

Lesson  
2

# Before Marriage

God's standards of right and wrong are intended to make His sons and daughters fit and able to live life to the fullest. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 reminds us that a runner undergoes strict discipline in order to be physically fit for a race. Because he runs to obtain a prize, he denies himself certain *immediate* pleasures that he may receive a far greater one.

In the relationship between a man and woman, God's standards are not meant as ways of denying them pleasure, but of directing them to the greatest pleasure possible. God created man with natural appetites, some of which find expression in the sexual union, but His Word affirms that these intimacies are to be reserved for marriage.

Generally a husband and wife, whose lives are characterized by discipline and unselfishness, adopt these patterns of behavior *before* marriage. Others, who before becoming man and wife, indulge in immediate pleasure at the cost of moral restraints, carry scars that may never heal.

In this lesson we will study how those who treat God's laws lightly are denied the greater pleasure, the better prize God has in store for them.



**In this lesson you will study . . .**

God Prepares You for Marriage  
God Expects You to Keep Pure  
You Can Keep God's Standards

**This lesson will help you . . .**

- Explain what God's moral standard is for a man and woman before marriage.
- Name some of the ill effects in lives of those who disregard this standard.
- Give the scriptural basis for ways to keep oneself pure.

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**GOD PREPARES YOU FOR MARRIAGE**

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**Objective 1.** *Explain what God's standards are for a man and woman before marriage.*

When God created the human race, He made man and woman according to His own perfect plan. He made provision for family life. He formed the human body in such a way that children could be born from the sexual union of a man and woman.

God also built into the body of the child a process of development which would prepare it in due time for the responsibilities of an adult.

As boys and girls pass from childhood into youth, many changes take place in their bodies. With these physical changes come new interests, feelings, and desires. The boy begins to take an interest in girls. The girl is attracted to boys. There is nothing wrong with this. It is just a part of God's plan to prepare them for marriage.

**Genesis 1:27.** He created them male and female.

However, it is very important for young people to understand that God has standards for their behavior before marriage—rules that they must follow if they expect to have a happy home later on.



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**For You To Do**

**1** Is it wrong for a young man to feel attracted to a young woman? Explain your answer.

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**2** Who gave us the sexual urge?

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**3** Who has the right to say how the sexual urge must be used?

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**GOD EXPECTS YOU TO KEEP PURE**

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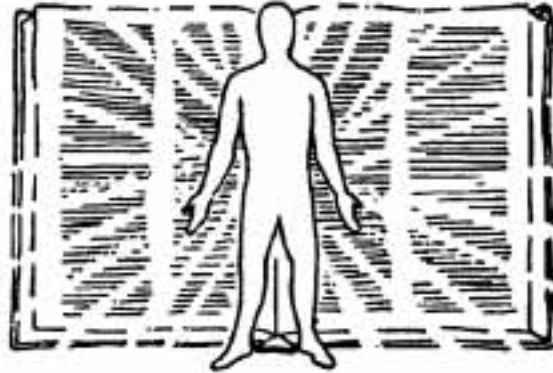
**For God to Live in You**

**Objective 2.** *Explain the three reasons why God wants you to respect the body He has given you.*

God wants you to respect the body that He has given you and treat it in a way that will honor Him. You are to keep it clean both physically and morally for three reasons:

- For God to live in you.
- For the sake of your family.
- For the sake of your health.

Since you belong to God, you have become God's temple or dwelling place. This means that you have a solemn responsibility to keep your body sacred, for God's Spirit lives in you (1 Corinthians 3:16-17). And while you have other responsibilities as a Christian, such as to your family and to yourself in terms of your own health, your primary responsibility is to maintain yourself as a holy, pure, and sanctified vessel appropriate for God to dwell in.



**1 Timothy 5:22.** Keep yourself pure.

The Bible warns young men against going after prostitutes or loose women. It absolutely forbids sexual relations outside of marriage, homosexuality, and other forms of sexual perversion. Read carefully 1 Corinthians 6:15-17, 19.

Notice some of the consequences that result when principles of purity are ignored. First, immoral persons often contract venereal disease. Not only does this result in the loss of health and cause shame; it may also result in permanent defects that are transmitted from those who have become infected to their children, causing blindness, mental illness, and other serious physical defects.

Where immorality results in pregnancy, the young woman may have to raise the child in great hardship outside the normal marriage relationship, without the security she would derive from a legitimate marriage union. Thus, her child would be deprived of the love and care of both parents.



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**For You To Do**

**4** Name three reasons why God expects you to keep pure.

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**5** A verse in the Bible which tells us to keep pure is

- a) 1 Corinthians 6:16.
- b) 1 Timothy 5:22.
- c) Genesis 3:15.

**6** According to 1 Corinthians 6:15, what is the Christian's body a part of?

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7 What can a Christian home provide for children, that children born outside of marriage may not have?

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8 Name at least two defects which children may have as a result of the immorality of their parents.

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**For the Sake of Your Health**

Don't think that lack of sexual relations before marriage will harm you. Keeping God's standards is much more important than self-indulgence. The book of Proverbs, in the Bible, has some excellent advice about this. Read carefully Proverbs 7:1-27.

Even if a person doesn't contract venereal disease, there are other threats to the health in premarital sex relations, or sex before marriage. For the woman there is always the danger of an unwanted pregnancy. And for both there is the damage to the emotions and to the health in general that comes from the sense of guilt and fear. The fear may be of pregnancy, of discovery, of other results of the affair, or of punishment for violating social moral principles or breaking God's laws.

And, of course, disobedience to God, if not remedied by repentance and spiritual renewal, brings spiritual sickness and eventually spiritual death. So, for the sake of your own physical, mental, and spiritual health, keep yourself pure.

**1 Corinthians 6:18.** Avoid immorality. . . . the man who is guilty of sexual immorality sins against his own body.



**For You To Do**

9 What specific sin mentioned in this part of the lesson is a sin against a man's own body?

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10 Name three things mentioned in Proverbs 7 to which the man led astray by an immoral woman is compared.

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11 How do premarital sex relations endanger the health of a person?

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**YOU CAN KEEP GOD'S STANDARDS**

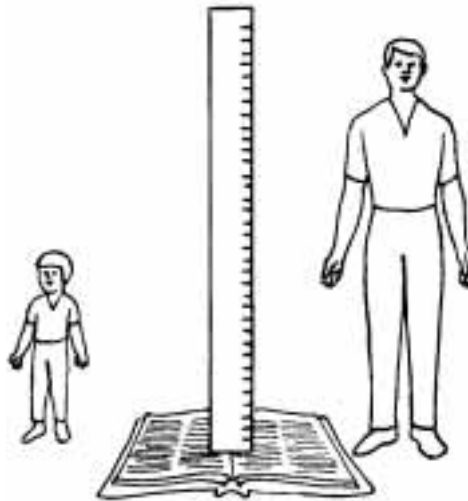
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**By Controlling Your Feelings**

**Objective 3.** Describe the resources available to us to keep ourselves pure.

Learning self-control is a very important part of growing up. A little child may kick and scream if he can't have his way, but you have learned not to act that way. Self-control is an essential part of a happy marriage. Thus, God gives each person the opportunity throughout his adolescent years to develop it. His Word says, "Be sober, self-controlled, and orderly" (1 Timothy 3:2).

#### KEEP GOD'S STANDARDS



Satan especially tempts young people sexually. They experience strong sexual urges and desires. These feelings are normal in a developing body, but they must be controlled.

Don't say that you can't control your desires. God has given you a spirit that makes you different from the animals. You don't have to be a slave to your feelings. God gave you these things to help you control yourself:

- Intelligence to understand what to do.
- His Word to guide you.
- A conscience through which He speaks to you.
- A will, or the power to choose what to do.

Best of all, God Himself will help you control your desires if you ask Him to.

**2 Timothy 2:22.** Avoid the passions of youth, and strive for righteousness, faith, love, and peace, together with those who with a pure heart call out to the Lord for help.



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#### For You To Do

**12** The *best* source of help in controlling your desires is

- a) your conscience.
- b) your intelligence.
- c) God's Word and His help.

#### **By Controlling Your Thoughts**

The desire to do wrong comes to us through our thoughts. The more you think about the temptation, the stronger the desire will be. So you need to control your thoughts.

**James 1:14-15.** But a person is tempted when he is drawn away and trapped by his own evil desire. Then his evil desire conceives and gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Many of your thoughts come from what you hear. So don't listen to dirty stories or take part in conversation that would lead you toward immoral living.

**Ephesians 5:3.** Since you are God's people, it is not right that any matters of sexual immorality or indecency or greed should even be mentioned among you.

Temptation also comes from what you look at. Satan tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. He got Eve to look at it and think about how good it would taste until she finally ate it and gave some to Adam to eat. Then they were punished for disobeying God.

Satan still tempts people by getting them to look at things that will stir up lust. He uses indecent pictures, movies, sex-filled books, the dance, and suggestive fashions in clothing to tempt people. Don't let him persuade you to participate in these things.

Guard your thoughts and don't let them wander. If you find yourself thinking the wrong kind of thoughts put them out of your mind. Think of something else. Start doing something that will keep your mind busy.

**Philippians 4:8.** Fill your minds with those things that are good and that deserve praise: things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, and honorable.



**For You To Do**

**13** Why is it important that you control your thoughts?

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**14** Name several things Satan uses to tempt people to sin.

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**By Overcoming Temptation**

To overcome temptation you should do two things: avoid it as much as possible and refuse to give in to it when it comes to you. Don't go into places and situations that will tempt you to do wrong.

Too much familiarity between men and women may lead to temptation. So be friendly but treat people with respect and expect them to respect you.

Go by God's standards—not those of the movies—in your courtship. Learn to respect the companion you have chosen to be with. Try to develop the kind of relationship that will deepen your respect for each other and at the same time please God, and avoid the kind of familiarity that

will cause you to lose this respect and inflame your passions. Obviously, petting is like playing with fire. So avoid temptation and don't give Satan an opportunity to excite you to indulge in a "liberty" that can only lead to shame and spiritual failure.

The Bible tells us the story of Joseph, a young man who loved God. By running away from temptation, he set a good example for young people. He was a slave in the house of Potiphar. The wife of Potiphar tried to get Joseph to be her lover but he refused. One day when she and Joseph were alone in the house, she tried her best to seduce him. Joseph said: "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" When Potiphar's wife kept on insisting, Joseph ran out of the house and escaped from the temptation.

Potiphar's wife was so angry that she accused him falsely and had him put in jail. God took care of Joseph, delivered him from prison, and made him prime minister of Egypt. Thus, Joseph's high moral standard paid tremendous dividends. This example demonstrates a principle that we can count on: God blesses those who uphold His standards.

**1 Peter 4:4-5.** And now the heathen are surprised when you do not join them in the same wild and reckless living, and so they insult you. But they will have to give an account of themselves to God.



**15** A man in the Bible who set a good example by resisting a woman's immoral advances was

- a) Potiphar.
- b) Joseph.
- c) Peter.

**16** What can you do if unsaved friends and relatives make fun of you for not taking part in some of the things they do? (Use your notebook.)

**17** How should members of the opposite sex treat one another, so as to avoid temptation?

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### **By True Love**

True love includes respect and honor. So the man who truly loves a woman will consider her welfare and her reputation as more important than his own personal desires. True love would not want to ruin the girl's reputation or risk making her pregnant before marriage. True love demands self-control.

Don't trust too much in your own power of self-control. The wisest thing to do is to avoid temptation. So wait until after you are married for the intimate caresses that should be exchanged only between husband and wife.

Some men try to get a girl to "prove her love" by letting them do whatever they want to with her. Remember, the man who asks this doesn't do it out of true love, but out of selfish desire.

Your love for the person whom you plan to marry will also help you avoid the temptation to get involved with other men or women. You know that you can have a much happier marriage if both you and your partner wait and keep yourselves pure for each other. So even your plans for a happy marriage will help you avoid immorality.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.** God wants you to be holy and completely free from sexual immorality. Each of you men should know how to live with his wife in a holy and honorable way, not with a lustful desire, like the heathen who do not know God.



**For You To Do**

**18** What does true love include?

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**19** Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5 several times. What is the sin spoken of in these verses?

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**By God's Help**

It takes the power of God to make you strong enough to overcome temptation under every circumstance. You need God's help to control your thoughts and your actions. Unless you have His help, sooner or later sin in your heart will come out in evil thoughts and drive you into wrong behavior. "For from his heart come the evil ideas which lead him to kill, commit adultery, and do other immoral things" (Matthew 15:19). So you need to give your life to God. Ask Him to forgive all of your sins and help you to live right.

Jesus came to save us all from the power of sin. Many young people who found it impossible to live a clean life by themselves have been completely changed by the power of God. Now they live pure, happy lives.

Satan will tempt you after you are saved, but with the Word of God to guide you and the power of God to help you, you can overcome temptation.

**1 Peter 4:2.** From now on, then, you must live the rest of your earthly lives controlled by God's will and not by human desires.



**For You To Do**

**20** Is it impossible to live up to God's standards for our lives? Explain your answer.

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**21** What is the very first step you must take before God can help you live right?

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**22** Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11 and 1 Peter 4:2 several times; then circle the letter in front of each TRUE statement.

- a** You need to be saved so that Satan will no longer tempt you.
- b** Only as we depend upon God for help, are we able to overcome temptation.
- c** Because God is a God of love, nobody will be kept out of his kingdom.



## Check Your Answers

- 12** c) God's Word and His help.
- 1** No, it is part of God's plan to prepare them for marriage.
- 13** Temptation comes through the thoughts, and the more you think about it the stronger it becomes.
- 2** God.
- 14** Indecent pictures, movies, books on sex, dancing, drugs, suggestive clothing.
- 3** God.
- 15** b) Joseph.
- 4** For God to live in you, for your family, for your health.
- 16** Your answer. I would pray for them, and ask God to help me live by Bible standards and be a good example.
- 5** b) 1 Timothy 5:22.
- 17** With respect.
- 6** The body of Christ.
- 18** Respect and honor.
- 7** The love and care of both parents.
- 19** Sexual immorality.
- 8** Blindness or mental illness.
- 20** In your own strength, it is impossible; with God's help, it is possible.
- 9** Sexual immorality.
- 21** Give Him your life.
- 10** An ox going to slaughter, a deer walking into a trap, a bird going into a net.
- 22** Statement **b** is true.
- 11** The person may contract venereal disease; guilt and fear resulting from these relations damage the emotions and health in general.