



Impure Lust

John Flavel

Banner of Truth, 2008
£3.25, 80pp
ISBN: 9780851519814

Daniel Nie is a final year medical student in London and *Nucleus* student co-editor

Many books have been written on the subject of lust and sexual sin over the years, but the test of time often demonstrates which books prove most helpful for believers battling this perennial, serious foe. John Flavel may not be the best-known Puritan, but his writings have been appreciated by many down the centuries. I came across this little book at the Banner of Truth Youth Conference earlier this year and it makes for a revealing but wholesome read.

Flavel begins his book with a stern warning based on the observations he made of the society of his time. He notices how pervasive sexual sin is in the lives of many, professing Christians. One of the things that makes this book age so well is its vivid description of the seriousness of lust. Flavel expertly brings out what the Scriptures have to say on this topic. He expounds on the gravity of this sin and its consequences, the very reason he is confronting this topic. He gives ten arguments why Christians should flee from this sin and put it to death, all of them hard-hitting and based on Scripture.

His arguments include: Scripture strongly condemns lust and its partner in crime, adultery. He shows the contempt God has for this sin, meaning Christians should have nothing to do with something that God hates so much. He argues that such a sin leaves a blot that might never be taken away in this life – reference David after his affair with Bathsheba and the murderous conspiracy in its aftermath. Very few repent and are restored back to life after succumbing to this sin, leading to a tragic end not just for one, but two or more people.

Thankfully, he doesn't leave us defeated with the devastating consequences of lust and adultery. Instead he leaves us with what all true ministers of the gospel should leave us with – the gospel of grace with its solutions. He offers seven directions we should take to avoid this sin or be restored back onto the right path. Examples include begging God for a clean and renewed heart and for his sanctifying grace to be present in our lives; walking in the fear of the Lord all day long, knowing that he is always watching us, and exercising ourselves diligently with the profession that God has given to us. If we apply ourselves to our medical studies diligently, then lust has less of a chance to make deep inroads into our hearts causing spiritual havoc, since we are focusing on our God-given work.

Overall, this book is a classic that takes the time to deal with the seriousness of lust and sexual sin carefully and thoroughly, and it also points out the path to spiritual restoration. The temptation is to quickly brush over this and focus on grace. But understanding the critical nature of this sin enables us to appreciate the amazing nature of the grace given to us through the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is what this book so wonderfully does. ■