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**Adultery:
Disease of the Eye
Part 1**

722-A

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)



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Disease of the Eye

Part 1

This is one of life's more difficult subjects. It is difficult because no one wants to teach about it, and even more difficult because even fewer want to hear about it. And yet few subjects in Scripture have more clearly defined absolutes and few have such clearly defined illustrations as to the spiritual truths involved.

It is also true that few subjects are as close to the heart of God because of what those illustrations teach. Therefore, whether it is popular or not, *it must be taught*. Every generation, at regular intervals, needs to look carefully at what God says about the issues surrounding moral fidelity, because society is always in the process of redefining its concepts of morality. God, fortunately, *never changes His*.

As we begin, I would like to have a funeral service. It will be a very brief funeral service. We are going to bury the past before we look at the present and make commitments for the future. In John 8 Jesus came from the Mount of Olives back to the temple where He began teaching. While He was teaching, the scribes and the Pharisees interrupted His message. They brought to Him a woman who had been caught in the very act of adultery. With pious self-righteousness and an eye to trap the Master, they tested Him with these words:

“Now in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?”

And they were saying this, testing Him, in order that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground.

But when they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up, and said to them, “He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”

And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

And when they heard it, they began to go out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman, where she was, in the midst.

And straightening up, Jesus said to her, “Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?”

And she said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more.”

(John 8:5-11 NAS)

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This story paints one of the Scripture's most beautiful portraits of forgiveness. It is true that some sins leave deeper scars than others. But God has given us a choice. Those scars can become emblems of bitterness or reminders of grace. Adultery leaves deep wounds, indeed. But God's healing hand gently covers the scar. He covers it with love until its faint reminder serves never to self-condemnation, only to Christ's exaltation. We can do nothing about the past but give it to God and profit by it. There is no one here who is sinless and can condemn us but Jesus, and He has chosen to forgive us instead. But He very clearly makes this statement, and it is our prelude to the rest of this lesson:

Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

(John 8:11b)

You don't have to do a lot of counseling to realize how deep the marks of immorality go into a life. The inability of some to fully believe that God has cleansed the record serves as a stumbling block from Satan to keep them from entering into the fullness of a life in Christ. I think every Christian needs to once and for all bury the past the way God has buried it. When Satan tries to dredge it up again, you can honestly say, "What sin? You will have to see Jesus about that." He then goes to Jesus, and Jesus says, "What sin? You will have to see the Father about that." Then Satan goes to the Father and He says, "What sin? You will have to see the Son about that." Before long, Satan figures out that he is being given the run around and the accuser has no ammunition left. Let's pray for just a moment before we go further in this lesson, a prayer of burial. Let's pray.

Dear Lord,

As we approach Your word in this lesson, we approach it in a spirit of awe at the clarity of Your moral absolutes. But also, Father, we are awed at the depth of Your mercy. We pray for the grace to bury the past even the way You have. We want to see no more the sins we have committed as walls that render us unworthy to be used. May those walls tumble, Father, because of Your forgiveness, may the scars that remain, however slight, be but tools to equip us unto holiness. May they be gentle reminders to go our way and sin no more. We hereby declare dead by the authority of Jesus, the power of those past offenses. We hereby declare that we shall never again allow Satan to use them against us. Thank you for covering us in Jesus' blood and thus making us totally whole

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and totally forgiven. As we once and for all bury the past, grant us an insatiable hunger for holiness in the future.

For we pray in Jesus' name,

Amen.

I would like to give you an outline for this lesson and the next lesson as well for it is a two-part series entitled: "Adultery: Disease of the Eye". It is divided into these parts:

I- The Foundation: the Symptoms of the Disease

II- The Evaluation: the Cause and Effects

III- The Application

To remind of us of why we are here and why we are studying this subject, we have been searching out the Living Legends of Scripture. We are, in particular, looking at the legend of Moses, a man after God's own heart. We have come to the place in Moses' life where God has called him up to the top of Mount Sinai. There God is giving Moses ten foundations for living. These are ten basic principles on which to build a godly life. We commonly refer to them as the Ten Commandments.

For the sake of review, the first three commandments or principles, 1) *thou shalt have no other gods*, 2) *thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images* and 3) *thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain*, speak of the essence of God the Father, the image of God the Son and the expression of God the Spirit. They form the three cornerstones on which the Christian life is built. The fourth principle, *remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*, speaks of the Sabbath rest of God and the believer at rest in God. It forms the foundation which rests its weight on the three cornerstones.

God then gave Moses six pillars or principles of life which rest their weight on this foundation. The first of the three is the pillar of respect, *honor your father and your mother*. The next is the pillar of life, *thou shalt not kill*. The next is the pillar of holiness, *thou shalt not commit adultery*. These hold up the first floor. The second three, the pillar of rights, *thou shalt not steal*, the pillar of honesty, *thou shalt not bear false witness*, and the pillar of contentment, *thou shalt not covet*, are superimposed on those three and they hold up the second story, the even deeper attitudes that make up the mind of Christ in the Christian.

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In this lesson, we have come to look at the third pillar. It is the pillar of holiness. God's simple word to Moses is

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

(Exodus 20:14)

The whole of God's word resounds in unison, "Amen". It is very clear. It is perfectly absolute. It leaves absolutely no margin for questioning the mind of God. The Scripture speaks without apology and says that adultery, fornication and all forms of moral compromise as well as all forms of moral perversion such as homosexuality are outside the will of God. He will never ever change His mind or change His standards. He cannot and still be God.

Do you ever praise God for absolutes? In a morally degenerate society where the world has come to accept what only a generation ago was unacceptable, praise God for absolutes. Premarital sex is unacceptable to God. It always has been and always will be. It will not change. Live-in marriages are unacceptable to God. They always have been and always will be. Adultery is unacceptable to God. It always has been and it always will be. Male/male relationships or female/female relationships are unacceptable to God. They always have been and always will be. Pornography, vulgarity and obscenity of all forms are unacceptable to God. They always have been and always will be. No matter what any court of law says, or what laws any government passes, you will never change the severity of moral impurity in the eyes of a holy God.

Men and women were created for holiness. Sex was placed into marriage by divine decree for specific purposes and God blessed it. But before marriage or outside of marriage God condemns sex. Its misuse defiles the very beauty of the message its proper use conveys. If you are not sure your children understand that, go straight home today and show them from the word of God that the law of God where sex is concerned is beautiful and complete and absolute. *It absolutely will not change.*

The problem is that our children live in the world and the world they live in is being saturated by a barrage of immoral, humanistic lies. These lies are a smokescreen Satan has designed to cloud over the moral absolutes on which civilized society has been built. These absolutes find their roots in a tablet of stone on the top of a mountain where a man named Moses met with his precious God. Please forgive me for the outburst of criticism, but the major offender is in your home and in mine. Most of our homes today

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come equipped with a garbage disposal in the kitchen and a garbage dispenser in the den. It is called television. Try just spending two hours a day in the afternoon and two hours a day at night for one week, appropriating the barrage of moral and spiritual statements it spits out and you will conclude the following. I call them the “twelve moral laws of television”.

- 1- Sensual behavior is becoming. It even sells blue jeans.
- 2- Perversion is natural. Only narrow-minded fanatics find it disgusting.
- 3- Adultery is a normal expression of adult freedom. Everybody does it.
- 4- Traditional, Biblical roles in the home are discriminating and antiquated. Mom home with the kids and Dad, an authority figure, out earning the living and coming home doesn't fly anymore.
- 5- Divorce and remarriage is an exciting new alternative to boredom.
- 6- Rebellion to all forms of authority is an expression of courage and character.
- 7- Premarital sex is normal. Virginity and moral holiness are peculiar.
- 8- Live-in relationships are an exciting new concept which offer maximum pleasure and minimum responsibility.
- 9- Religious leaders and pastors are best characterized as either effeminate, ineffectual or con men. Every time you see a man who represents the things of God in a movie or on a television program, make note of how they characterize that person.
- 10- Beauty is defined by external attractiveness and the key to that is bottled glamour such as make-up, toothpaste, eyelashes and sensuality in dress.
- 11- Alcohol and other intoxicants are the key expressions of manliness. If you are a real man, no downstream beer will do.
- 12- Those to idolize are those who entertain us, those who are beautiful, those who are strong, those who are successful, and those who make money.

These are the twelve commandments of the entertainment industry. They violate the very fabric of God's absolutes. In one

generation the acceptable, moral standards of western society have snowballed downhill at such an accelerated pace that the teaching of *thou shalt not commit adultery* has given way to teaching means of birth control in junior high school. We, as evangelical Christians, sit with our children huddled around our 25" garbage dispensers decrying the moral decline of society. Just watching the church at large dealing with homosexuality and drugs and divorce, we see that Christians are having a difficult time separating compassion from compromise. In the name of love, even evangelicals are buying Satan's standard with an, "Oh, well, that is just the way the world is today."

My friend, it may be the way the world is today, but it is not the way God is. He hates it. We are supposed to hate it, too. The Scripture says, *Yea ye who love God, hate evil*. We are to love the sinner the way God loves us, but never accept the sin itself as normal, or ignore it within the body of Christ as though it will not affect the whole body.

Paul made this clear in I Corinthians 5:6 where he said,

Don't you know that a little leaven will spoil the whole lump?
(paraphrase)

The problem was a moral problem. A member of the Corinthian church was committing immorality with his own stepmother. The Corinthians were proud of their "loving spirit". They had continued to accept him and treat him as though it was a choice he made with no necessary consequences. I'm sure you would have looked on and seen no difference between God's standards in the church and the standards of the people of Corinth. Paul said, "*Here is how you show God's love to this man: Remind him of God's standards and then cease having fellowship with him. Deliver him to the devil until he gets his fill of sin and repents*". Paul went on, *you can't keep from spending time with adulterous unbelievers, that is your ministry, but don't ever lower the standards of holiness within the church (paraphrase)*. The underlying principle in I Corinthians 5 is this, that it is a rotten, degenerating world out there, but we have been called unto holiness.

When the church lowers its standards of morality and, in the name of love, confuses compromise with compassion, it will lose its power. The world does not need a cheap imitation of what it already has. It needs to see a dynamic, holy, set apart, distinctively different body of men and women with love that reaches out to the

depths of society, coupled with holiness that never moves an inch from God's standards. As the world grows sicker and sicker, the church of Jesus Christ had better become increasingly whole and increasingly holy for God has brought us into the kingdom for such a time as this. You may say, "Preach it brother! Right on! The world has a problem, Amen. The church has a problem. Amen."

Isn't it great that God has us? Or are we evangelicals not like that proud, pious, cardboard saint Jesus spoke of in Luke 18, who cried, *we thank you Lord, that we are not like them.* Ought not we to be on our knees before God crying, "Oh God, be merciful to me. Oh God, be merciful to us, we are sinners. We are a company of adulterers by Jesus' definition in need of grace to become increasingly holy in an increasingly unholy world."

There is an epidemic out there, beloved. It is a contagious epidemic. We as Christians not only have been exposed, we have the symptoms. These symptoms indicate we need treatment. Our doctor is the only One who has a cure. Ought we not to pay Him a visit? We will not talk about the ills of an evil world, but rather present ourselves for an examination. I thought you might want to do that, so I have made an appointment with the Great Physician. I am asking you to go with me.

First, we have to sign a release to allow Him to have His discerning eye minister to us. The release is found in Psalm 139 and it goes like this:

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts:

And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. (Psalm 139:23,24)

This doctor knows us well. He was the one who delivered us. He was there while we were being formed in utter seclusion, verse 15 says. It was He, the Master Surgeon, who verse 13 says made all of the delicate, inner parts of our body and knit them together in our mother's womb. Is He not the same Physician who has treated us all of these years, and does He not have all our records? Verse 16 says that He saw us before we were born and scheduled each day of our lives before we began to breathe, and all of our days are recorded in His book. Is He not the most concerned, compassionate Physician to ever live?

How precious it is Lord, to realize that You are thinking about me constantly!

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I can't even count how many times a day your thoughts turn towards me. And when I waken in the morning, you are still thinking of me!
(Psalm 139:17,18 TLB)

There is no doubt about His credentials. So let's submit ourselves for diagnosis.

Ushered into the doctor's office, we are seated in front of one of the kindest, most compassionate men we have ever seen. On His desk is a plaque which says simply, "Doctor Jehovah, General Practice of Spiritual Medicine". Softly He begins to explain how serious the disease of immorality really is. He reminds us that it has reached epidemic proportions. It has reached such proportions that many of His own patients have been infected and are totally unaware of how sick they are. He reads from His medical book from Exodus 20:14 and Deuteronomy 5 which plainly state that it is a must never to commit adultery. No one who does escapes the disease.

He then explains that there is now a cure. There was a time when death was inevitable. He reads to us from Deuteronomy,

If a man be found with a married woman both of them shall die so that they can put away evil from Israel.

(Deuteronomy 22:22 paraphrased)

Now society has softened its punishment and man has mistaken grace for a license to sin and forgotten how dangerous this disease really is. He looks tenderly at us and asks, "Would you allow Me to show you how serious it is?"

Many Christians do not realize the serious implications of any form or moral deviation from the plan of God. Most young people do not recognize the intense danger of toying with moral impurity by lowering their standards of physical contact in dating. Thus they allow themselves to become vulnerable to a more serious violation. Nor do they realize that simply by entering into physical contact that arouses more desire, they have committed adultery, spiritually. Most adults and young people do not realize that to attend that movie where sexual compromise is portrayed on the screen as beautiful, is to accept its standards and is an affront to God. Most adults do not realize that to read magazines and books, even socially acceptable ones that portray sex as anything other than what it is, God's plan for the completion of marriage, is to say to those children, "Decide for yourselves whether sex is holy or not." My friend, those children are not wise enough to decide

for themselves. We have to teach them line upon line, precept upon precept. As you sit around and laugh at those compromising scenes on television and treat them as legitimate entertainment, you teach them that sex is something to be laughed at, something to make light of. You are implying that if live-in lovers are that funny on television, they can't be that much of an affront to God.

As you rush out and buy those products which are sold by sensual models using sexual innuendoes, they subconsciously believe sex sells. It is a marketable commodity that is cheap, commercial and pays off. As you listen to off-colored jokes at work and laugh and then share your testimony to your fellow employees and say that God hates immorality, what you are really saying is that God is wrong and He is too serious. You think it is a joking matter, just like the rest of the guys.

Now I want to tell you, the Great Physician says lovingly, that all forms of sexual and moral compromise break the heart of God. With that, He pointed to a chart on His wall that said this:

All forms of moral compromise are sins against God in four ways.

- 1- They are sins against the holiness of God.
- 2- They are sins against the temple of God.
- 3- They are sins against the marriage of God.
- 4- They are sins against the plan of God.

Softly He added, "If we ever really come to see those four violations in their proper perspective, I believe our level of moral obedience will change." This is how He began, "First of all, all forms of moral compromise are a sin against the *holiness* of God." He read I Peter where it says this:

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

(I Peter 1:13-16)

Truth 1- God, who is perfect holiness, has ordained for His children a life of moral holiness. The standards never change even when the world's standards slide into oblivion. What He expects of

us is a life of holiness. What He has given us are clear guidelines and the power to obey. We have His Spirit so that we can *be* holy because He in us *is* holy. It is true that God is a God of love, but His love is an expression of His holiness so that while He never ceases expressing love to us, He hates it when we read books that characterize adultery as acceptable. He hates it when we accept the infidelity of other Christians with a ho-hum instead of falling to our knees in tears and staying there until we have prayed our hearts out for a spirit of repentance. When we don't see adultery as breaking God's heart and thus ours, we are saying by omission that it wouldn't be so bad for us either. That is a sin against the nature of God who is holy.

Truth 2- All forms of moral impurity are sins against the temple of God.

Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

(I Corinthians 6:9-12)

And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.

What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

(I Corinthians 6:14-20)

Do you understand what that passage says? It says that at Calvary Jesus Christ purchased you and labeled you as His prized possession. What He bought was the whole package, body, soul and spirit. Now His Spirit lives in your body. So whatever you do to that body, you do to Him. If you involve it in any form of moral impurity from what you see to what you do, Jesus shares that experience. When you join your body with anyone other than your spouse, you join a part of Christ to what God considers to be a prostitute and He hates it. Every time you watch such behavior on television or at the movies, you subject Christ in you to watching something that is an affront to His nature. You give the actor watching your approval. The next time you are in the middle of a compromising situation, just turn to the Lord and ask Him if He is enjoying it. Paul tells us to flee fornication and not to associate with anything that even condones or accepts moral impurity.

Truth 3- You sin against your relationship with God when you compromise any form of moral standards. He is the bridegroom. We are the bride. Yours is an unbreakable contract. His is a life of total faithfulness. He will never leave you or forsake you.

God is faithful by whom you were called. (I Corinthians 1)

Faithful is He who has called you. (I Thessalonians 5)

Jesus is our faithful priest. (Hebrews 2)

He is faithful and just to forgive. (I John 1)

The essence of God's nature is faithfulness. The world says to love them and leave them. God says to love until the end.

Here is how it works. When you receive Christ, you become married to God. He takes ownership of your body and vows to love you for all of eternity. Therefore, any act of moral infidelity is a violation of your marriage contract with Him. Because He understands our physical needs, because He desires that we be fruitful and multiply and because of the picture He wants to draw for mankind, He allows each man one woman and each woman one man, except for those few special called ones He calls to a life of singleness; to be married only to Him. To the rest of us, He allows one mate and frees us from that relationship only through death. His perfect plan is for one man and one woman to enter into one marriage in Christ. Into that relationship He grants the privilege of sex as husband and wife, and in that context only, to have a physical relationship and complete the spiritual union with one another and thus honor God. This relationship is so binding that

in Christ each one as Paul says in I Corinthians 7 now has joint title to the other's body even as Christ has title to theirs. Their freedom to engage in a physical relationship honors God only so long as it takes place in the confines of that marriage, never before and never outside of that relationship. To violate that principle is to commit a grievous sin against our very relationship with God.

Truth 4- Moral impurity is a sin against the plan of God. Scripture teaches that God was married to Israel. When Israel rejected His holiness and committed idolatry, Jehovah concluded that Israel had “played the harlot and committed adultery.” Then Jesus came and God's Son called out a bride for Himself. He called His bride the church. In Ephesians 5 Paul draws it together and brings it to light by painting a portrait of marriage, superimposing it on the canvas of salvation. He says:

Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.

Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it; (Ephesians 5:22-25)

For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (Ephesians 5:30-32)

Do you see what Paul is saying? He is saying that tucked within every marriage is the mysterious portrait of Christ and His bride, the church. How a man loves his wife shows the world how Christ loves the church. How a woman submits to her husband shows the world how the church reverences Christ. So then, the marriage relationship physically was designed by God to spiritually depict our union with Him. That is why *any deviation from His plan distorts His purpose and mars His portrait.*

The picture portrayed by sex without marriage says to the world that man can find spiritual fulfillment without commitment and without salvation. That is a lie. Adultery, sex with another besides your mate, says that man can find spiritual fulfillment in Christ but He alone is not enough. That is a lie. Homosexual relationships

depict that man can find spiritual fulfillment within himself. That is another lie.

So then, any moral compromise is a sin against the character of God, against the temple of God, against our marriage with God and against the plan of God. Thus it cannot be tolerated by the child of God. You see why God's standards of holiness must be total and unreservedly set apart as our standards *no matter what the world says*. Do you see why the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in our times needs to take a fresh look at the holiness of God amidst a generation where moral decline has become a way of life? Do you see why the standard of the holiness of God must stand ever so clearly, that the world may see that there is a difference and that there is a cure for the sickness called moral compromise?

In the next lesson we will return to Dr. Jehovah's office as He completes His examination. Don't be surprised if He refers us to His Son, Dr. Jesus, who has joined His practice and who, as a cardiologist, will help trace our moral impurity to a problem of the heart. He in turn may well call in His partner, Dr. Comforter, who is an ophthalmologist. He has a theory that may well prove that adultery is really a disease of the eye.

Until our next visit, the Great Physician cautions us to stay away from exposure to the radiation of our personal garbage dispenser or anything else that brings into our lives a compromising spirit. He admonishes us to take large amounts of God's word, rest in His spirit, and exercise godliness, as our prerogative to flee evil and cleave to holiness. Our next appointment is next week and the doctor has promised to be there with both His diagnosis and His cure. I think we ought to be there, too.

For Focus and Application

1- How can you, as a Christian, keep the balance in your life between guilt over real conviction and freedom from forgiveness? How does Satan try to cheapen grace until we "continue in sin that grace may abound"? If you have never accepted God's complete forgiveness for sins of the past, reread John, chapter 8. Hold a funeral service and bury the past. As you do, realize that the consequences of those sins may go on and on, but in God's sight *you are as clean as if you had never sinned*.

2- How has the media and society in general succeeded in lowering the standards of morality until things that were once

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considered grievous are now the norm? How has Satan deceived believers into either a form of legalism that breeds hypocrisy or a form of compromise in the name of love that defies absolutes? Why does the church seem to move from one extreme to the other?

3- How can the church best show love to those who claim to be believers, but who engage in immorality and do not repent? How does love and truth merge?

4- How have we as evangelicals, in fighting immorality, often appeared to be condescending and hypocritical? Should we change our standards? Should we change our attitudes? What is the problem?

5- Memorize I Peter 1:15,16. How can we best come to grasp how holy God is? How do we form our concept of God's holiness? Why is Scripture memory essential to changing that concept? What ways does Satan use to convince us that God's standards are unreachable?

6- Do you realize that your body is the temple of God? What does I Corinthians 6 tell us about how immorality and compromise affect that body? Try acknowledging this week every time you compromise in what you watch or do that Jesus in you is being asked to do the same?

7- What does being married to Christ mean to you? How should His faithfulness to us affect our faithfulness to His moral standards of purity?

8- Try to paint a picture in your mind of Christ as the bridegroom and you as His bride. Try to picture *every form of moral compromise in your life as adultery where that relationship is concerned*. Ask God to forgive you and covenant with Him to put the watchman of God's word at the entrance to your eyes and your heart, that you might not sin against Him. Meditate on Genesis 39:9 each time you are tempted to compromise. Just pray back to Him, "*How can I do this great evil and sin against the Lord?*"

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