

Lust of the Flesh

5 January 2021



Scripture warns us in 1 John 2:16 that three primary areas have the potential to rob us of our joy and damage our relationship with our Heavenly Father and immediate loved ones. These three areas that John names in his first epistle are, *"lust of the eyes, lust of the flesh and the pride of life"*. I call these, **'Pennies, Petticoats and Power'**.

In my previous article '[Lust of the Eyes](#)', we looked at both the blessing and potential dangers of finance (i.e. the attitude we have toward pennies in one's life). In this second article, I want to take a brief look at the second area of temptation around sexual purity that we are warned about by the Apostle John in 1 John 2:16, which he calls *"the lust of the flesh"* and I've classified as 'Petticoats'.

Petticoats

For those of us who grew up before 1980, a petticoat was a thin, silky or satin undergarment that ladies wore under their dresses, or a 'half-slip' if only worn under the skirt. The bottom hem was usually embroidered, and if it was protruding slightly from under a dress or skirt, it would immediately catch a man's eye, often resulting in him being sexually aroused in some way.

A Sexual Appetite

The mystery of creation is that God our Creator has designed us with certain appetites, and one of these appetites is of a sexual nature. As is the case with food and drink, our appetites are expressed through hunger and thirst, which we need to satisfy. Well, it's the same with our sexual appetite – it also wants to be fed and satisfied. But what isn't helpful is when our sexual appetites are aroused in situations that are not pleasing to the Lord, and when we respond to it in different ways outside of the boundary of marriage between a man and a woman.

...the Lord has given us His enabling grace that empowers us to ensure that every appetite... is exercised under our control

Enabling Grace to Empower Us

Paul the Apostle makes it quite clear to his readers in his letter to Titus (Titus 2:11 – 12) that the Lord has given us His enabling grace that empowers us to ensure that every appetite, whether of a physical or sexual nature, is exercised under our control. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6:13 (NIV), *“You say, food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both. The body, however, is also not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body”*. With regards to food, Paul goes on to say to the church in Philippi, *“For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.”* (Philippians 3:18 -19, NIV).

Our Salvation At Stake

But then in the area of sexual appetite, he says in 1 Corinthians 6:9 (NIV). *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?”* Here, when speaking of one’s sexual appetite, Paul says, *“Do not be deceived...”*

- *“neither fornicators”* (i.e. single folk who are sexually active or involved in pornography),
- *“nor idolaters”* (Plato uses this word to depict orgies practised for heathen deities),
- *“nor adulterers”* (when sexually active with folk who are not their marriage partners),
- *“nor lesbians”* (females sexually involved with females – also seen in Paul’s letter to the Roman believers (Romans 1:26 – 27),
- *“nor sodomites”* (males sexually involved with other male partners).

Paul makes it quite clear that these categories of people will not inherit salvation.

Sexual Purity Boundaries & Discipline

Since I surrendered my life to Christ in 1976 at the age of 22 years, I have pressed into the Lord and relied on His grace to keep me disciplined in this particular area of life. Even more so, since I am well aware of men and women (far more godly than I) who have fallen sexually over the years. It has been for this reason that I have put the following boundaries and disciplines in place in my own life:

- **Not to counsel women** (the only exception being if Pam wants to include me with her in a counselling session, but then only if what is being discussed is not of a sexual nature).
- **Not to allow myself to be socially alone with a woman** or to take a trip with a woman other than Pam or one of my daughters.
- **Not to ‘visit’ any website to surf its contents** knowing that every random site has been hacked by pornographic ‘suppliers’. I stay very specific while ‘searching’ the web and do not ‘accept’ offers to open unknown sites.
- **Not to watch movies that have sexual scenes** or read magazines that have photographs of women partially clothed.

Other Purity Pointers

Through research, I am aware of the fact that women also have sexual appetites and are primarily aroused by suggestive compliments received from men. They are also sexually stimulated when being touched in non-sexual areas, such as on a bare arm or gently on their neck or ears. It is for this reason, during times of ministry that, as far as possible, I caution men to pray only for men and women to pray only for women. I also caution them not to touch the other person, other than on a

covered shoulder area, if at all.

Making It Personal

One afternoon (a good 15 years ago), a very attractive, married woman from our church family came to my home and asked to speak to me. I told her very apologetically that Pam wasn't home and that I do not counsel the opposite sex without her present. She assured me it wasn't of a counselling nature and would only take a few minutes to share. I hesitantly agreed to see her for 'a few minutes'. However, in no time at all she was telling me how she finds herself physically attracted to me and was having highly inappropriate sexual thoughts about us together. I was completely gob-smacked. I immediately told her that not only did she need to leave, she also needed to get in touch with Pam before lunchtime the next day. I instructed her to tell Pam what she had told me, to ask for Pam's forgiveness, and to seek advice on how to deal with this and her thought life as a believer. She did this (incredibly) and confessed to Pam the next day and asked her forgiveness. Thankfully that 'door' was closed going forward. BUT I am acutely aware that it could have ended very differently, with a moment of indiscretion becoming a lifetime of disappointment. This is another reason why I am highly cautious (and encourage others to be so) when it comes to any interactions with the opposite sex.

May our God fill us with both His Spirit and His enabling grace as we remain intentional in walking in sexual purity and integrity in our relationship with Him, which we have through His Son Jesus Christ.

To those who are struggling in this area, we encourage you to reach out to your local church leaders, be it a community leader, deacon or elder, and bring it into the light. This will be the first step towards helping you walk in freedom. If you are not part of a local church, we encourage you to find one and integrate into family. You can find a partnering church in your area [here](#).

Article Series: [Lust of the Eyes](#) | [Lust of the Flesh](#) | [The Pride of Life](#)
