

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH

"UNCLEANNES"

In any respectable society, the avoidance of dirt and filth is a proper standard of conduct. Homemakers work daily to keep dirt out of their houses. Hospitals continuously sterilize to eliminate impurities from touching their patients. Reputable food manufacturers constantly demand cleanliness in their factories. We cringe when the local consumer watchdog extracts a foreign substance from his soup, and cheer him on when he barges in to a roach infested kitchen to confront a seemly astonished restaurant manager. No one has to draw a detailed picture for us to see the inconsistency between living in filth while demanding clean living standards. The two life styles are totally incompatible.

What "dirt" is to a physically clean society, "uncleanness" is to a spiritually pure mind. We need men and women actively engaged in sweeping away filth from their mental workshops, because the mind-molded products have the unique potential to defile the whole man (Matt. 15:11, 17-20).

I. WHAT THE WORD "UNCLEANNES" MEANS

- A. AKATHARSIA - Noun; occurs 10 times in the N.T. and means "impurity"; Physically (Matt. 23:27) and Morally (Rom. 1:24, Gal. 5:19).
- B. AKATHARTOS - Adjective; occurs 30 times in the N.T. and like the noun , it refers to "impurity". Primarily (24 times) it refers the evil spirits or demons (Mk. 5:2, 8, 13, etc.) Also, 6 times the word refers to ceremonial uncleanness in light of the Old Law and Jewish practice (Acts 10:14, 28; 2 Cor. 7:14; etc.)
- C. In general, the term denotes whatever is in opposition to purity (Rom. 6:19). "All uncleanness" (Eph. 4:19); In opposition to God and his Law - hypocrisy and iniquity (Matt. 23:27-28).

II. HOW THE TERM "UNCLEANNES" IS USED IN THE N.T.

- A. "Uncleanness" is connected with repulsion and disgust which it produces (Matt. 23:27; Rev. 17:4).
- B. "Uncleanness" refers to sexual impurity:
 - 1. Homosexuality (Rom. 1:24, 26-27).
 - 2. Fornication (I Thess. 4:7; cf. 4:3).
- C. Sometimes "uncleanness" refers not just to the act of fornication, but to the impure mind that contrives and contributes to the illicit act itself being committed (Gal. 5:19, Col. 3:5, 2 Cor. 12:21).
- D. "Uncleanness" stands in contrast to the purity of motive and action in godly apostolic labor (I Thess. 2:3). Suggests that sensuality and false doctrine are frequently associated (cf. 2 Pet. 2:1-2, 18-19).

- E. "Uncleanness" is associated with impure thinking and suggestive speech (jesting, off-color anecdotes, etc.) Eph. 5:3-4.
 - 1. "It is the quality of that which is soiled and dirty. There is a kind of mind which is itself soiled and which soils everything which passes through it. It can reduce the finest action to a mean motive, and it can defile the purest things with a smutty jest." (Barclay, FLESH AND SPIRIT, page 30).

III. CONCLUSION

- A. Such inward and outward filth must NOT be characteristic of a Christian. Uncleanness in thinking and living will deprive us of our inheritance in the kingdom of God (Eph. 5:5, Gal. 5:19-21).

DISCUSSION:

1. In what way do advertisers promote "uncleanness" in our society?

2. Does the Bible teach that practicing "homosexuality" is an act of "uncleanness" ?

3. Should the loving Christian stand up and condemn "same sex marriages" ?

4. Does "dancing" promote the sin of uncleanness?
If so, how?

5. When we listen to, and laugh at off-color jokes, are we promoting the sin of "uncleanness"?