

“A PASSION FOR PURITY”

Hebrews 13:4

Thomas Costain's history, The Three Edwards, described the life of Raynald III, a fourteenth-century duke in what is now Belgium. Grossly overweight, Raynald was commonly called by his Latin nickname, Crassus, which means "fat."

After a violent quarrel, Raynald's younger brother Edward led a successful revolt against him. Edward captured Raynald but did not kill him. Instead, he built a room around Raynald in the Nieuwkerk castle and promised him he could regain his title and property as soon as he was able to leave the room.

This would not have been difficult for most people since the room had several windows and a door of near-normal size, and none was locked or barred. The problem was Raynald's size. To regain his freedom, he needed to lose weight. But Edward knew his older brother, and each day he sent a variety of delicious foods. Instead of dieting his way out of prison, Raynald grew fatter.

When Duke Edward was accused of cruelty, he had a ready answer: "My brother is not a prisoner. He may leave when he so wills." Raynald stayed in that room for ten years and wasn't released until after Edward died in battle. By then his health was so ruined he died within a year. . . a prisoner of his own appetite.

The spiritual parallel for men and the struggle with lust is striking. Many men are able at any point to walk to their own freedom, but are caged by their own passions and lusts. The liberty of Christ's transformation for a believer is seldom put to work in the life of men, most of which die while still a prisoner of lust.

Who was the strongest fallen man in the Bible?

Who was the wisest fallen man in the Bible?

Who was the godliest fallen man in the Bible?

What do they all have in common?

To fix our gaze up, we are going to consider “every man’s battle” from the book of Hebrews. To whom was the book of Hebrews written?

What is the theme of Hebrews?

Knowing that **chapter 13** is a list of character qualities the church is to put on, how do these commands fit into the overall theme of the book?

After reading **v. 4**, and knowing what you know about this audience, why would the author single out this as a temptation?

How does **Hebrews 11:24-26** and **12:16** add to your understanding?

This passage then is about 3 ways a heaven-bound, hope-filled, trial-enduring believer can develop a passion for purity!

1. DESIRE THE WILL OF GOD AS BEST

v. 4 - “Marriage is to be held in honor among all...”

NOTE: The word “**marriage**” refers to ‘the whole marriage union,’ with primary emphasis on the promises made in the vows; and the word honor means literally, ‘precious, valuable, respected, or of great worth.’

Knowing that the meaning of the word “**marriage**” encompasses everything within the marriage union, it is important to know what that includes. What would you say God’s perfect design includes?

Why should these features be considered ‘precious, valuable, respected or of great worth?’

What does this teach about the glory of God’s design and His commands to align with it?

On the flip side, what does that say about what sin does to a marriage relationship?

According to our passage, who is responsible to view “**marriage**” as honorable?

How would this apply to a single man?

How would this apply to a married man?

What does this say about how we are to view the divinely ordained institution of marriage? Conversely, how are we not to view it?

What are some ways in our modern day culture that God's design of marriage is not honored or considered precious?

What is this passage teaching about the value and safety of God's will?

2. PROTECT THE MARRIAGE BED AS HOLY
“...and the marriage bed is to be undefiled...”

The author shows that the marriage union includes sexual intimacy, which is the meaning of the “**marriage bed.**” What is sex and why did God create it?

Clearly God is the Maker of sex. What kind of sex is allowed and what kind is forbidden, based on the word “**undefiled** (*which means pure, unstained, and unsoiled*)?”

How will you know whether something is forbidden or allowed in your marriage bed?

At the end of v. 4, the author mentions two defiling intruders that do not belong in the marriage bed – what are they and what do they mean?

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Identify the different kinds of sexual perversions that are a violation of the marriage union?

What makes these perversions especially wrong for a believer, based on to **1 Corinthians 6:13-20**?

What then are some ways to protect your (present or future) marriage bed from defilement, practically?

3. FEAR THE JUSTICE OF GOD AS SEVERE
“...for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.”

NOTE: The term **“judge”** means in its strongest sense, ‘to condemn, or to treat as guilty and deserving of punishment.

What does this mean for the person whose life is a pattern of sexual sin? How does **1 Corinthians 5:12-13**, and **6:9-11**.

Is it possible for a Christian man to commit the sin of fornication? Adultery?

What kind of judgment will he face, knowing that all of his sins are already atoned for by Christ – past, present, and future?

How do the following passages shape your thinking about God's judgment for a believer?

- 2 Corinthians 5:9-10**

- 1 Corinthians 3:12-15**

- Hebrews 12:4-14**

Mr. Spurgeon once made a parable. He said, "There was once a tyrant who summoned one of his subjects into his presence, and ordered him to make a chain. The poor blacksmith -- that was his occupation -- had to go to work and forge the chain. When it was done, he brought it into the presence of the tyrant, and was ordered to take it away and make it twice the length. He brought it again to the tyrant, and again he was ordered to double it. Back he came when he had obeyed the order, and the tyrant looked at it, and then commanded the servants to bind the man hand and foot with the chain he had made and cast him into prison. "That is what the devil does with men," Mr. Spurgeon said. "He makes them forge their own chain, and then binds them hand and foot with it, and casts them into outer darkness." But thank God, we can tell them of a deliverer. The Son of God has power to break every one of their fetters if they will only come to Him.

TRUTH IN THE LIFE

1. Which of the different kinds of perversions most threaten your marriage bed? Why?

2. In what ways do you feed this sin under the table, as it were, allowing it to grow and be nourished, rather than to be starved?

3. For further study, consider **Proverbs 5, Proverbs 7, Song of Solomon** and **1 Corinthians 7** for a Biblical understanding of God's perfect design, and for principles of protection.

4. Make a list of consequences that will occur if you "flame out" morally. Put them in a place where you can review them weekly.

5. Take the time to interview other men about practical ways in which they defeat the temptation to indulge sexual sin, and see which helpful ideas can work for your struggle.

6. Consider seeking discipleship, counseling, or accountability for you to do whatever it takes to be holy in this area.