

Real Personal

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It gets real personal when you start talking about the "works of the flesh" that the Gospel condemns as contrary to the "fruit of the Spirit," those wonderful habits of character that bring glory to our God. Love, joy, and peace are incompatible with immorality, impurity, and sensuality. Immorality is a practice that says that although I marry you today, and promise my undying devotion, tomorrow may make me a liar and a cheat if I see another who steals my heart and gives me a greater thrill. My love has become a dirty four-letter word. Now comes the Gospel which can save us from such ugly sins. The Gospel teaches that we are not our own; we are not gods; our body of flesh is designed to be God's temple to be used for His glory. Dress your body with dignity and godliness so as to communicate less interest in the flesh and less attraction for the flesh of strangers. Cover up that "great body" and don't flaunt it before the eyes of others as if to invite them to commit immorality with you. Remember, that is not love. The flesh whispers, "it might become love," but that is a lie. It is dirty. It starts out dirty or impure, and never quite comes clean. Is this becoming too personal yet?

Immorality sometimes begins in the workplace where men and women are thrown together out of the need to work and make a living. "Attractive" attire and makeup attracts. It draws two persons into familiar conversation, flirtation, laughter, permission to closer familiarity, and the bonds begin to form between two who are married but not to each other. Adultery begins in the heart. Marriages become cumbersome, heavy burdens to bear. Children are forgotten. The love of children, the joys they bring, the peaceful refuge of home; all becomes a prison. At this point, the Gospel warns, "You are walking into disaster!" but that is all too personal. Calm reason warns, "You are dressing like a tramp." Now you are really provoked. The Gospel has crossed into the forbidden personal space. Yeah, I know. Everybody is doing it. Everybody lives that way. Yes, and "everybody" is dead and barren and empty. The world is full of losers. Does that mean you must be one too? The laughter of happy children has almost disappeared from many neighborhoods. Immorality is not compatible with having and raising children. Those who are born are growing up in homes made dysfunctional by immorality; the work of the flesh which the Gospel leads us out of to the glory of God the Father.

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