.

- The effect of sin tarnished our view and experience – as introduced in Genesis 3, such that after eating the fruit, their eyes were opened and they realised they were naked and made coverings to cover their shame (Gen 3:7)
- Fallen nature may be a reality, immorality now a greater threat, but that does not mean it is the new ideal.
- Ask King David – how the godly can fall. Samuel gives the account of how God's own king with a good heart (1 Sam 16:7) could spectacularly fall in this area. Almost immediately after becoming King, he takes wives and concubines (2 Sam 5:13 c.f. Deut 17:17) and then

in time finds himself on a roof of his palace watching over Bathsheba who he then seduces and gets pregnant (2 Sam 11:2-5). God fades before lusting eyes.

- Now the cover-up begins. David tries to remedy the situation and in the process goes from lust, to adultery, to lying, to murder, to family degeneration and then to national decline (2 Sam 11 – 15). Oh the importance of purity.
- And as with all sin, we come to the gospel and repent knowing that in Jesus we have someone who understands and who wants to save (1 Tim 2:1-4; Heb 5:14-15).
- And one of the blessings of God's grace and forgiveness is that he still allows us to enjoy our sexual nature (although conversely he can also use that nature to bring judgement upon us – Rom 1:18-32).

### **Pornography**

- It is suggested that children are exposed to pornography at increasingly young ages. For many boys, their sex education is in front of a screen with pornographic images.
- It is estimated that 70% of boys in Australia have seen pornography by the age of 12 and 100% by the age of 15.<sup>5</sup>
- Michael Flood's research asserts that 73% of 16-17 year-old boys in Australia have watched an X-Rated video, with 1 in 20 watching on a weekly basis, and more than 1 in 5 watching at least once a month.<sup>6</sup>

The Porn Industry is huge. Consider these stats.

- The global pornography industry generates total sales of US\$ 97 billion p.a. (as of June 2009).<sup>7</sup> That is greater than the global sales for Sports (\$63 bill), Live Performances (\$35 bill) and Music (\$7 bill). In fact, if the industry was a country it would be the 36<sup>th</sup> largest economy in the world.
- And unlike other sex permissible industries (e.g. prostitution, computer games, television) it is a free market and largely unregulated.

It is suggested:

*1. It rewrites your brain.*

- It affects how you view others and yourself. It hijacks the way your brain processes sexual arousal – it lowers the individual's desire for physical intimacy.<sup>8</sup>

*2. It treats women with an unhealthy (dis)respect.*

---

<sup>5</sup> Sauers, J., *Sex Lives of Australian Teenagers* (Sydney: Random House, 2007)

<sup>6</sup> Flood, M., in Tankard Reist's *Big Porn Inc.* (Nth Melbourne: Spinifex Press, 2011), xvii.

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.morssglobalfinance.com/?s=economics+of+global+entertainment>

<sup>8</sup> Hart, A.D., *The Sexual Man* (Dallas: Word, 1994), 87-88.



- Bridges, after analysis of the bestselling and most rented pornographic video available by catalogue in the US found that: ‘physical aggression occurred in 88 per cent of scenes....across all acts of aggression – both physical and verbal – 94 per cent were directed at women....’<sup>9</sup>

*3. It has a detrimental effect to interpersonal relationships*

- Marriage counselling rates pornography in marriage as one of the higher factors in couple breakdown.

*4. Desensitization*

- The more often you see something, and the more familiar you are with it, the more normal or expected it is. The addictive nature of pornography means the amount and degree of the material needs to increase to achieve the same thrill.<sup>10</sup>

*5. Porn replaces God*

- Why replace what is real with that which is unreal?
- Porn can become an idol or an obsession. It is an unhealthy exchange (Romans 1:23-24).

**Defeatism**

- The feeling of defeat is common – and it’s a terrible place to be.
- It is often reinforced by a history of ‘failure’ that’s made all the worse if you’ve worked really hard to get control only to, in a weak moment, throw it all away.
- In your defeat, turn to God, confess your sin if you need to and then remember his grace.
- It’s only his grace that will ultimately sustain you in the battle.
- We fight by the grace and power that is in Christ, and in fellowship with each other.
- Also, let’s be clear about what we’re aiming for:  
You will never (in this life) achieve .....

And for some.....

But, for example, an appropriate and desirable goal should be....

---

<sup>9</sup> Bridges, A.J., ‘Methodological considerations in mapping pornography content’ in *Everyday Pornography* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 46.

<sup>10</sup> Stewart, A., *Men – firing through all of life* (South Sydney: Blue Bottle Books, 2007), 71

And as we work towards our goals, we need to .....

For many of us the damage runs deep, but....

### **Masturbation**

- Arch Hart's research concluded that 95 percent of males have masturbated and that almost 80% started between the age of 11 and 15.<sup>11</sup>
- I won't assume that it has overrun your life, but I am happy to talk further with you if you want specific help.
- I will also assume that you may have picked this Equip subject because you want to help other blokes who struggle with sexual purity, so some of what we consider now may help.

*From a Christian point of view – is Masturbation sinful?*

- The answer is not just to tell the bloke to try harder, or take more cold showers!
- Scripture helps us to see the battle for sexual purity in the context of the gospel and encourages us to work toward that which is self-controlled, upright and godly.

Look at what Paul says to Titus 2:11-14:

*For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope-- the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.*

### **Tools for battle**

- Let's assume that the aim is to reduce or stop a dependence on Masturbation and therefore increase self-control.

---

<sup>11</sup>

Hart, A.D., *The Sexual Man – Masculinity without Guilt*. (Dallas: Word, 1994), 54.

*1. Go to battle with your best weapon – God.*

- This is a battle worth fighting, so fight it with God's help.
- Reading your Bible regularly (and at the times when you are most tempted) is a great help and helps focus the mind helpfully.
- Praying and asking God to work with you in the battle is necessary.
- I (Ken) am often surprised at how guys will enter into this difficult battle and then 'fail' yet when asked how they have gone in reading their Bible they have admitted to not even trying.
- Going to God's word helps to ensure you are not making this about your performance – it is about sanctification by God.

*2. Purge.*

- Lock down the hatches, purge any material that you may have that will start you off (e.g. DVD's, articles, magazines, stored images etc.)
- Don't feed the lust bank. Bounce eyes, refine thoughts, practice and build the mind strength.

*3. Think of England!*

- If you are going to masturbate – the stress is to do it in a way that is holy and pure (if that is possible)
- Not to porn, Not to fantasy, Not to past memory, Not attributed to someone!
- Easy to say – hard to do.
- Suggestion: Do all you can to focus on something neutral (e.g. blue sky/brick wall/ task at work!) This is the art of mind-bouncing. Enjoy the feeling and sensation without entertaining the ungodly fantasy.

*4. Set Goals and put in measures*

- Reduce the number of times to...by a certain date.
- Don't do it until after....
- I like the idea of a Fast. Although Biblically this was to do with abstaining from food for a time so that the person could focus on what God was doing. The same principle could be applied to Masturbation – especially as a way of breaking the stranglehold. It gives you a refocusing tool if disheartened and it gives you a time to work toward which is not endless.

*5. Change habits.*

- In many ways masturbation works like an addiction - input, stimulus, experience, thrill, output = feelings of guilt.
- To break a habit, change the habits.
- Stay away from temptation.
- If you always do it in a particular place (like in your bedroom or shower), then stop doing it there only. If you always do it a particular time (like first thing in the morning), then stop doing it then only. Break the habit by changing the habit.

*6. Safeguard and set boundaries*

- TV Lock on certain channels, 'No Junk Mail' on the letterbox, settings on your computer and phone.
- Make rules to live by (e.g. don't watch TV alone after 9.30pm, never use your laptop in a closed door room)
- Get a mate to install safeguard computer program (like Covenant Eyes: [www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com) )

*7. Fight the Battle as a corp – be accountable*

- Mates can be a great gift from God here. Ask them to help.
- Give them the *specific* questions to ask you and schedule a time to ensure it regularly happens. Remember they may also help in other areas of godliness as well.
- They can be the ones who are your internet accountability partners.

But, keep in mind:

- They are a friend not a policeman. Keep working on the relationship where you talk about others things.
- The purpose is to present one another more mature and godly.
- Accountability relationships are hard to maintain and so it is worth setting a time frame on how long you do it for (and revise or reset at that point)

## Challenge

*Walking away from Equip...*

- a. What is the challenge you are under God setting yourself?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- b. What from this seminar will you take in order to help other blokes to grow in godliness?

## Helpful Resources

### Books

- Hart, A. D.,                    *The Sexual Man – Masculinity without Guilt* (Dallas: Word, 1994).
- Hughes, R.K.,                *Disciplines of a Godly Man* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 11th Ed., 2001).
- Hughes, R.K. & W.C.,      *Disciplines of a Godly Young Man* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2012).
- Al Hsu                         *The Single Issue* (Leicester: IVP, 1997).
- Gary Inrig                    *Pure Desire: Moral Sanity in a Sex-Saturated Culture* (Grand Rapids: Discovery House Publishing, 2010).
- Melinda Tankard Reist  
& Abigail Bray (eds.)      *Big Porn Inc – Exposing the Harms of the Global Pornography Industry*  
(Melbourne: Spinifex, 2011)
- Stewart, A.,                 *Men – Firing through all of Life* (South Sydney: Blue Bottle Books, 2007).

This seminar appreciates earlier work done by Peter and Lyndy Berthon in *Marriage, Love and Sex – enjoying God’s good creation in the light of Christ’s work*. (Unpublished paper)

### Websites

[www.covenanteyes.com](http://www.covenanteyes.com)

[www.GodlyYoungMan.org](http://www.GodlyYoungMan.org)

### Contact Us

Ken D Noakes    email: [ken.noakes@trinitycity.org.au](mailto:ken.noakes@trinitycity.org.au)

Shane Ellery     email: [shane.ellery@biblecollege.sa.edu.au](mailto:shane.ellery@biblecollege.sa.edu.au)