

Practical Advice for a Pure Life

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<http://lifeteen.com/practical-advice-for-a-pure-life/>



Who likes a challenge? Some people really enjoy a daunting dare or being told that something is impossible so they can try it anyway.

Well here's my challenge to you. I want you to go sign up for the next big golf tournament and win it. I won't accept second or third place – you have to win. Maybe you've never played before, but I'm sure you at least know how to swing a golf club, right?

So even those of you who like a challenge are probably thinking 'No way!'

It pretty much seems impossible, right? Well a lot of people also view purity in the same light. It's a nice thought, but it really isn't a practical idea.

But what if instead of rejecting the challenge, you decided to work on it daily? What if you admitted that you wouldn't be perfect but that with discipline you might actually be ready to accept the challenge?

The truth is that living a pure life with a pure heart and pure mind is what we were made for. We were created to settle for nothing less. The ability to be pure is inside of you, so please don't sacrifice it because it looks difficult.

I would like to share with you some tips that have helped me (and continue to help me) as I strive for purity.

1. GUARD YOURSELF

It's no secret: what comes in must go back out. For example, when you consistently expose yourself to negativity or profanity through media or even through your friends, it won't be long until those things start coming out of your mouth as well. It isn't too different with purity. To act in a pure and wholesome fashion, you need to be taking in pure and wholesome information. In the same way, if you welcome impurities into your mind, it will affect your decision making down the road. It's for this reason that it's important to 'guard your heart.' That's an expression most of us have heard before, but ultimately it's about guarding your soul. You're purity is a gift. Don't sacrifice it; don't let it be attacked without a fight.

2. BE EXTRA MINDFUL OF YOUR ACTIONS WHEN YOU'RE ALONE

Community is great and having people around us often helps keep us accountable. When you are by yourself, it's easier to make a poor decision or let things slowly slip out of your control. It's wise to be proactive. Maybe you

move the computer out of your bedroom and into a more public area in the house. Maybe you try to not use your phone, computer, or television after a certain time. Not much good is happening on those three devices after midnight anyway.

3. HAVE ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNERS

In my journey, many people along the way have helped keep me in check. My spiritual director and Core members really helped me in high school. In college, my peers and the men I lived with as a Life Teen missionary challenged me and kept me accountable. The brothers and sisters God gives us to journey with are invaluable. I used to have a group of guys in high school that I could call when I was struggling with purity and one of them would talk with me until the struggle passed. I wouldn't be the man I am today without their support.

4. UNDERSTAND THE SPIRIT, NOT JUST THE LAW

For some of us, myself included, telling me not to do something isn't enough of a reason for me not to do it. It helps to have some insight into why we do what we do. Sex isn't bad and your desires don't make you evil. We should seek purity because we know our sexuality is a gift from God and can point us to heaven. In my own journey, I've seen the way an impure life can damage hearts, friendships, self-esteems, and souls. I encourage you to read as much as you can about God's plan for your sexuality. Read through the other blogs on LifeTeen.com about this topic. Pray for the gift to see other people as your brothers and sisters. Pray that God would help you to see your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit. Pray that God would help you understand why purity is important.

5. COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT YOU CAN'T DO IT ALONE

The best advice I ever got for being pure was from a priest while I was on a retreat about a year ago. I shared with him that I was struggling with purity, and was upset because up until recently I had been tackling impurities and fighting them off very well. He said to me, 'My friend, the problem here is that you are trying to tackle this and handle it yourself. You are much too small and temptation is much too big. Only God can win such a fight. Let Him win this battle inside of you.' Since then I've been handing over this fight to the Lord. I still give it my all, but with an awareness that my all isn't good enough. The Lord's grace is my strength.

6. DATING IS DIFFICULT, SO PLAN ACCORDINGLY

Purity in dating is a challenge because you're attracted to the person in more ways than just physically. You are justified in spending a lot of time together. Plus, society tells you that sex is a normal part of dating. All of the tips listed above apply to you, but there are a few things you can do in addition to those.

The first one is to pray together and pray for each other. Just remember that prayer, like sex, is intimate and sacred. Be mindful of that when you pray together. Make sure the focus is always on the Lord and that your prayer lives don't become dependent on each other. It might also be helpful to pray together in a chapel or somewhere quiet but public. Furthermore, be aware of how you spend your personal time. If the plan is to watch a romantic movie, under a blanket, in the dark all by yourselves and NOT be tempted to do anything inappropriate, that's just silly. It would be like jumping out of a plane with no parachute and trying to land on your feet.

Set yourselves up for success! Hang out in large groups. Continue to fall in love with each other's personality and keep physical touch at a safe and pure level. Read books and blogs about purity and set guidelines. Keep reminding yourself that you are brother and sister in God's eyes and that sex is a 'forever' language. It shouldn't be spoken and can't even really be understood outside of the 'forever' covenant of marriage.

Brothers and sisters, the fight for purity is difficult but is worth it. Use the gifts you've been given. Seek out good accountability partners. Deepen your understanding of why purity is important and holy. Most importantly, pray.

There are two ways to lose the battle for purity. The first is to never fight. The second is to fight alone. Keep your eyes on the prize and keep your trust in the Lord. Be God's.