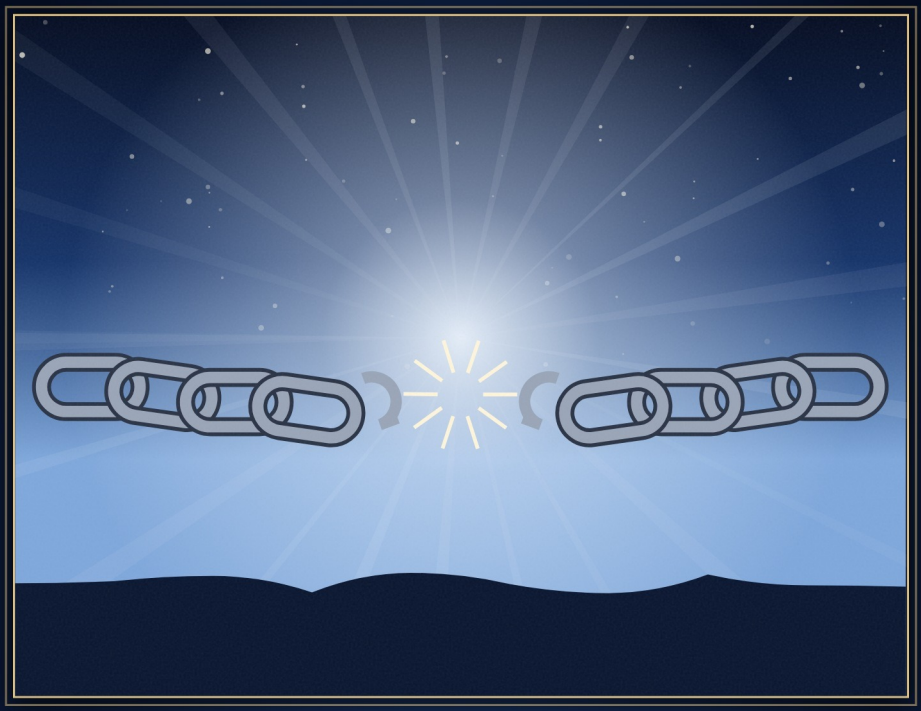
A SHORT BIBLE STUDY

Walking in Purity and Freedom

Growing Closer to God · Book 8



Guarding the eyes, the mind, and the heart

Andrew Dominguez

Trinfinity Enterprises

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A Note on the Bible Translation Used in This Book

My preferred Bible for personal study, teaching, and research is the Steadfast Literal Bible (SLB). I chose it because it is a word-for-word translation in today's language, built on the ancient Scripture sources: the Hebrew and Aramaic of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. I prepared the SLB myself, and the Scripture in this book is taken from it.

Where a literal phrase would mislead an English reader, the SLB gives the writer's meaning in plain words. Words added for sense are set in bold italics so you can see what is in the original and what is not.

The complete Steadfast Literal Bible is free to read, search, download, and print at trinfinityenterprises.com/slb. If you want to check a verse in its full setting or read the translation's preface and principles, that is the place to go.

Above all, my desire is not to promote one translation over another, but to faithfully teach the Word of God, encourage careful examination of the Scriptures, and help readers grow in their knowledge, understanding, and relationship with the Lord.

May every page of this book direct attention not to the translation itself, but to the truth of God's Word and the One whom it reveals.

Introduction

Sexual temptation is one of the most common struggles people face, and one of the least talked about in church. Because it stays hidden, it grows. Many men and women carry it alone for years, convinced they are the only ones and that God must be finished with them.

I have spent time walking alongside others who were fighting for purity. This book is meant to be honest without being graphic. It looks at how God sees people, why a plan matters, what to do when you fall, and where real freedom comes from.

1 What Jesus said about the heart

Jesus did not limit purity to what we do with our bodies. He said, "everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28, SLB). The battle starts in the eyes and the mind long before it shows up in actions.

That can sound discouraging, but it is actually freeing. It tells me where to fight. If I only try to manage my behavior, I will keep losing ground. If I bring my thought life to God, He can change me from the inside.

It also means pornography is not a harmless private habit. It trains the mind to see people as objects. Over time it can make it harder to be satisfied with a real spouse, damage a spouse's sense of worth, and open the door to deeper sin. God's design for sexual

intimacy is a gift for husband and wife, and He wants to protect it.

Translating Matthew 5:28 for the Steadfast Literal Bible made me face the truth that sin starts in the heart long before anyone sees it. In my lowest season, I had made choices that hurt my marriage and the people closest to me. My real problem was not just bad habits. It was an unguarded heart. Jesus goes to the heart because that is where purity has to begin.

2 Seeing people the way God does

> *older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.*
> **1 Timothy 5:2 (SLB)**

Paul told Timothy to treat "older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity" (1 Timothy 5:2, SLB). When I see a woman as an object of fantasy, I strip away who she really is. God created her to be someone's daughter, sister, mother, wife, or friend. She is not here for my thought life.

One thing that helps me stop treating people as objects is to keep them in context. If I remember that the person in front of me is dear to a husband, children, parents, and friends, the temptation to lust loses much of its pull.

Another practical tool is learning to bounce the eyes. When my eyes land on something that feeds lust, I look away right away instead of taking a second look. Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker describe this in Every Man's Battle. It sounds small, but small

decisions made over and over change the way the mind works.

After 36 years of marriage, two daughters and now granddaughters, I see every person as someone's daughter, wife or mother, made in the image of God. That makes it much harder to treat anyone as an object. Paul says to treat women as mothers and sisters, in all purity (1 Timothy 5:1-2). Seeing people with the dignity God gave them is a strong defense.

3 Making a plan ahead of time

When there is no plan, I tend to follow whatever appeals to me at the moment. Jesus said, "Enter through the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad the way that leads to destruction" (Matthew 7:13, SLB). Staying on the narrow road takes decisions made before the temptation arrives.

In the heat of temptation there is too much emotion to think clearly. That is why my decisions need to be made beforehand. I once heard about a man who ended up in a place full of temptation by mistake. What kept him faithful was a promise he had made to his wife before he ever left home.

> *Marriage **is to be** honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers.*
>
> **Hebrews 13:4 (SLB)**

A plan might include filters on devices, staying out of certain places, avoiding being alone online late at night, and having someone I report to. None of that is

legalism. It is wisdom from someone who knows his own weaknesses.

In utility work, you never wait until an emergency starts to decide your safety steps. You write the safety plan before you step onto the job. Purity works the same way. Decide ahead of time what you will watch, where you will go and when you will walk away. A plan made in daylight keeps you standing when the heat turns up.

4 Walking in the light

Sin grows in the dark. Secrets give it room to breathe. That is why confession matters so much. James 5:16 (SLB) says, "Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed."

When someone falls, the first temptation is to hide. Pride kicks in because we do not want anyone to know. The enemy then uses that shame to convince us to quit trying altogether. The better response is to resist his lies, confess the sin to God, and then tell a trusted mentor or accountability partner. Bringing it into the light takes away its power.

Honesty with that partner has to be complete. Leaving out the one area where I struggled defeats the purpose. I may fool another person, but God sees it all.

Isaiah 50:10 (SLB) speaks to the one who "has walked in darkness and has no brightness," and tells him to "trust in the name of the LORD and lean on his God."

Picture a little boy who is afraid to walk down a dark staircase until his father promises to stay at the top where he can hear his voice. Knowing the Father is near gives courage to face what we fear.

Secrecy kept me trapped in the worst seasons of my life, because I was terrified of what people would think. That changed on May 29, 2020, when my wife caught me and took me to my first 12-step meeting that same day. I went in drunk and wept the whole time. Telling the truth felt terrifying, and it was the moment healing began (1 John 1:7). Sin loses its grip when we bring it into the light.

5 Freedom that lasts

Real freedom does not come from willpower alone. It comes from a renewed mind. Romans 12:2 (SLB) says, "do not be conformed to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." God's Word is how my mind gets renewed.

When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He answered each temptation with Scripture from Deuteronomy (Matthew 4:1-11, SLB). Memorizing Scripture gives me something to reach for when temptation comes. I find it helps to learn one verse a week, give it a theme, review it during the day, and look for a place to use it.

Second Timothy 2:22 (SLB) tells me to "flee youthful desires, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Fleeing is not cowardice. It is wisdom. Pursuing is

just as important, because a heart filled with good things has less room for the old ones.

If you are fighting this battle, you are not alone, and God is not finished with you. Second Corinthians 5:17 (SLB) says, "if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation." That is who you are. Keep walking toward the light.

Walking in Purity and Freedom

✦ ✦ ✦

Sexual temptation is one of the most common struggles people face and one of the least talked about. This book looks honestly at what Jesus said about the heart, seeing people the way God does, making a plan ahead of time, walking in the light, and finding freedom that lasts.

And flee youthful desires, and pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

2 Timothy 2:22 (SLB)

Book 8 of 9 in the collection Growing Closer to God

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