

The Age of Sensuality

Intro:

1. Ph 2:15 – “*Without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation.*”
2. No need to compare our generation with other corrupt cultures such as Corinth. Other cultures may have been more degenerate, but lasciviousness has never been so widely *available* as it is today.
3. Sexual messages are beamed in via satellite, wired in via cable, thrown on our front lawns every morning, delivered by the U.S. mail. We can privately go in search of it anywhere in the world via internet. Children confronted daily at school.

1. The Power of Sensuality

A. Sensual urges have caused the great to fall:

1. Samson was so smitten by the Philistine woman of Timnah that he was vulnerable to her wiles (Jud 14:1-3). Same with Delilah (16:4-5).
2. David was not satisfied with all God’s goodness/gifts; he had to have the “forbidden fruit” – the wife of a loyal soldier/bodyguard (2 Sam 12:7-9).
3. How many celebrities, athletes, politicians – not to mention elders, preachers and other trusted, influential brethren – have been ruined by unbridled lust?

B. Why is sensuality so powerful?

1. Involves *all* physical senses: sight (beauty), smell (perfume), hearing (music, voice), taste and touch. Such produce chemical reactions in the brain.
2. Emotional satisfaction: the need to be loved, desired, depended upon. Adultery often starts with satisfying such needs; beauty is not the issue.
3. It is *God-given desire*. The sexual urge is natural and approved, not evil (unlike drunkenness). While God has confined it to a given sphere, all the natural responses are the same whether directed lawfully or not.

C. Society’s picture of sexuality is a distorted one: It is considered only from standpoint of *pleasure*. Overlooked (or ignored or downplayed) are: disease (condoms, drugs), pregnancy (abortion, day-care, custody courts), crime (policing, jail). Pornography, rape, prostitution, pedophilia, homosexuality are all deviant spin-offs of the wholesale licensing and distribution of lasciviousness.

2. The Standard of Purity

A. Satisfaction of desire: marriage.

1. God has provided a sphere of lawful, healthy, fulfilling sexual expression: marriage. Shared intimacy between husband and wife enriches and deepens a relationship in a way that nothing else can.
2. *“Marriage is honorable among all ...”* (Heb 13:4); cf. 1 Cor 7:2-5.
3. Deviating from this is destructive spiritually, emotionally and socially.

B. In order to remain pure in a sexually soaked culture begins in the mind.

1. Jesus defines lust as intent of the heart (Mt 5:27-28). *“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts ... adulteries, fornications ...”* (Mt 15:19).
2. This begins with how we entertain ourselves: TV, movies, songs. We are gradually being changed by bombardment of sexual imagery. We all have a higher threshold of tolerance than we would have ten years ago.
3. **A special warning:** Internet pornography, phone sex, etc. *You are helping support a degraded, perverted industry opposed to everything godly. You will weaken your resolve to be pure. **You will eventually be found out.***

C. Response to temptation: flee – 1 Cor 6:18. But fleeing alone is not enough; we must actively develop pure thought processes – 2 Tim 2:22.

3. Taking Responsibility for Ourselves

A. We need to stop making excuses and take responsibility for our actions.

1. Certain preacher’s wife: “All men do it.”
2. Liberated woman: “Regardless of what I wear, it’s the man’s fault for lusting.” In an ideal world, lust/rape should not happen. In ideal society, no need for locks, security systems, insurance, etc. We do not live in a vacuum. There are sexual predators and just plain weak men around us.

B. Men, we need to cultivate purity: *“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why, then, should I look upon a young woman?”* (Job 31:1). Ladies, you need to account for what stimulates a man’s sexual interests and dress/act accordingly.

C. The need to “possess our vessels” – 1 Th 4:3-8.

Conclusion: If we are not honest with ourselves, we will succumb to temptation.