

Men can say no

(This article is equally applicable to women, but we focus here on men)

Men who live pure and holy lives are urgently needed in our society today. The problem is not really just with non-Christians. Sad to say, it is unfortunately true that so many Christian men live impure lives. The appeal to people to live pure and holy lives is quickly brushed aside, accompanied by reproaches that you are quick to judge, that you are hypocritical, that you should not think you are better than others and also, who are you to judge?

This is however not about one person who judges another. The Scriptures make it very clear that we must live pure and holy lives. When men live pure and holy lives, according to God's standards, it is reflected in their marriages. It makes their families holy, it spills over into the congregation and influences their workplace and ultimately also society. In **1 Thessalonians 4:7** we read: *For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.* Holiness destroys immorality and impurity. The opposite is also true. Jesus explains in **Mark 7:21-22** what things make us impure: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

Pure lives lead to the restoration and preservation of marriages, prevent divorce which then drastically reduce the violent influence of divorce on families, and especially children (**Mal.2:16**). A pure life sets a spiritual standard in the community – it makes a choice against the impure things mentioned in **Mark 7:21-22**. And it is when we live like this that peace settles in our hearts, our homes, workplaces and the country. It sets us free and blesses other people. And it starts with men who choose to live pure lives. Men *can* say no to impure relationships. Men are not 'victims' of their urges and of women who tempt them to become involved in impure relationships. Men make their own choices and become impure by getting involved in extramarital and sexually impure relationships, pornographic reading matter, visiting pornographic web pages and watching films showing nudity and sexually provocative scenes. Men can choose not to do impure things like the ones Jesus mentions in **Mark 7:22**.

In our society today we are seeing more and more households devastated by violence, and here we are not referring to violence from outside. The violence is from the inside, and a result of divorce. Malachi 2:16 says that God hates divorce and that it is nothing but violence. If we as Christian men feel strongly about God's Word and want to put an end to the violence resulting from divorce that is destroying our children's lives, we will have to start by obeying God's command to live as holy men.

How do I, a man, achieve a holy life? The following are a few guidelines and thoughts to consider:

- **Confess your sins.** Read **Mark 7:22**, **Galatians 5:19-21** and **1 Corinthians 6:9-10**. Ask the Holy Spirit to point out specific sins to you and write them down. Divide the different time periods in your life into sections: preschool, primary school, high school, after school, university, married life, etc. When you have confessed these sins and put them into writing, destroy the page(s). Plan to spend time to stand before the Lord daily and ask Him to show you the things that have to be confessed. Don't go digging for sins – allow the Holy Spirit to show you. Carry on with this until there is nothing more to confess. Afterwards, before you go to bed you can ask the Lord to point instances out to you where you behaved in an impure way.
- **Choose a lifestyle that keeps you from temptation and sin.** Find one or two people that you can be accountable to. People with whom you can share things in your life, whose help you can ask and who can speak to you when they see things in your life that are impure and not according to the will of God. Make an agreement with at least one person you can trust to ask you on a regular basis if you are still living a pure life in your contact with other women (as far as your conversations go and also what is going on in your thoughts).
- **Be wise.** Don't travel somewhere by car alone with your secretary or another woman (and if it can't be helped, find someone else to go along.) Don't counsel or help other women behind closed doors. Try to put a glass panel in the door in your office so that anyone can at any time see what is going on inside. However, as far as

possible try to maintain an open door policy. When the 'guys' start telling dirty jokes that belittle women, leave, or make it clear that it is not acceptable to you (normally it then stops immediately). Don't make remarks to women that can be misunderstood and/or discuss your domestic and emotional problems with another woman. Some of the things mentioned here may seem impractical to you, unheard of and even ridiculous or absurd, and yet they will protect you against a myriad of temptations. It is exactly in these situations that many men have been tempted and have sinned (**Eph.5:15**). Our lives should be examples to those watching us (children and non-Christians) and be of good reputation to the Christian faith.

- **Be pure with things and money.** Reflect before the Lord on your attitude towards money, things in your business that are not 100% in line with the laws of our country or that God could see as fraud or theft, any slander or pride in your heart. Ask the Lord to help you make practical arrangements that will help you avoid every one of these snares.
- **Choose to follow God radically.** Take your Bible and start underlining all the *commands* God gives us and make sure your life is in line with these instructions or commands. Start with the New Testament – it is sure to give you a good foundation.
- **Stand up for who you are in God.** Don't compare yourself with others and reason that this or that person does or does not do a specific thing. Only the Word sets your standards. Nothing else.