

But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: no immoral, impure, or greedy person – such a man is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. Therefore do not be partners with them.

God's Wrath

Ephesians 5:6: **God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.** America wants desperately to believe that human behavior has no serious consequences, at least none that doctors and lawyers can't fix. On behalf of Christ for whom I am authorized to speak I say: **Let no one deceive you with these empty words.**

The AIDS epidemic and the economic recession of 2008 both fit the biblical models of God's judgment on human sin. AIDS is not just about homosexual behavior; it is about the growing rejection of God in the formerly Christian nations of the West. The economic recession is directed specifically at idolatrous greed. Judgment is God's way of saying, "You may not find your way to my door, but I will find my way to your door."

Secular **prophets and priests alike**, disagree. They **all practice deceit. They dress the wound of my people as though it were not serious. "Peace, peace," they say, when there is no peace.** On the other hand, faithful pastors, teachers, evangelists, and prophets say to the people of God and to all who will listen: **Let no one deceive you with these empty words. "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."** (Jeremiah 6:14, 16)

Chastity

Ephesians 5:3 points us to the ancient paths. **Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality.** The apostle said that sexual immorality is **improper for God's holy people.** The present danger facing **God's holy people** in our confusing times is to give up on the ancient paths. The world tries to make us give up by making us believe that keeping sex and children inside marriage is no longer possible or even desirable.

The world has at its disposal powerful instruments of persuasion. Supreme Court decisions, corporate sensitivity training, television, movies, the Internet, and relentless peer pressure bombard us every day with the message that sex outside marriage is okay. It would be foolish to deny the impact this message has all of us. Jesus warned us: **"Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold."** (Matthew 24:12)

Jesus also said not to give up. He said: **"But he who stands firm to the end will be saved."** The world's propaganda conveniently ignores the fact that millions and millions of people still live faithful to the biblical command that **among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality.** But we never hear about it. The people who are faithful to the biblical command don't talk about it, and no movie, book or television show celebrates it.

Many years ago, Billy Graham appeared on a late-night television talk show. Graham talked about how he and his wife, Ruth, abstained from sex before marriage. The live audience hooted at Graham in disbelief and derision. It was an awkward moment for Dr. Billy Graham. The next guest on the show was Pat Boone. He brought the conversation back around to what Billy Graham had said about sexual abstinence. Boone said, "There's one person who didn't think what Billy Graham said was funny at all, and that's Ruth Graham." The studio audience fell silent as a cell phone with a dead battery.

Don't let the world's propaganda intimidate you. Sex between a man and woman inside marriage is where you will find **the ancient paths**. That's **where the good way is**. **Walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.**

Confession

Sex on demand is now the new normal in the United States and Europe. Let's stop complaining about it. Instead, let's **become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe**. Let's keep sex and children inside marriage between a man and a woman for life and be prepared to support each other and our behavior, when necessary, by saying, "I believe that's what Christ wants us to do."

Don't let your past failures hold you back. Whatever sexual sins you have committed in the past, God makes all things new. You are now a citizen of heaven. You know your actions which you now regret will have no place in the coming kingdom of Heaven. Renounce them. Walk in the way of life where there is **not even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people**.

There is a powerful way of dealing with past failures. Sexual sins are the sins we never confess. Proverbs 28:13 says: **He who conceals his sins does not prosper; but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy**. The New Testament picks up this theme in a powerful way in 1 John 1:8-9: **If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he (God) is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins, and purify us from all unrighteousness**.

Before we receive the Lord's Supper, let us acknowledge our sexual sins before God in a solemn act of confession. Let them break your heart. Speak the truth. Renounce evil. Ask God to set your feet on **the ancient paths, where the good way is**. **Walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls**.