

Series: PURE

Text: Matt. 5:8; Proverbs 23:7; Isaiah 8:11; Romans 12:2; Phil. 4:8

Title: "Thought Filters"

Introduction: WELCOME, BMZ! Glad you are with us TODAY as we CONTINUE our SERIES called: "PURE"! This is a RELATIONSHIP SERIES ... SO, we BEGIN the YEAR with a REMINDER we EACH have a GREAT WORK to DO ... in 2022!

WHAT is ONE THING PREVENTING you from being in a CLOSE RELATIONSHIP with JESUS? ONE of the GREAT BARRIERS in our RELATIONSHIP with JESUS is HOW we CONDUCT ourselves in our RELATIONSHIPS with EACH OTHER. When we 80/20 JESUS ... TELLING Him OUR TERMS for HOW we will be in RELATIONSHIP with HIM and HOW we will CONDUCT OURSELVES in this LIFE, REGARDLESS of HIS COMMANDS?

One of the AREAS where we 80/20 JESUS is in the AREA of our PHYSICAL RELATIONSHIPS. IF we're going to **ENGAGE in a GREAT WORK**, we MUST PAY ATTENTION to the AREA of SEX, in a WORLD that's SEXUALLY CHARGED. Human SEXUALITY has become its OWN RELGION. People WORSHIP their SEXUALITY.

In Church? The BIBLE has a LOT to SAY about SEXUALITY and PHYSICAL INTIMACY. If the PEOPLE who BELIEVE in The HOLY GOD who CREATED IT do NOT TALK ABOUT IT, WHO does that LEAVE to DO ALL the TALKING? ... and they ARE!

Here is WHY we TALK about it: JESUS TAUGHT PURITY MATTERS... **MATTHEW 5:8 = <sup>8</sup> God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. <sup>1</sup>** PURE HEART ... Cockpit of our LIVES. COMMAND CENTER. CORE of our BEING. EXCLUSIVE ACCESS ... PURE = HOLY / RIGHTEOUS / according to GOD. Includes PHYSICAL.

LIKELY, MOST have a PAST and REGRETS. I'm NOT here to LOWER some RELIGIOUS BOOM. I'm here to LOVE you ENOUGH to SPEAK TRUTH. As we WORK our WAY THROUGH this SERIES, we'll FIND GOOD NEWS! Think HOW JESUS handled SEXUAL IMMORALITY. GUILT and SHAME are OK. They cause REPENTANCE!

TODAY ... THOUGHT FILTERS. IF we do NOT have FILTERS, we let ANYTHING and EVERYTHING INTO our MINDS. Those thoughts will GLADLY take up RESIDENCE!

Now, our THOUGHTS / MINDS are PART of our WHOLE BEING. IT'S PART of the HEART ... **PROVERBS 23:7a (KJV) = <sup>7</sup> For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.<sup>2</sup>**

Our WHOLE BEING / HEARTS, it STARTS in our MINDS ... our THOUGHTS. Agree? YOU do NOT do ANYTHING you did NOT THINK ABOUT FIRST. I know, some people ACT WITHOUT THINKING, but they ACT on SOME THOUGHT they HAD at SOME TIME ... it has to be IN THERE (MIND) to COME OUT (Actions).

SO, IF JESUS tells us our HEARTS / WHOLE BEING must be PURE, it BEGINS with PURE THOUGHTS ... EVEN (most importantly?) IN the AREA of SEX / Physical Intimacy. **IMPURE THOUGHTS lead to IMPURE ACTIONS.** PURE THOUGHTS = PURE ACTIONS. GOD wants you to LIVE 100% PURE. PROBLEM = Our THOUGHTS are NOT!

Therefore, we need WAYS to FILTER our THOUGHTS, so they're PURE. I understand this is very DIFFICULT in a WORLD where we are BOMBARDED with IMPURE IMAGES.

Recent STUDIES show that BACK in the 1970s, we were only IMPACTED by around 500 ADS/DAY. TODAY? We are IMPACTED by anywhere from 4,000 to 10,000 ADS/DAY.

<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 5:8). Tyndale House Publishers.  
<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Pr 23:7). (2009). Logos Research Systems, Inc.

And, BECAUSE they want to SELL you on their PRODUCT, OVER HALF of those ADS contain VISUALLY ATTRACTIVE / SEXUALLY STIMULATING IMAGES. That means you are IMPACTED EVERY DAY by OVER 2,000 ... IMPURE IMAGES. IMAGES that will CONCIIOUSLY or UNCONCIIOUSLY MOVE your MIND AWAY from PURITY. BTW – The study also showed that EVEN IF you did NOT LOOK DIRECTLY at the IMAGE, your PERIPHERAL LIKELY PICKED it UP! WOW! We are BOMBARDED.

IF that's the CASE ... MINIMUM 2,000/DAY, HOW do I FILTER OUT the IMPURE?

**I WILL BUILD THOUGHT FILTERS IN MY LIFE BY...**

BEFORE I go any FURTHER, please UNDERSTAND this is for BELIEVERS who want to HONOR GOD / SEE GOD / NOT HURT themselves, NOR the PEOPLE they LOVE.

**#1 = Understanding the POWER of My Thoughts**

So, are you ABLE to TALK yourself INTO / OUT OF THINGS? That's the POWER of THOUGHT. You can THINK yourself INTO being SICK ... or WELL (sometimes). STUDIES SHOW (like we need a study) that THOUGHTS IMPACT your PHYSICAL life, EMOTIONAL health, MENTAL HEALTH, and even SPIRITUAL HEALTH. Our **ATTITUDE MATTERS** ... our ANGLE of APPROACH to LIFE MATTERS. It ALL STARTS with our THOUGHTS!

Like, WHO you are TODAY is a RESULT of WHAT went INTO your MIND LONG AGO. Charles Reed, famous quote ... ***"If you SOW a THOUGHT, you REAP an ACT. If you SOW an ACT, you REAP a HABIT. If you SOW a HABIT, you REAP a CHARACTER. From CHARACTER, you REAP a DESTINY."*** It ALL STARTS with your THOUGHTS.

What you ALLOW into your MIND will AFFECT WHO you are TODAY and WHO you will BE. So, WHAT are you ALLOWING into your MIND? And, I understand, we CAN'T always STOP BAD STUFF from HAPPENING to US. BUT we CAN STOP BAD THOUGHTS that REPEAT themselves OVER and OVER.

I know SOME of you have had BAD STUFF HAPPEN PHYSICALLY. You can NOT go BACK and CHANGE the EXPERIENCE. BUT ... TWO THINGS ... **ONE**, you ARE in CONTROL of your THOUGHTS and with GOD'S HELP you can CHANGE THOSE. **TWO**, ALL the BAD stuff that HAPPENS in the AREA of SEXUALITY STARTED in someone's MIND. That IMPURE THOUGHT was in someone's MIND long BEFORE they TOOK ACTION. SEXUAL ABUSE starts in the MIND. What are you ALLOWING IN?

Thoughts are POWERFUL both IMPURE and PURE. The PROBLEM: EASY to FOLLOW the CROWD. And there is a WAY the CROWD / WORLD THINKS about SEX. The WORLD says DO WHATEVER you PLEASE ... ANYTHING GOES! It is EASY to FALL into MAJORITY THINKING. BUT we BELIEVERS are DIFFERENT / CHRISTLIKE!

LISTEN ... **ISAIAH 8:11 = <sup>11</sup> The Lord has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does.<sup>3</sup>** IF you THINK like EVERYONE ELSE DOES, you GET what everyone else GETS. Everyone ELSE is HURTING because of IMPURE SEX. There is a LOT of PAIN OUT THERE ... and IN HERE. Many of you FEEL PAIN / SHAME / REGRET / EMOTIONAL DISTRESS / LONELINESS / ISOLATION / ETC. due to IMPURE THOUGHTS that LED to IMPURE ACTION.

LET me ENCOURAGE you to NOT GO that WAY ANYMORE. You do NOT need to LET the MAJORITY PUSH YOU AROUND. You can CHANGE the WAY you THINK ... IF you CHOOSE to ... And I can NOT CHOOSE FOR YOU (only pass, not receive) ...

ROMANS 12:2 = <sup>2</sup> *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by (HOW?) changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, (Don't Miss) which is good and pleasing and perfect.* <sup>4</sup>

GOD'S WILL for your PHYSICAL LIFE is GOOD and PLEASING and PERFECT! God's PLAN does NOT LEAD to PAIN / SHAME / REGRET ... IT LEADS to PERFECTION ... It's PURE and LEADS to DEEPER INTIMACY in MARRIAGE / DEEPER BONDS / RELATIONAL STRENGTH. That is HOW it WORKS ... good / pleasing / perfect.

It STARTS with HOW you CHANGE your THINKING and WHAT GOES INTO your MIND. Again TODAY, I can ONLY go so FAR with this. BUT...

MEN ... DID you KNOW your MIND gets ALTERED by WHAT your EYES SEE? We need to GUARD our EYES to GUARD our MINDS. QUICKLY ... Just because you LOOK at PORNOGRAPHY does NOT mean you are some DEEP, DARK ADDICT. BUT you DO become ADDICTED due to "PLEASURE HIGHS". Let me QUOTE from the book, "EVERY MAN'S BATTLE" (Stephen Arterburn) ... *"Men receive a chemical high from sexually charged images—a hormone called epinephrine is secreted into the bloodstream, which locks into the memory whatever stimulus is present at the time of the emotional excitement."* It LOCKS INTO the MEMORY ... the MIND.

*"Okay, Pastor Stan, it's LOCKED into my MIND. I can't get RID of it. NOW WHAT?"* Great QUESTION. The FIRST thing you DO is STARVE your MIND. Do NOT FEED the MEMORY ANY MORE of those IMAGES. But NOT just pornography. Remember those 2,000 PLUS AD IMAGES we SEE each DAY? As much as POSSIBLE, BOUNCE YOUR EYES AWAY from those. IF you LOOK at ANY WOMEN as PARTS instead of a PERSON ... BOUNCE your EYES AWAY! Want more? Let me know. Book.

Women, I'm NOT sure EXACTLY how it WORKS for YOU, but YOU have some THOUGHTS YOU need to PROTECT YOURSELVES from AS WELL... #2 =

## **#2 = PROTECTING My Mind from IMPURE Thoughts**

Okay, now that you WROTE that DOWN, I KINDA know how it WORKS for WOMEN ... Did you KNOW that the ROMANCE NOVEL industry takes in OVER \$1 Billion / Year? Which makes it about a 30% LARGER than the INSPIRATIONAL book industry, and about the size of the MYSTERY novel and SCIENCE FICTION/FANTASY markets COMBINED!

GUESS WHO is the PRIMARY PURCHASER of those BOOKS? Women. How about ROMANTIC MOVIES (Hallmark Channel)? Women, please hear me ... Those MEN you FANTASIZE about have about 4 HOURS/DAY to WORK OUT and they HAVE a SCRIPT ... and it took about 15 TAKES to GET the FINAL CUT you SAW on SCREEN. You COMPARE your HUSBAND to THAT?

Okay, so I PICKED UP *"Every Woman's Battle"* TOO! WOMEN have THINGS they BELIEVE in their MINDS ... they are MYTHS that INTENSIFY "Every Woman's Battle". Let me SHARE a couple ... Many WOMEN BELIEVE / THINK 1) there is NOTHING WRONG with COMPARING THEMSELVES or their HUSBANDS to OTHER PEOPLE. 2) There is NOTHING WRONG with FANTASIZING about someone OTHER than my HUSBAND. 3) There's NO ONE who would REALLY UNDERSTAND MY STRUGGLE. Get the book!

Let me work with that LAST MYTH ... 1 CORINTHIANS 10:13 = <sup>13</sup> *The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show*

*you a way out so that you can endure.*<sup>5</sup> Women are WOMEN. MEN are MEN. We are CREATED CERTAIN ways and the CREATOR wants us to be PURE with HOW we are MADE. The DECEIVER wants us to be IMPURE about HOW we are MADE, and HE TEMPTS US ... BUT GOD says there is ALWAYS a WAY OUT of our TEMPTATIONS... here we go...

### **5 TIPS to OVERCOME TEMPTATION:**

Write these down... USE THEM to OVERCOME TEMPTATION!

#### **- NAME My Temptation**

In the AREA of SEXUALITY, what CAUSES you to SIN. You KNOW what it IS ... NAME IT! You can NOT ADDRESS IT until you FACE IT.

#### **- Recognize the SOURCE of My Temptation**

We know the ENEMY / The DEVIL wants YOU to be TEMPTED, but the DEVIL does NOT make you DO IT! You are the primary CAUSE of your TEMPTATION. You put yourself in THE LINE of FIRE. You ALLOW the THOUGHTS.

#### **- Avoid What FUELS My Temptation**

Paul = RUN from ALL SEXUAL TEMPTATION! You KNOW there are PEOPLE who FUEL your TEMPTATION. You know there are SITUATIONS / OBJECTS, etc. that TEMPT YOU ... AVOID them! Do NOT go to the BAR if you are TEMPTED to DRINK TOO MUCH.

#### **- Take GOD'S OUT**

In EVERY Temptation, GOD gives you an OUT. TAKE IT! God SAYS you do NOT have to SLEEP with someone to CURE LONELINESS. God SAYS you do NOT have to TURN on your COMPUTER and DOWNLOAD ... God GIVES you an OUT. But we do NOT RECOGNIZE those "OUTS" if we do NOT SPEND TIME with GOD.

#### **- Focus MORE ON GOD Than My Temptation**

It's EASY to keep THINKING about our TEMPTATION ... we get caught up in it. Take your MIND OFF. The MORE you THINK about FOOD, the HUNGRIER you get. The more you think about DRINK, the THIRSTIER you get. The MORE you think IMPURE SEX THOUGHTS, the MORE you want to ACT on those.

WHEN THOUGHTS start to CROWD your MIND, GRAB your BIBLE. No. SERIOUSLY! Spend MORE TIME with GOD. Growth Group. Worship. Devotions. Listening to worship music... It will HELP PROTECT your MIND from IMPURE THOUGHTS ... #3 =

### **#3 = EXAMINING My Life for Impure Thoughts**

Build thought FILTERS by... AS much as you PROTECT yourself from IMPURITIES, some make it THROUGH the FILTERS. SO ... we CONTINUALLY EXAMINE our LIVES to STAY PURE. Kind of like a GARDENER working to REMOVE the WEEDS. Your MIND is like a BIG, POWERFUL GARDEN where you PLANT GOOD STUFF, but the DEVIL keeps PLANTING WEEDS (Jesus told parables about that). Your SINFUL NATURE naturally ALLOWS some WEEDS. So, we EXAMINE our LIVES for WEEDS / IMPURITIES.

Paul wrote this into that CORINTHIAN SOCIETY ... 2 CORINTHIANS 10:5 = *We destroy every proud obstacle that keeps people from knowing God. We capture their rebellious thoughts and teach them to obey Christ.*<sup>6</sup>

When we have PROUD OBSTACLES (80/20 Jesus ... I'll do it my way!) we INTENTIONALLY TAKE them CAPTIVE. We EXAMINE and RECOGNIZE REBELLIOUS THOUGHTS and BRING them BACK to OBEDIENCE to CHRIST! We CAPTURE those IMPURE THOUGHTS and REPLACE them with something PURE ... GODLY.

<sup>5</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (1 Co 10:13). Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>6</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (2 Co 10:5). Tyndale House Publishers.

Listen, if we are NOT INTENTIONAL, we EASILY fall BACK to our SINFUL nature. We have MOMENTS of WEAKNESS, LONELINESS and PRIDE (I deserve). MEN deal with this at an ALARMING RATE. Studies show OVER 67% of MEN are ADDICTED to Internet Pornography, and the FASTEST GROWING Group of people USING it are WOMEN.

Be HONEST with YOURSELF about your PURITY. EXAMINE YOURSELF and then be MAN or WOMAN enough to ALLOW GOD to EXAMINE you ... PRAY THIS: **PSALM 139:23 = <sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.** <sup>7</sup>

Finally, BUILD THOUGHT FILTERS into MY LIFE BY ...

#### **#4 = Choosing to Act ONLY on My Most PURE THOUGHTS**

Act ONLY on my most PURE THOUGHTS. YOU have the CHOICE to either ACT or NOT on your IMPURE THOUGHTS. YOU have a CHOICE. Up until the LAST MOMENT, you can CHOOSE PURITY. BUT the BEST way to be PREPARED for that MOMENT is to CHOOSE to ACT with PURITY LONG BEFORE you GET THERE.

Remember our THOUGHTS become ACTIONS, and WISE people THINK LONG before they ACT ... **PROVERBS 13:16 = <sup>16</sup> Wise people think before they act; fools don't—and even brag about their foolishness.** <sup>8</sup> It's YOUR CHOICE. WISE or FOOLISH, it is YOUR CHOICE to USE these TIPS for putting THOUGHT FILTERS in PLACE ... to GO AFTER PURITY as JESUS says.

It's YOUR CHOICE. You DECIDE LONG BEFORE that you are NOT going to put yourself in a PLACE where you will be TEMPTED. You CHOOSE BEFORE you go on the DATE what your BOUNDARIES ARE. You CHOOSE as a SPOUSE to RENEW your VOWS every DAY and CHOOSE your SPOUSE. Your SPOUSE is your ONLY CHRISTIAN / MORAL SEXUAL OUTLET...

Our THOUGHTS are POWERFUL. They LEAD to our CHARACTER / INTEGRITY / LIVES. How will you FILTER THEM? Where will you FIX your THOUGHTS? **PHILIPPIANS 4:8 = <sup>8</sup> And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.** <sup>9</sup>

Listen, this is where the RUBBER MEETS the ROAD. STOP the PAIN.

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *Memorize Romans 12:2*  
*Read Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 10*  
*I will practice these steps to build Thought Filters in my life*  
*Pray about who I will invite to worship with me*

<sup>7</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ps 139:23). Tyndale House Publishers.  
<sup>8</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 13:16). Tyndale House Publishers.  
<sup>9</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Php 4:8). Tyndale House Publishers.



## Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!  
In a moment, we are going to RECEIVE the OFFERING so please take this time to finish COMPLETING any information

- Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)
- AND when our ushers come around to RECEIVE our OFFERING
- You can drop that card in the offering basket.

### **IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today**

• We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.  
It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

- all you need to do is **HIT "SEND"** your COMPLETED Connection Card

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As our ushers GET READY to come forward

- I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!
- STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... **ISAIAH 8:11 = <sup>11</sup> The Lord has given me a strong warning not to think like everyone else does.<sup>10</sup>**
- FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1<sup>st</sup> place!  
That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!
- God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!
- As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.
- **MONEY is a HEART ISSUE.** And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART!  
Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?! USHERS ...
- Next Week: **DATING FILTERS...**

*"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."*  
Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegram for outlines and ideas for this worship series.