

RANDY ALCORN

the PURITY PRINCIPLE

GOD'S SAFEGUARDS *for*
LIFE'S DANGEROUS TRAILS



the PURITY PRINCIPLE

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Learning Activities and Leader Guide
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week 1

day 1

God's Plan for Sexual Purity

Smart or Stupid?



Lucinda, a Christian, decided that her husband wasn't romantic enough. A decent, hardworking, churchgoing guy, he just didn't live up to the Prince Charming images of Hollywood. So Lucinda became involved with another man, eventually marrying him. Years later, after bringing unspeakable grief to her family and herself, she came back to Christ. "I wish I had my first husband back," she admitted. "But now it's too late." God has forgiven Lucinda and still has plans for her. Yet she has paid a fearful price. Lucinda has forfeited what was hers—and what could have been hers.

Name some blessings Lucinda forfeited by her decision.

Lucinda gave up a clear conscience and a priceless sense of peace; warm, satisfying years of companionship; the respect and affection of children and grandchildren; a ministry touching many lives; or rewards—exceeding all imagination—in the life to come. Yes, God has forgiven Lucinda, but the consequences

of her choices remain. She still lives with the realization that she could have had so much more if she had followed God's plan for sexual purity.

What do you think is meant by the term *sexual purity*?

Sexual purity is an absolute commitment of your sexual needs, desires, thoughts, and actions to God. For a single person, that commitment includes abstaining from sexual intercourse until marriage. For married people like Lucinda, it means being completely faithful to your spouse in your thoughts and actions.

Sadly, Lucinda thought she was acting in her own best interest when she followed her lust. If we could have obtained an honest interview with her just before she trashed her purity, she would have said: "This is for me. This is for my happiness." Yet it wasn't. Not even close. It never is. Without intending to, Lucinda acted against her own self-interest. What she did wasn't just wrong. It was stupid.

Since the time we were young teenagers, many of us have been told to remain sexually pure, and we were probably given a variety of reasons. The bottom line is: God commands purity and forbids impurity. Purity is right. Impurity is wrong.

Look at what God has to say about sexual purity and impurity.

Match the Scripture reference with the truth found in it.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. Exodus 20:14 | a. Flee from sexual immorality. |
| ___ 2. Acts 15:20 | b. Keep yourself pure. |
| ___ 3. 1 Corinthians 6:18 | c. God has not called us to impurity but to sanctification. |
| ___ 4. Colossians 3:5 | d. Do not commit adultery. |
| ___ 5. 1 Thessalonians 4:7 | e. Put to death whatever in you is worldly. |
| ___ 6. 1 Timothy 5:22 | f. Abstain from sexual immorality. |

As these verses teach, God's position is that purity is always smart; impurity is always stupid. That's what I call the Purity Principle: purity is always smart; impurity is always stupid. Not sometimes. Not usually. Always. You're not an exception. I'm not an exception. There are no exceptions.

In this study we are going to learn why the Purity Principle is true—why it is always smart to follow God's design for purity and why it is always stupid to do otherwise. You might be thinking: *That's not so profound. I'm a Christian, and I know the difference between right and wrong.* But surveys indicate that the sexual morality of today's Christians has become almost indistinguishable from that of non-Christians. It's often impossible to discern where the world ends and the church begins.

**Check each statement that is true for believers
who live in a sex-saturated culture.**

- It's OK for us to adopt the sexually permissive habits of our culture.
- It's easy for us to adopt the impure lifestyle of our culture.
- We will eventually give in to sexual temptation.
- We must fight hard to maintain a lifestyle of purity.

Being a believer in a culture that constantly bombards us with sexual messages doesn't mean that believers are destined to succumb to sexual temptation. It means that it's easy for us to adopt attitudes and thought patterns that could lead to immoral, ungodly choices. We must make a concerted effort to reject these influences and to choose the life of purity that God wants for us.

Our failure in the area of purity has devastating consequences, not only for our personal lives and the lives of our families but also for the church as a whole. Why? Because if believers are just like the world, we have nothing to offer it. An unholy church will never win an unholy world to Christ.

Why is sexual purity such an integral part of a rewarding life? Why is premarital and extramarital sex so toxic to joy?

Why have so many tried and tried and tried—yet failed and failed and failed? How can we avoid the lures and snares that lock us into bondage and tear away the abundant life? These questions—and others like them—have been discussed for years. God has graciously given us examples in His Word of those who did—and didn't—fare so well.

Assess your attitude toward purity as you begin this study.

- I want to learn God's teachings on purity and live a pure life that pleases Him.
- I'm not convinced the issue of purity is very important.

It's no overstatement to call this a life-and-death issue. The time you take to complete the rest of this study could save you from disaster. It could set you on a course for which you—and your family—will always be grateful.

THE DAY IN REVIEW

Review today's lesson.

What was the most important concept you read today?

How will this truth challenge you to be like Christ?

Think about any stupid decisions you have made, thinking that you were acting in your best interest. Ask God to use this study to teach you His standards for purity. Write your prayer below.
