

detox

A 29 day journey to clean living in a toxic culture



The student ministry of Dothan First Assembly



# February 1

## Read:

Genesis 2:18-25

<sup>18</sup>Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him." <sup>19</sup>So the LORD God formed from the ground all the wild animals and all the birds of the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would call them, and the man chose a name for each one. <sup>20</sup>He gave names to all the livestock, all the birds of the sky, and all the wild animals. But still there was no helper just right for him.

<sup>21</sup>So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep. While the man slept, the LORD God took out one of the man's ribs and closed up the opening. <sup>22</sup>Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib, and he brought her to the man.

<sup>23</sup>"At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'"

<sup>24</sup>This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one. <sup>25</sup>Now the man and his wife were both naked, but they felt no shame.

## Reflect:

What messages have you received about sex in your home/from parents?

What messages does our media present about sexuality?

What is the main message of the Bible about sexuality?

## Dig:

Why did God create woman? See verse 18.

Notice that verse 23 is set off as poetry. This is the first poem from a man to a woman. Based on this poem, what do you sense is in Adam's heart when he first sees Eve?

Why did the man and woman feel no shame? See Genesis 3:7, 10-11.

**Apply:** Ask God to deepen your commitment to receive sexuality as one of his best gifts. Examine your commitment to practice the Bible's revelation of the steps toward sexual fulfillment:

1. leave father and mother
2. be united to spouse
3. become one flesh

# February 2

## **Read:**

Matthew 5:8

God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.

## **Reflect:**

In your experience, how does purity help you see God?

## **Dig:**

Reread Matthew 5:8. What do the pure in heart get to see?

What does Psalm 24:3-4 say about the connection between purity and spiritual sight?

What does Psalm 66:18 tell you about purity and your prayers?

Read 1 John 1:9 and write out the two things that are promised when we confess our sins:

## **Apply:**

Since sexual purity is so clearly connected to our ability to see and hear God, confess your sins and thank God for the cleansing that he continues to give to us.

# February 3

## **Read:**

Psalm 37:4-5

<sup>4</sup>Take delight in the LORD, and he will give you your heart's desires. <sup>5</sup>Commit everything you do to the LORD. Trust him, and he will help you.

## **Reflect:**

It appears that getting your heart's desires is the result of "something". What is that "something" that must be done first?

## **Dig:**

Are the desires for physical intimacy part of God's original plan? Recall Genesis 2:24-25.

What happens when such desires become all consuming (i.e. idolatrous)? Have you seen this happen in your own life?

Read Psalm 37:4 to remind yourself what David says about desire and delight.

## **Apply:**

Assess your level of delight in the Lord. Now, following the instruction of Psalm 37:5, prayerfully commit your way to the Lord and trust Him.

# February 4

## **Read:**

Exodus 20:14

Be faithful in marriage.

## **Reflect:**

Even though you aren't married, how would this verse apply to your life if it were rephrased: "Be faithful in *purity, even in the preparation for marriage*"?

## **Dig:**

Your future husband/wife is out there somewhere. Wouldn't it be a blessing to you to know that they have been faithful in purity while they are waiting for you? Do you think it would be a blessing to them if you practiced purity while waiting for them?

How can you be faithful to God and to your future spouse even now?

Considering that God's laws are more descriptive of the best way to live rather than simply being a list of prescriptive rules, why does it make sense that God would call us to live pure lives?

## **Apply:**

Evaluate what it means for you to practice purity with your sexuality within God's healthy parameters.

# February 5

## Read:

Ephesians 5:3-14

<sup>3</sup>Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. <sup>4</sup>Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. <sup>5</sup>You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world.

<sup>6</sup>Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. <sup>7</sup>Don't participate in the things these people do. <sup>8</sup>For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! <sup>9</sup>For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

<sup>10</sup>Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. <sup>12</sup>It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. <sup>13</sup>But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, <sup>14</sup>for the light makes everything visible

## Reflect:

Ephesians 5:3 NIV says, "*among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity*". Scrutinize your habits and thoughts of this past week: Do you detect any hints of sexual impurity? What if someone else could see your thoughts and know your habits—would that make you uneasy?

## Dig:

"Since the Master honors you with a body, honor him with your body!" 1 Corinthians 6:13 (The Message) Think about what an honor it is to have the physical blessings you have: healthy eyes, ears, brain, mouth, heart, arms, legs? Do you view those things as a way that God has already honored you?

## Apply:

How can you honor God with your body?

How can you honor him with your eyes?

How can you honor him with your mind?

# February 6

## Read:

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

<sup>12</sup>You say, "I am allowed to do anything"—but not everything is good for you. And even though "I am allowed to do anything," I must not become a slave to anything. <sup>13</sup>You say, "Food was made for the stomach, and the stomach for food." (This is true, though someday God will do away with both of them.) But you can't say that our bodies were made for sexual immorality. They were made for the Lord, and the Lord cares about our bodies. <sup>14</sup>And God will raise us from the dead by his power, just as he raised our Lord from the dead.

<sup>15</sup>Don't you realize that your bodies are actually parts of Christ? Should a man take his body, which is part of Christ, and join it to a prostitute? Never! <sup>16</sup>And don't you realize that if a man joins himself to a prostitute, he becomes one body with her? For the Scriptures say, "The two are united into one." <sup>17</sup>But the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him.

<sup>18</sup>Run from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. <sup>19</sup>Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, <sup>20</sup>for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.

## Reflect:

1 Corinthians 6:12 MSG says, "Just because something is technically legal doesn't mean that it's spiritually appropriate. If I went around doing whatever I thought I could get by with, I'd be a slave to my whims." Examine both of those sentences carefully. What do they mean in terms of purity?

## Dig:

Look at verse 15 and 18 again. Why are sexual sins so serious?

Paul quotes Genesis 2:24 in verse 16. How has our sinful nature corrupted God's good design—and how can the original beauty be restored? See verses 15, 19-20.

## Apply:

Put verse 20 into action—from the clothes you wear today, to the thoughts you think, to the things you do—'Honor God with your body.'

# February 7

**Read:** Ephesians 4:17-19;

<sup>17</sup>With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. <sup>18</sup>Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him. <sup>19</sup>They have no sense of shame. They live for lustful pleasure and eagerly practice every kind of impurity.

James 1:13-18

<sup>13</sup>And remember, when you are being tempted, do not say, "God is tempting me." God is never tempted to do wrong, and he never tempts anyone else. <sup>14</sup>Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. <sup>15</sup>These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.

<sup>16</sup>So don't be misled, my dear brothers and sisters. <sup>17</sup>Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. He never changes or casts a shifting shadow. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give birth to us by giving us his true word. And we, out of all creation, became his prized possession.

## **Reflect:**

Identify the temptations within your life that are at the greatest risk of corrupting who God created you to be.

## **Dig:**

Reread James 1:13-18. Note the progression of such temptation—how does it start? See verse 14.

What happens in stage 2? See verse 15a.

How about stage 3? See verse 15b.

According to Ephesians 4:19, what happens when sensitivity is lost? Is lust ever satisfied? How is this related to the progressive stages seen in James 1?

**Apply:** Ask God to heighten your level of sensitivity. Since one of the ways that we increase our sensitivity is by feeding upon God's word (Psalm 119:9-11, 37). Consider memorizing scripture that specifically addresses the temptations you listed (perhaps 1 Corinthians 6:18 or 6:20; Ephesians 5:3; or 1 Peter 5:8).

# February 8

## Read:

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Finally, dear brothers and sisters, we urge you in the name of the Lord Jesus to live in a way that pleases God, as we have taught you. You live this way already, and we encourage you to do so even more. <sup>2</sup>For you remember what we taught you by the authority of the Lord Jesus.

<sup>3</sup>God's will is for you to be holy, so stay away from all sexual sin. <sup>4</sup>Then each of you will control his own body and live in holiness and honor— <sup>5</sup>not in lustful passion like the pagans who do not know God and his ways. <sup>6</sup>Never harm or cheat a fellow believer in this matter by violating his wife, for the Lord avenges all such sins, as we have solemnly warned you before. <sup>7</sup>God has called us to live holy lives, not impure lives. <sup>8</sup>Therefore, anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human teaching but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.

## Reflect:

Many people say that what we do in the privacy of our own homes (or minds) does not hurt others and therefore is no big deal. What do you think?

## Dig:

Reread 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8 and answer these questions:

What are we called to avoid?

According to verse 4,5 who practices "lustful passion"?

What does verse 3 teach us about how to be holy?

What does verse 8 tell you about God's attitude toward our sexual sin?

**Apply:** Since James 1 teaches us that sin begins with entertaining thoughts that are impure...and they eventually grow ugly fruit. Ask God to cleanse your mind and then seek today to think pure thoughts.

# February 9

**Read:** Ephesians 5:1-14

Imitate God, therefore, in everything you do, because you are his dear children. <sup>2</sup>Live a life filled with love, following the example of Christ. He loved us and offered himself as a sacrifice for us, a pleasing aroma to God.

<sup>3</sup>Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. <sup>4</sup>Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. <sup>5</sup>You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God. For a greedy person is an idolater, worshipping the things of this world.

<sup>6</sup>Don't be fooled by those who try to excuse these sins, for the anger of God will fall on all who disobey him. <sup>7</sup>Don't participate in the things these people do. <sup>8</sup>For once you were full of darkness, but now you have light from the Lord. So live as people of light! <sup>9</sup>For this light within you produces only what is good and right and true.

<sup>10</sup>Carefully determine what pleases the Lord. <sup>11</sup>Take no part in the worthless deeds of evil and darkness; instead, expose them. <sup>12</sup>It is shameful even to talk about the things that ungodly people do in secret. <sup>13</sup>But their evil intentions will be exposed when the light shines on them, <sup>14</sup>for the light makes everything visible. This is why it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, rise up from the dead, and Christ will give you light."

**Reflect:** How much has your tolerance of sexual images, jokes, movies, TV, and language changed in your lifetime? Have your standards changed?

## **Dig:**

What does this text call an "immoral, impure, or greedy person"? See verse 5.

An "idolater" is a person who values something above God. How is sexual sin putting something above God?

What does "light" do to these dark sexual activities? How would you interpret the wake up passage in verse 14 in terms of sexual sinning?

**Apply:** How must your life change (in terms of media intake: songs you listen to, movies you see, conversations you engage in) so that you can obey the command that no "hint" of sexual immorality be in you? Ask God for the grace to obey this command.

# February 10

## Read:

Proverbs 7:6-27

<sup>6</sup>While I was at the window of my house, looking through the curtain, <sup>7</sup>I saw some naive young men, and one in particular who lacked common sense. <sup>8</sup>He was crossing the street near the house of an immoral woman, strolling down the path by her house. <sup>9</sup>It was at twilight, in the evening, as deep darkness fell. <sup>10</sup>The woman approached him, seductively dressed and sly of heart.

<sup>11</sup>She was the brash, rebellious type, never content to stay at home. <sup>12</sup>She is often in the streets and markets, soliciting at every corner. <sup>13</sup>She threw her arms around him and kissed him, and with a brazen look she said, <sup>14</sup>"I've just made my peace offerings and fulfilled my vows. <sup>15</sup>You're the one I was looking for! I came out to find you, and here you are! <sup>16</sup>My bed is spread with beautiful blankets, with colored sheets of Egyptian linen. <sup>17</sup>I've perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon. <sup>18</sup>Come, let's drink our fill of love until morning. Let's enjoy each other's caresses, <sup>19</sup>for my husband is not home. He's away on a long trip. <sup>20</sup>He has taken a wallet full of money with him and won't return until later this month."

<sup>21</sup>So she seduced him with her pretty speech and enticed him with her flattery. <sup>22</sup>He followed her at once, like an ox going to the slaughter. He was like a stag caught in a trap, <sup>23</sup>awaiting the arrow that would pierce its heart. He was like a bird flying into a snare, little knowing it would cost him his life. <sup>24</sup>So listen to me, my sons, and pay attention to my words. <sup>25</sup>Don't let your hearts stray away toward her. Don't wander down her wayward path. <sup>26</sup>For she has been the ruin of many; many men have been her victims. <sup>27</sup>Her house is the road to the grave. Her bedroom is the den of death.

## Reflect:

What foolish thinking have you done regarding the consequences of sexual sin?

What lies does our culture tell us about sexual sin?

## Dig:

What do verses 24 – 27 tell about the effects of impurity?

According to this passage, what is the cost of sexual sin? See verse 23. What should we be willing to sacrifice to avoid sinning?

**Apply:** If you are going to "take every thought captive" (2 Corinthians 10:5) and "if your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away," (Matthew 5:27) then what drastic action might God be asking of you?

# February 11

## Read:

Psalm 119:9-11

<sup>9</sup>How can a young person stay pure? By obeying your word. <sup>10</sup>I have tried hard to find you don't let me wander from your commands. <sup>11</sup>I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

## Reflect:

Do you think your lack of knowing and applying God's word has led to impurity in your life?

How so?

## Dig:

In verse 9, why do you think it is specifically addressing a young person's purity?

What does it mean to hide God's word in your heart?

Finish this sentence: Verse 11 implies that the more we get God's word in our mind and heart,

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## Apply:

Commit to memorizing a few verses of scripture from over the past few days.

# February 12

## **Read:**

Proverbs 4:20-27

<sup>20</sup>My child, pay attention to what I say. Listen carefully to my words. <sup>21</sup>Don't lose sight of them. Let them penetrate deep into your heart, <sup>22</sup>for they bring life to those who find them, and healing to their whole body. <sup>23</sup>Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life. <sup>24</sup>Avoid all perverse talk; stay away from corrupt speech. <sup>25</sup>Look straight ahead, and fix your eyes on what lies before you. <sup>26</sup>Mark out a straight path for your feet; stay on the safe path. <sup>27</sup>Don't get sidetracked; keep your feet from following evil.

## **Reflect:**

What messages (TV, movies, songs, friends) have you listened to that would be considered "perverse" or "corrupt"?

How do you think those messages have influenced your thinking and attitude toward your sexuality?

## **Dig:**

What are the promises that are given to a person who follows God's way? See verse 22.

What are we to do "above all else"?

In order to guard our heart (verse 23), what are we to do with our mouth and our eyes and our feet? See verses 24-26.

## **Apply:**

Identify the sources of the impure messages that have entered your ears. If you continue to allow them to come in, what are the consequences?

What steps do you need to take to remove those negative influences?

# February 13

## Read:

Psalm 139:13-18, 23-24

<sup>13</sup>You made all the delicate, inner parts of my body and knit me together in my mother's womb. <sup>14</sup>Thank you for making me so wonderfully complex! Your workmanship is marvelous—how well I know it. <sup>15</sup>You watched me as I was being formed in utter seclusion, as I was woven together in the dark of the womb. <sup>16</sup>You saw me before I was born. Every day of my life was recorded in your book. Every moment was laid out before a single day had passed. <sup>17</sup>How precious are your thoughts about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! <sup>18</sup>I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! And when I wake up, you are still with me!

<sup>23</sup>Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. <sup>24</sup>Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.

## Reflect:

Think of 5 popular TV shows, magazines, or movies and evaluate how (a.) men's bodies and (b.) women's bodies are portrayed. What messages are being sent?

How have such messages affected you?

When you are with a number of other people who are "in better shape" than you or are "more attractive" than you, does your sense of self-worth go down?

## Dig:

1 Peter 3:3-4 says, "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God."

Note what Peter writes regarding the source of true beauty. Is this passage an argument against wearing jewelry, makeup, looking nice, dressing up, etc.?

Our society and media lie to us about what we should look like. Those lies affect us mentally, emotionally, physically and even sexually. How do think they affect us sexually?

## Apply:

Spend some time praising God that you, even with your flaws and imperfections, are 'fearfully and wonderfully made'.

# February 14

## Read:

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

<sup>4</sup> "Listen, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. <sup>5</sup> And you must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. <sup>6</sup> And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. <sup>7</sup> Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. <sup>8</sup> Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. <sup>9</sup> Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

## Reflect:

How do you decide which media is OK and which is not OK?

What is your standard of measurement?

## Dig:

What is the basis for all the "commandments" that God gives to us? See verse 4.

Teenagers often ask "what's wrong with \_\_\_\_\_?" According to this passage, what might be a better question?

If your parents watch TV/movies with inappropriate content or listen to questionable songs, does that mean it's okay for you to do it? Why or why not?

## Apply:

Just because others in authority over you make poor decisions about purity, don't make the same mistakes. Commit to live to a higher standard. Your parents aren't your standard. Jesus is.

# February 15

## Read:

Matthew 5:27-30

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard the commandment that says, 'You must not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your hand—even your stronger hand—causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

## Reflect:

How has lust affected your life?

If you are a male, how does what you see affect your sexuality?

If you are a female, how does what you see affect your sexuality?

Why is pornography so widely used in our society?

## Dig:

What does Jesus say we are guilty of if we look at someone lustfully?

What does Jesus say will happen to you if you don't kill lust in your life? (can lust send you to hell?)

Jesus is using "hyperbole" (humorous exaggeration to make a point) when he says that we must "cut off our right arm" or "gouge out" our eye. What would be an application of this principle (of radical action) in your life if you were fighting lust?

## Apply:

In terms of lustful thinking, what do you need to gouge out of your life or cut off in your life in order to avoid the judgment of hell?

# February 16

## **Read:**

Philippians 4:8-9

<sup>8</sup>And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise. <sup>9</sup>Keep putting into practice all you learned and received from me—everything you heard from me and saw me doing. Then the God of peace will be with you.

## **Reflect:**

If you were to have a record of every thought you think in a day or in a week, what percent do you think would be “true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent and worthy of praise”?

## **Dig:**

Is it easy for impure thoughts to fill your mind? Why do you think that is?

Verse 8 tells us what kinds of thoughts we should fill our mind with. How can you fill your mind with those thoughts?

Verse 9 tells us to put into practice all the good that we learned and received. Do you know Christians that know the right things to do but don't ever put it into practice? Why do you think they do that?

## **Apply:**

What can you do to increase the percentage of “pure” thoughts today?

# February 17

## **Read:**

Proverbs 3:21-26

<sup>21</sup> My child, don't lose sight of common sense and discernment. Hang on to them, <sup>22</sup> for they will refresh your soul. They are like jewels on a necklace. <sup>23</sup> They keep you safe on your way, and your feet will not stumble. <sup>24</sup> You can go to bed without fear; you will lie down and sleep soundly. <sup>25</sup> You need not be afraid of sudden disaster or the destruction that comes upon the wicked, <sup>26</sup> for the LORD is your security. He will keep your foot from being caught in a trap.

## **Reflect:**

Identify an instance in the past week or so in which you used 'common sense and discernment' with respect to your sexuality. Any instances in which you let sound judgment and discernment get 'out of your sight'?

## **Dig:**

Verse 22 makes a clear link between preserving common sense and 'refreshing your soul.' Think of tangible/practical ways you have seen this to be true.

Note the metaphor at the end of verse 22. For what reasons does one wear a necklace? List as many as you can. How does this enrich your understanding of common sense being like a necklace?

For further insight note the paraphrase of verses 21 and 22 in The Message: "Dear friend, guard Clear Thinking and Common Sense with your life; don't for a minute lose sight of them. They'll keep your soul alive and well, they'll keep you fit and attractive."

## **Apply:**

Go back to how you answered the 'reflect' question. Identify the areas of your life in which you have to keep a tighter rein on 'common sense and discernment'. Put a plan into effect to keep them in sight.

# February 18

## Read:

2 Corinthians 10:1-5

<sup>1</sup>Now I, Paul, appeal to you with the gentleness and kindness of Christ—though I realize you think I am timid in person and bold only when I write from far away. <sup>2</sup>Well, I am begging you now so that when I come I won't have to be bold with those who think we act from human motives (standards of this world).

<sup>3</sup>We are human, but we don't wage war as humans do. <sup>4</sup>We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. <sup>5</sup>We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.

## Reflect:

What would a rebellious thought be in your life (in terms of sexual impurity)?

## Dig:

How would you characterize the 'standards of this world,' particularly in areas of sexuality?

Are you living more according to the world's standards or Christ's standards?

How does Paul characterize the weapons that Christ-followers should fight with? In other words, what gives such weapons their power?

## Apply:

Evaluate: are there any strongholds in your life that need to be demolished? Any thoughts that need to be taken captive?

Recognize that in Christ you have Divine Power to do so (the Christian version of 'weapons of mass destruction!') and then commit to find a partner in prayer who can join you in this battle.

# February 19

## Read:

Romans 7:14-25

<sup>14</sup> So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. <sup>15</sup> I don't really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don't do it. Instead, I do what I hate. <sup>16</sup> But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. <sup>17</sup> So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>18</sup> And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. <sup>19</sup> I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway.

<sup>20</sup> But if I do what I don't want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it.

<sup>21</sup> I have discovered this principle of life—that when I want to do what is right, I inevitably do what is wrong. <sup>22</sup> I love God's law with all my heart. <sup>23</sup> But there is another power within me that is at war with my mind. This power makes me a slave to the sin that is still within me. <sup>24</sup> Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? <sup>25</sup> Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God's law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.

## Reflect:

What do you do to handle sexual temptation?

Is it effective?

## Dig:

Do you find that certain sin habits are virtually impossible to break? How do you feel about that?

Read carefully Romans 7:14-25 and see if you can note the phrases that Paul uses that indicate that he is describing the state of a believer, not an unbeliever.

How is the first sentence in verse 18 a key to understanding this passage?

## Apply:

Admit to God in prayer the sexual and other sins that still stubbornly dwell in you. Now ask him to deliver you from this slavery of sin. Determine to keep fighting against this sin because you have the power of Jesus!

# February 20

## Read:

Romans 12:1-2

<sup>1</sup>And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. <sup>2</sup>Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

## Reflect:

How have you seen evidence of your mind being renewed in the past week, month, year?

How has that process transformed your actions, behaviors, and thoughts?

## Dig:

According to verse 1, what are we urged to offer up as a living sacrifice?

Which parts of your bodies is he referring to?

According to verse 2, what is the result of 'not conforming' but rather of 'being transformed'? Apply this verse—both the command and the result—to areas of sexuality.

How do you need God to change your behavior?

## Apply:

Finish this sentence: In order to change my behavior, I have to let God change \_\_\_\_\_.

How do you plan to do that?

# February 21

## **Read:**

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

## **Reflect:**

How do people view you?

When people think about you, do you think they think about your appearance more OR the kind of person you are more?

## **Dig:**

This verse is about King Saul of Israel. He was a head taller than any other man in Israel. He was also extremely handsome. So from the outside looking in, how did he appear to everyone?

So it is definitely possible to fool people but you cannot fool God. The outside might appear attractive, but our heart and soul might be absolutely disgusting. Is there an area of your life that this might be true for you in?

God knows what's really going on in your life. He knows your thoughts, feels and even your mistakes. But God wants to forgive you and heal all the toxic places in your life. What do you need to give to Him today?

## **Apply:**

What can you do today to make a change so that your heart and your outward appearance match up?

# February 22

## **Read:**

1 Corinthians 10:12-13

<sup>12</sup>If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. <sup>13</sup>The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

## **Reflect:**

How strong would you view your relationship with God?

Do you think it's "strong" because you think that's the "right answer"? Is it possible that you've misjudged how close you are with God? Scripture tells us that pride comes before a fall. Make sure you are looking honestly at your status with God so that you are not naïve to the devil's schemes.

## **Dig:**

Verse 13 tells us that what you're facing, others have faced. You're not the first to experience this and you won't be the last. How does this comfort you to know that you're not all alone in your struggles?

Sometimes it feels like temptation, especially sexual temptation, is so strong that you can't say no to it. But this scripture assures that we don't have to give in. "He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand". Everything you face, you can say no to. How does this fact comfort you?

"When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure" means that when we are tempted, we are not left on our own to overcome it. God will provide self-control, restraint and peace in moments of crisis & temptation. His power of saving is greater than the power that is tempting you. How does this thought comfort you?

## **Apply:**

What can you do today to make a change so that your heart and your outward appearance match up?

# February 23

## **Read:**

Psalm 119:33-40

<sup>33</sup>Teach me your decrees, O LORD; I will keep them to the end. <sup>34</sup>Give me understanding and I will obey your instructions; I will put them into practice with all my heart. <sup>35</sup>Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found. <sup>36</sup>Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than a love for money! <sup>37</sup>Turn my eyes from worthless things, and give me life through your word. <sup>38</sup>Reassure me of your promise, made to those who fear you. <sup>39</sup>Help me abandon my shameful ways; for your regulations are good. <sup>40</sup>I long to obey your commandments! Renew my life with your goodness.

## **Reflect:**

“Give me an eagerness for your laws rather than a love for money”. Is there anything you love more than God’s laws?

## **Dig:**

Verses 33,34 and 35 give us a step-by-step process to get from where we are currently to where happiness is found. Write out each step.

The theme of this passage is that we find life/happiness through one thing. What is that one thing?

## **Apply:**

How can you apply today’s passage into your everyday life?

# February 24

## Read:

2 Chronicles 29:1-6,15

<sup>1</sup>Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became the king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. <sup>2</sup>He did what was pleasing in the LORD's sight, just as his ancestor David had done.

<sup>3</sup>In the very first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah reopened the doors of the Temple of the LORD and repaired them. <sup>4</sup>He summoned the priests and Levites to meet him at the courtyard east of the Temple. <sup>5</sup>He said to them, "Listen to me, you Levites! Purify yourselves, and purify the Temple of the LORD, the God of your ancestors. Remove all the defiled things from the sanctuary. <sup>6</sup>Our ancestors were unfaithful and did what was evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They abandoned the LORD and his dwelling place; they turned their backs on him.

<sup>15</sup>These men called together their fellow Levites, and they all purified themselves. Then they began to cleanse the Temple of the LORD, just as the king had commanded. They were careful to follow all the LORD's instructions in their work.

## Reflect:

Why is it that sexual sin (even if it is mostly mental and fantasy) makes us feel not only guilty but also unclean?

## Dig:

What steps does Hezekiah take to cleanse the temple?

Verse 5:

Verse 15:

Even though we live in the new age with the blood of Jesus as our cleansing agent, how might these steps be followed when we need to be cleansed?

## Apply:

In prayer, offer the parts of your body to God, asking him to cleanse each part and then consecrate them to the Lord. Begin with your head (offer your mind, your eyes, your ears) then continue through your whole body.

# February 25

## **Read:**

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

<sup>9</sup> Don't you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, <sup>10</sup> or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

## **Reflect:**

Are you involved in any activities that will prevent you inheriting the Kingdom of God?

## **Dig:**

In verse 9, it says, "Don't fool yourselves." This must mean that there were some "Christians" who were knowingly participating in some of the sins listed and yet, they still thought they were going to Heaven. Have you taken God's grace for granted?

Sometimes we tend to rank sins. For example, really bad sins would be murder or child abuse, while really small sins would be cheating on a test or telling a lie. But the Bible is very clear here. It doesn't rank these sins. They are all equal. Why do you think we rank some sins worse than others?

According to verse 11, there are 2 things that made us right with God. What are they?

## **Apply:**

Remember how far God has brought you. Remember where you were spiritually, how lost and enslaved to sin you used to be. Thank Him for His grace and mercy and let this attitude help you to make God-honoring choices today.

# February 26

## **Read:**

2 Timothy 2:22

Run from anything that stimulates youthful lusts. Instead, pursue righteous living, faithfulness, love, and peace. Enjoy the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts.

## **Reflect:**

Youthful lusts are wrong because as an unmarried person, you have no proper Biblical outlet for such passions. Any way those passions are fulfilled, outside of marriage, is wrong. Understanding this, what are some situations you need to run away from to that “youthful lusts” are encouraged?

## **Dig:**

Does it literally mean to physically “RUN” from impure things?

If not, what does it mean and how can you do that?

According to our verse, what are the four things you should be pursuing?

Enjoying the companionship of those who call on the Lord with pure hearts means that you should spend most of your time hanging around with people who are committed to following Jesus and obeying His word. If you don't you are opening yourself up to ungodly influences and ideas. Are there any friends in your life you need to start limiting your time with?

## **Apply:**

Make pursuing the things of God more important than human approval, popularity, attention from the opposite sex, and anything else. Stop seeking satisfaction and happiness through relationships with others. Commit to God that His opinion will be the only one that matters.

# February 27

## **Read:**

Job 31:1

“I made a covenant with my eyes not to look with lust at a young woman.”

## **Reflect:**

Lust is something that gets associated with guys more than girls. Rightfully so, guys are more visual than girls. However, statistics show that record numbers of girls are viewing inappropriate images. So...this is a pretty big problem for both genders. Have you seen something lately on TV, in movies, on the internet, or elsewhere that you know God would not be proud of?

## **Dig:**

Lust can happen when you're with someone else or it can happen when you're alone. What situations could create improper thoughts for you?

Now that you know what “red flags” to look for, how will you respond if you find yourself in one of these situations?

Self-control is a Fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). But that doesn't just mean that self-control happens in a moment of temptation. The Holy Spirit in you will produce enough self-control to help you create boundaries in your life so that you won't even be in tempting situations. What are some boundaries that you can put up in your life to help safeguard you from facing sexual temptation?

## **Apply:**

Job made a covenant. A covenant is stronger than a promise. Promises can be broken. Covenants were permanent. What permanent commitments should you make with yourself and with God?

# February 28

**Read:** Galatians 5:16-25

<sup>16</sup> So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. <sup>17</sup> The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires. These two forces are constantly fighting each other, so you are not free to carry out your good intentions. <sup>18</sup> But when you are directed by the Spirit, you are not under obligation to the law of Moses.

<sup>19</sup> When you follow the desires of your sinful nature, the results are very clear: sexual immorality, impurity, lustful pleasures, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, hostility, quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish ambition, dissension, division, <sup>21</sup> envy, drunkenness, wild parties, and other sins like these. Let me tell you again, as I have before, that anyone living that sort of life will not inherit the Kingdom of God.

<sup>22</sup> But the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against these things! <sup>24</sup> Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there. <sup>25</sup> Since we are living by the Spirit, let us follow the Spirit's leading in every part of our lives.

## **Reflect:**

You naturally want to be selfish. We all do. No one naturally is lead by the Holy Spirit. It's something you have to work on? On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being awful and 10 being great, how good are you at relying on the spirit to overcome your sinful desires?

## **Dig:**

Verses 16-18 describe the war going on inside of you everyday. Did you know this was taking place within you? How does this change your perspective of the battle you're fighting?

Verses 19-21 list things we shouldn't have in our lives. Verses 22-23 list things we should have in our lives. Do you see any of the bad traits in your life? Do you see any of the good traits in your life? List them.

Followers of Jesus don't carry around shame and guilt. Where are their passions and desires of their sinful nature? (See verse 24)

## **Apply:**

Ask God to send the Holy Spirit to lead every part of your life. And may you have the courage to follow His leading.

# February 29

## **Read:**

1 Peter 5:8-9

<sup>8</sup>Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. <sup>9</sup>Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith.

## **Reflect:**

Certainly we are not supposed to think about the devil all day long. However, we should be on alert for his traps. What kind of spiritual traps is it easy for you to fall into?

## **Dig:**

We must recognize that the devil is our enemy. People aren't our enemy, the devil is. Your greatest enemy isn't yourself. It's the devil. We must see him for what he is. How can you stay alert and recognize his plans when they come against you?

The devil wants to destroy our lives. He prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. That means he is only concerned with one thing: destroying you. He wants to steal your hope, kill your dreams and destroy your life. How has the devil tried to destroy your purity?

What does it mean to stand firm against him? How can you stand up to the devil?

## **Apply:**

Pray and ask God to give you discernment about the attacks of the enemy and also to give you the strength to stand firm in the face of temptation.