

My father was a great preacher but he was an even better pastor. He had a heart for people and it showed. He spent several months of his ministry driving 4 hrs each way to Durham, N.C. twice a week to visit one of his deacons who was in the hospital there. When we received friends at the funeral home, some people would comment on a sermon he had preached that stuck with them, but they all commented on his heart.

Ministering can be difficult. Not only does it require a loving and compassionate heart on the part of the minister but it also requires trust on the part of those to whom ministry is given. People won't let you in to minister to their deepest needs if they don't trust you in their darkest hours.

My dad ran into this at one of the churches he pastored. And the reason for apprehension on the part of the congregation had nothing to do with him. It was caused by his predecessor. You see, the previous pastor had run off with the wife of another church member. I can think of only a few better ways to destroy people's trust.

Unfortunately, the Christian church and its leaders are not immune to sexual temptations. Satan takes great joy in bringing down a Christian leader/pastor because in doing so, he not only negatively effects the pastor but everyone around him as well. And one of his greatest tools is sexual immorality.

Whether it's the often mocked image of a weeping Jimmy Swaggart or you, Satan seeks to get us through our groin.

Scripture: Eph. 5:3; Lev. 20:10-21

I. Examining Ourselves: The Groin

A. **Sexual Immorality**

1. Bestiality
 - a) Sexual acts involving animals is forbidden
2. Incest
 - a) Sexual acts with family members (even in-laws, adopted children/siblings and step-siblings) is forbidden
3. Homosexuality
 - a) Sexual acts between people of the same sex is forbidden
 - (1) Biblical consistency amidst logical inconsistency
 - (a) The prohibition against homosexuality is not an "OT thing"
 - (i) Matt. 19:4-5
 - (ii) Rom. 1:26-27
 - (iii) 1 Cor. 6:9
 - (b) Passages in both the OT & NT prohibit homosexuality along with other sexual sins, yet modern "teachers, preachers, and theologians" have singled out only homosexuality for a change in God's sexual standard
 - (i) Imagine what the response would be to a "preacher/teacher/theologian" arguing that bestiality and incest were now permitted by God

4. Adultery
 - a) Sexual acts between a married person and anyone other than their spouse is forbidden
 - b) Jesus extended this prohibition to thoughts of adultery
 - (1) Matt. 5:27-28
 - (a) Pornography/Smut
 - c) The author of Hebrews encourages us to keep the marriage bed undefiled
 - (1) Heb. 13:4
 - d) An agreement between spouses to allow adultery doesn't remove God's prohibition
5. Fornication
 - a) Sexual acts between two unmarried people is forbidden
 - b) Jesus' extension of adultery to the realm of thought pertains to fornication as well
 - c) Paul encourages those who can't handle the temptation of fornication to get married so that their sexual activity will not be sinful
 - (1) 1 Cor. 7:2; 8-9

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 tells us that those who practice sexual immorality will not inherit the kingdom of God. Regardless of whether you interpret "kingdom of God" as the rule and reign of God in one's life or eternal life in heaven (or more accurately, both), the bottom line is sexual immorality is a sure sign of a life that is not surrendered to the Lord.

As ministers of the Gospel, we cannot preach against homosexuality while practicing adultery or fornication. To do so, marks us as hypocrites. It ruins not only our witness but the opportunity of other Christians to witness and share the Gospel.

If we are to be more Hippocratic and less hypocritical, we must heed Paul's exhortation from Eph. 5:3. "But sexual immorality and any impurity or greed should not even be heard of among you, as is proper for saints." So this morning I encourage you to use our time of invitation to examine yourself. Who is your God? Who controls your life? Is it God or is it your groin?