

Touch Not The Unclean Thing

To many in Western society today, very little seems to be taboo, unclean, wrong, forbidden or sinful.

Profanity and obscenities are used freely. More and more people live together before they get married, it is even approved of by some religions along with homosexual unions, in our “anything goes” society! [Ezekiel 22:26]

If we say anything negative about these things, many people criticise us for moralistic judgement.

In this article we will be looking at the importance of being able to recognise the difference between right and wrong, the clean and the unclean, so we can, as we are commanded, [Isaiah 52:11].

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 [New King James] *“Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,’ Says the LORD Almighty.”*

The Greek word used is “*akathartōs*” meaning lewd, impure, specifically demonica, foul, unclean. It is linked to being yoked as a believer to an unbeliever, [2 Corinthians 6:14-16].

How do we do this? –

Isaiah 6:1-7 [New King James] *“In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said: ‘Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!’ And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke. So I said: ‘Woe is me, for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.’ Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth with it, and said: ‘Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.’”*

It is when Isaiah, in vision saw the glory and holiness of the Eternal God, that he recognised how unclean he was, unfit to be in the presence of the Holy Creator God; he was ashamed of his condition.

People who have no sense of shame are unclean –

Jeremiah 6:15 [New King James] *“‘Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? No! They were not at all ashamed; nor did they know how to blush. Therefore they shall fall among those who fall; at the time I punish them, they shall be cast down,’ says the LORD.”*

Describes Western society today, [repeated Jeremiah 8:12].

Jeremiah 3:1-3 [New King James] *“‘They say, “If a man divorces his wife, and she goes from him and becomes another man’s, may he return to her again?” Would not that land be greatly polluted? But you have played the harlot with many lovers; yet return to Me,’ says the LORD. ‘Lift up your eyes to the desolate heights and see: where have you not lain with men? By the road you have sat for them like an Arabian in the wilderness; and you have polluted the land with your harlotries and your wickedness. Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no latter rain. You have had a harlot’s forehead; you refuse to be ashamed.’”*

People are refusing to be ashamed of sexual impurities.

Haggai 2:14 [New King James] *“Then Haggai answered and said, “So is this people, and so is this nation before Me,” says the LORD, “and so is every work of their hands; and what they offer there is unclean.””*

The whole nation was unclean, in everything they did.

Isaiah 5:20 [New King James] *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*

This shows another parallel between the Ancient Israelites and many today.

Many think that sinful acts are normal, and for the unconverted mind, sin is normal, such sinful acts are widely tolerated and assumed to be harmless. But this does not make them right!

1 Timothy 4:1-2 [New King James] *“Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, **having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,**”*

Their consciences have been made unproductive, not doing what it was created to do.

The Hebrew word translated “unclean” is “*tâmê*” meaning to be contaminated, defiled, polluted.

Physical uncleanness is being contaminated with dirt or filth.

Ceremonial uncleanness was a symbolic concept, to teach us that some spiritual things defile us and pollute our “human” spirit, [**Job 32:8; Proverbs 20:27; 1 Corinthians 2:11**].

Spiritual uncleanness includes idolatry and pagan religious practices.

For a Christian, any sin, whether action or thought, is unclean.

Knowing right from wrong is not natural for humans –

Proverbs 14:12 [New King James] *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.”*

This is repeated in **Proverbs 16:25** in case we missed it the first time.

1 Corinthians 2:14 [New King James] *“But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

A human mind, without the guidance of the Holy Spirit, [a mind that is led only by human thought] **cannot** know the truth, [**John 16:13**] for it is spiritually discerned.

We do not know absolutely what is right or wrong, spiritually clean or unclean, without God’s Word, the Christian Bible, [John 17:7] and God’s Word is not fully understood without an active indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Isaiah 55:8-9 [New King James] *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.’”*

Our thoughts are not like God’s thoughts, even at our human best, we are unclean, but we should not stay that way.

God commands us to be clean –

Isaiah 52:11 [New King James] *“Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the LORD.”*

Those who carried the Temple vessels were commanded to be clean, to not touch any unclean things.

Christians are now the Temple of God, [**1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 6:19**] and we are vessels called for a special use in our generation.

2 Corinthians 6:17-18 [New King James] *“Therefore ‘Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.’”*

To do this we must be able to recognise the difference between the clean and unclean.

God commanded His priests to teach the difference between the clean and the unclean –

Leviticus 10:8-11 [New King James] *“Then the LORD spoke to Aaron, saying: ‘Do not drink wine or intoxicating drink, you, nor your sons with you, when you go into the tabernacle of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations, that you may distinguish between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean, and that you may teach the children of Israel all the statutes which the LORD has spoken to them by the hand of Moses.’”*

The priest had to have a “clear head” when they served so they could distinguish “between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean.”

Malachi 2:7 [New King James] *“For the lips of a priest should keep knowledge, and people should seek the law from his mouth; for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.”*

Priests were to teach the people God’s Word, especially the laws that governed the way they should live.

Ezekiel 44:23 [New King James] *“And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”*

This is referring to the time after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, [Revelation 20:4-6, 11-13].

To be able to be teachers at that future time we need to be learning and living lives that are free from all unclean things.

We must put uncleanness out of our lives –

Hebrews 5:12-14 [New King James] *“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”*

We need to mature as Christians to be able to discern good from evil. We need to study and meditate on God’s Word, the Christian Bible, to learn how the Eternal Creator God judges our various thoughts and actions.

Some things are always unclean: adultery, prostitution, cocaine, coveting.

Other things are unclean only if used in a wrong way: alcohol, television, internet or anger, [Ephesians 4:26].

Many people immerse themselves in spiritual uncleanness without knowing it. Such sin should be as disgusting as to bathe in sewage.

Do **not** deceive yourself that a little sin is okay; watered down sewage is still sewage!

We must be meticulous about spiritual cleanliness.

James 1:27 [New King James] *“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”*

Reject completely the unclean lifestyle of this world.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 [New King James] *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,”*

Bringing every thought into *“captivity to the obedience of Jesus Christ”* is **not** easy, it takes hard work to be clean.

1 Corinthians 6:18 [New King James] *“Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body.”*

There are some temptations we must avoid by staying away from situations that are filled with temptations. **Do not allow others to bring uncleanness to you.**

Proverbs 6:27-29 [New King James] *“Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbour’s wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent.”*

If you play with such fire you are sure to get burnt.

Matthew 5:28 [New King James] *“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

In some cases we should not even look at an unclean temptation.

We need to always ask, “Is this something Jesus Christ would do, watch, or even think about?”

If Jesus Christ asked me about what I was doing, would I be embarrassed about it?

1 John 2:3-6 [New King James] *“Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”*

We must seek continually to live the same way that Jesus Christ lived, by discerning the spirit of the law that God gave to Ancient Israel through Moses.

How can we be cleansed? –

2 Chronicles 23:19 [New King James] *“And he set the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one who was in any way unclean should enter.”*

Guards were positioned at the entrance to the Temple so that no unclean person could enter.

The Eternal Creator God will not allow any unclean thing in His Kingdom, [**Isaiah 52:1; Ephesians 5:5**].

The Old Testament tells us about many ritual washings, mostly linked to the sacrifices that were made obsolete by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the New Covenant He introduced.

Christian baptism by total immersion is symbolic cleaning but spiritual cleaning is far more extensive than this outward action.

Romans 6:1-2 [New King James] *“What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?”*

The goal is total cleansing of sin.

Romans 6:3-13 [New King James] *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that **our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.** For he who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him. For the death that He died, He died to sin once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God. Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God.”*

Note our “old man,” our old way of uncleansed sin, was crucified.

It is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ we are cleansed, [**Romans 5:8-9**] and made acceptable in God’s eyes, [**Romans 3:25**] cleansed of the penalty of all past sins.

How do we remain cleansed? –

Through the cleansing power of knowing and applying God’s Word, the Christian Bible, [Psalms 119:9; Ephesians 5:24] also through Jesus Christ living on earth again in us, [Romans 5:10; Galatians 2:20].

But we all find that we cannot live this new life perfectly.

1 John 1:8-9 [New King James] *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Confession, repentance and faith in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ will clean us; do not harbour guilt, just express gratitude, [Colossians 2:7; Colossians 4:2].

If we again become polluted with sin, Jesus Christ is willing to clean us, just as He touched unclean lepers, making them clean again, [Luke 17:12-19].

Philippians 1:6 [New King James] *“being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”*

This promise should give us the knowledge we need to strive to live a “clean” life freed from sin.

Revelation 20:4-6, 11-13 [New King James] *“And I saw thrones, and they sat on them, and judgment was committed to them. Then I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the word of God, who had not worshiped the beast or his image, and had not received his mark on their foreheads or on their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years. But the rest of the dead did not live again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he who has part in the first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” ... “Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.”*

All true Christians have this job to do after the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, teaching people what is right and wrong, clean and unclean from God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

Now is the time to learn what we are to teach in the future, by studying God’s Word, meditating on it, and applying it to our lives, by placing guards on our minds, not allowing any unclean thing to enter in to pollute the New Covenant Temple of God.