

Series: "TANGLED"

For Message: Matthew 5:8, 29, 37, 6:22-23, 15:19; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Ephesians 4:29; Psalm 51:10, 101:3; Proverbs 27:19; Isaiah 1:18

Message Title: "PURE..."

Introduction: Good Morning BMZ! Glad you are with us as we CONTINUE our NEW SERIES on RELATIONSHIPS called: "TANGLED". It's called that BECAUSE HUMAN Relationships seem to be getting MORE COMPLICATED ... like a TANGLED MESS. Over the next FEW WEEKS, we want to take time to UNRAVEL some of those COMPLICATIONS as we LISTEN to what our BIBLES TELL us about HUMANS and RELATIONSHIPS.

This morning ... QUICK SURVEY. How many of you drink BOTTLED water? Ok. A LOT of you. Now, would you turn to your neighbor and tell them the name of your FAVORITE Bottled Water. I just recently TRIED ... and I LIKE ... "_FIJI_" (Drink) Delicious!

And, LAST FALL I collected a bottle of water from the KICKAPOO RIVER, just to see how CLEAN it was. And, it's NOT BAD. I was careful. But, there are some FLOATIES in here. (Drink) Actually, NOT TOO BAD ... I probably LIKE the PURE WATER BETTER...

Here's what I'm TALKING about TODAY: Not PURE Water. I'm talking about PURITY when it comes to your RELATIONSHIP with GOD, particularly as it relates to your SEX LIFE. Today, I'd like you to LEAVE here with as MUCH PASSION for PURITY as you have a PASSION for PURE WATER. Our BIBLES tell us there is a CONNECTION between GOD'S BLESSING in your LIFE and your PURITY in RELATIONSHIPS.

Okay, here is the WARNING: PG-13 ... AND ... If you thought I sounded OLD-FASHIONED the past couple of weeks, WAIT until TODAY!

GRAB your MESSAGE NOTES ... *If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your 3-HOLE PUNCHED MESSAGE NOTES and CONNECTION card. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a pen and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your MESSAGE NOTES home. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you joining on-line, you can go to our website, www.bmzchurch.org / MESSAGES ... find the NOTES and the CONNECTION CARD and follow along ... LET'S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!*

I want to START our TIME today off with JESUS. Jesus says in the SERMON on the MOUNT that there is a CONNECTION between the PURITY in our lives and GOD'S BLESSING in our LIVES. Here it is ... Matthew 5:8 = ⁸ *God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God.* ¹ As in, IF your HEART is NOT PURE, you will NOT see GOD. According to JESUS, there is a DEEP Spiritual CONNECTION between our DISCIPLINE towards PURITY in our LIVES and GOD'S ABILITY to BLESS your LIFE. This is TRUE in ALL the different AREAS of our lives.

If you want God to BLESS your SPIRITUAL life, you must strive for PURITY in your Spiritual Life. If you want GOD to BLESS your WORK LIFE, you must LIVE a LIFE of INTEGRITY in the WORKPLACE. If you want God to BLESS your FINANCIAL life, you must be HONEST in your Financial DEALINGS and HONOR GOD with your FINANCES. This is TRUE of your PHYSICAL / RELATIONAL Life as well. If you want God to BLESS your ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS and your SEX LIFE, you must LIVE UP to God's STANDARD for SEXUAL PURITY.

So, what is that GOD'S STANDARD of PURITY? We have been TALKING about this for the past few weeks. God's STANDARD for SEXUAL Purity is ONE MAN / ONE WOMAN inside of a COVENANT RELATIONSHIP / MARRIAGE! And, ANYTHING that is NOT THAT ... God CANNOT BLESS! You are going to MISS IT!

Now, the OPPOSITE of BLESSING is ... CURSING. The OPPOSITE of God's standard of a PURE Sex Life is a CURSED Sex LIFE. THINK about that for a MOMENT ... What does a CURSED Sex Life look like? It means SEX for you has been EMOTIONALLY HARMFUL. You probably TEMPORARILY ENJOYED, but LATER Regretted ... felt kind of SICK about it. You probably CARRY some SHAME about your PAST. Some of you KNOW this FEELING. You have some REGRETS. It FEELS EMPTY. You wonder, "Is THIS IT?" It's a SEX Life that PULLS people APART. It's BAGGAGE you CARRY into EVERY OTHER Relationship and it's NOT FUN! It causes JEALOUSY, HURT and LATE-NIGHT Arguments. It's a CURSE.

That's NOT what GOD had PLANNED. And, the GOOD NEWS is that you can CHOOSE PURITY today. You DO NOT have to LIVE that way. Did you KNOW that GOD wants to BLESS your SEX LIFE?? God INVENTED it and wants it to be "GOOD"! NOT just in the MOMENT, but it brings CONTINUAL JOY to the RELATIONSHIP!

Now, let me GO BACK to something we TALKED about at the Beginning of this Series. Remember we talked about MIND/BODY DUALISM vs. MIND/BODY UNITY. The idea where we think what we DO with our BODY does NOT AFFECT the REST of our BEING is FALSE! The TRUTH is MIND/ BODY UNITY ... it is ALL CONNECTED and what we DO with our BODY AFFECTS the CORE of our BEING ... our MINDS, our EMOTIONS, our WILL, our FAITH and our RELATIONSHIPS. Here's how BIBLE says it ... 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 = ¹⁹ *Don't you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself,* ²⁰ *for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.* ² Would you please UNDERLINE that phrase "Honor God with Your Body"? What does that mean? It means we HONOR GOD by living out our SEXUALITY God's WAY. Again, there are OTHER PLANS, but GOD'S BEST PLAN is between ONE MAN and ONE WOMAN inside of a MARRIAGE COVENANT.

Let me be CLEAR and OLD-FASHIONED ... for YOUR SAKE. That means that IF you are NOT YET MARRIED ... you are SINGLE or DIVORCED but are NOT MARRIED ... God's BEST PLAN for you is to ABSTAIN. Like, you DON'T! NOT until you are MARRIED. That is GOD'S PLAN for a PURE LIFE. I GET IT ... NOT a POPULAR MESSAGE. Kind of UNHEARD OF these days. Do you KNOW what IS HEARD of THESE DAYS? A LOT of UNNECESSARY PAIN!

If you are MARRIED, God BLESSES your SEX LIFE between YOU and your SPOUSE. Sex with ANYBODY ELSE means you will LIVE under a CURSE. It's called ADULTERY.

So, TODAY, I want to talk about the TRUTH because I would be a MEAN PASTOR if I did NOT TELL You HOW to INVITE God's BLESSING into your LIFE! I do NOT want you LIVING under a CURSE! So, please allow me to ATTEMPT to give you a PASSION for PURITY in a WORLD that has LITTLE to do with PURITY.

Now, IF we are going after PURITY, it must START LONG BEFORE you are in a SITUATION. BUT, I want GOD to BLESS YOU, so let me give you THREE STEPS to GOD'S BLESSING in your LIFE... **GOD BLESSES ME WHEN I HAVE...
... A PURE COMMITMENT**

Write that down. Here's the DEAL: A PURE Sex Life starts LONG BEFORE you are WITH a PERSON. If you are MARRIED and you find yourself ATTRACTED to someone BESIDES your SPOUSE and you end up ALONE with that PERSON, it is ALMOST TOO LATE! If you are NOT MARRIED and you are on a DATE with someone and you are about to GO HOME with them, it is ALMOST TOO LATE. I say "ALMOST" because you can STILL DECIDE, even at the LAST MINUTE to GO with PURITY instead of IMPURITY.

BUT, the BEST WAY is to make COMMITMENTS to your PURITY LONG BEFORE you get ALONE in a ROOM with another person. That way, when your PURITY is TESTED, you are NOT TEMPTED to GIVE IN. Let me ASK: What COMMITMENTS do you have right NOW when it comes to your SEXUAL PURITY? What kind of PARAMETERS have you SET UP to make sure you PROTECT YOURSELF from UNNECESSARY PAIN? WHY? Because without SAFEGUARDS built into your LIFE, you're going to FALL into TEMPTATION...

We can't help it. We are HUMAN. What comes NATURALLY for us, if we are NOT following GODLY Principles and if we do NOT have SAFEGUARDS in place ... Naturally, the way we are WIRED, is to go for IMPURITY instead of PURITY. Therefore, we MUST be DISCIPLINED. Have SELF-DISCIPLINE. Be a DISCIPLINED DISCIPLE of JESUS.

Listen, we ALL face these TEMPTATIONS. I face them as well. SO, I must build in some SAFEGUARDS to help keep me PURE. A few years BACK, I read a book called "HEDGES" and it talked about these HEDGES for a PASTOR to stay PURE. If you are MARRIED, and I am, these HEDGES that you build into your LIFE are part of your COMMITMENT to your MARRIAGE and Godly Purity. So, I thought I'd SHARE a FEW:

#1 = Never DINE or TRAVEL ALONE with a WOMAN. Breakfast? NO. Lunch? NO. Dinner? NO. "Wow, Pastor Stan, that sounds a little OVERBOARD." Yep! BUT, I'd rather go OVERBOARD on the FRONT END instead of getting THROWN OVERBOARD later...

#2 = Only HUG a Woman in front of OTHER People. I try to SIDE-HUG. And, this is unfortunate because sometimes people NEED a HUG! But, NOT when I'm ALONE with them.

#3 = NEVER Compliment a WOMAN on her LOOKS. You can say, "Hey, nice COAT. Is that new?" That's okay. What's NOT OKAY is: "Wow! You look GREAT today!" Get it?

#4 = Avoid ANY KIND of FLIRTING with ANYONE but your WIFE. BUT, engage in as MUCH FLIRTATION with your WIFE as POSSIBLE! Great HEDGE = FLIRT with your WIFE / SPOUSE!

#5 = QUICKLY SHARE with others that you are MARRIED. Wear your RING! This is for MEN and WOMEN. Wear your WEDDING RING! "But, it's too small..." Cool thing they do at Jewelry Stores ... they RESIZE RINGS! Get it DONE and WEAR it PROUDLY!

If you are SINGLE, you might have DIFFERENT SAFEGUARDS / HEDGES ... If every time you GO to the BAR you end up going HOME with SOMEONE ... I'm NOT a GREAT COUNSELOR but STOP GOING TO THE BAR!! I get it! The DRIVE inside of us is so STRONG that it's HARD to think when we get INTO the SITUATION ... it's HARD to THINK CLEARLY. Make the COMMITMENT BEFORE to NOT get into the SITUATION.

Couple of verses ... Jesus ... Matthew 5:37 = ³⁷ *Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one.* ³ For MARRIEDS, this is a reminder to KEEP your VOWS! You said "YES" to your SPOUSE. Keep your VOW. Adultery is at an ALL-TIME HIGH in our world. Just KEEP your VOWS. Stick to your COMMITMENTS! When you said, "YES" to your Spouse, you said, "NO" to everyone else!

Ephesians 4:29 = ²⁹ *Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be*

*good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*⁴

There are some things you need to SAY to YOURSELF that will be GOOD and HELPFUL and an ENCOURAGEMENT to YOU! What are some COMMITMENTS you can make that will be GOOD and HELPFUL? How about KNOWING how the DATE is going to END BEFORE it BEGINS ... like, NOT WONDERING how the DATE will END! You already KNOW.

“This date is going to END at the RESTAURANT. This DATE is going to end at my DOORSTEP because you ain’t going to COME IN. Because IF you COME IN, the date will NO LONGER be about US, it’s going to be about YOU, MISTER! And, I CHOOSE that the DATE will NOT END that way!” You have a COMMITMENT you VOW to STICK TO! Again, it’s called DISCIPLINE according to GOD’S STANDARD!

Not POPULAR, but SO MUCH BETTER for YOU! Start with a COMMITMENT...

... **PURE EYES**

If we are going to keep a GODLY PURITY and keep INVITING God’s BLESSING and NOT a CURSE, we MUST think about what we LOOK AT. We need PURE EYES. THINK ... what goes INTO your EYES AFFECTS your WHOLE BEING. Jesus warns us to be very CAREFUL about ALLOWING IMPURITY to PASS through your EYES into your MIND ... Matthew 6:22-23 = ²² *“Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light.* ²³ *But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!”*⁵

IOW – What you ALLOW into your EYE is going to AFFECT your PURITY. And, it is DANGEROUS! So, what kinds of things are YOU LOOKING at? The most PROMINENT application here is PORNOGRAPHY. And, I must address it because JUST from a NUMBERS standpoint, it is a multi-billion-dollar industry that has a HIGHER REVENUE than the NFL, MLB and NBA combined by most reports.

I’m NOT going to go much further with this, but we need to be AWARE of the accessibility these days ... and ACCESSIBILITY for Children. And, it is ADDICTIVE! If you are ADDICTED, please SEEK HELP! It is a STEP toward MORE IMPURITIES and it CLOUDS our minds. It changes the way we THINK about OURSELVES and HOW we VIEW OTHERS. And NEITHER are GODLY or PURE. We will LIVE under a CURSE.

What kinds of CHANGES to you need to MAKE to PREVENT this? What SAFEGUARDS do you have for your KIDS? What SAFEGUARDS do you have for YOURSELF? Maybe you need to COMMIT to this VERSE from Psalms ... Psalm 101:3a = ³ *I will refuse to look at anything vile and vulgar.*⁶ Some people think of PORNOGRAPHY as an EXTREME, but it’s become all too MAINSTREAM. SO, that’s ONE ISSUE. BUT, it is NOT the ONLY ONE.

Let me ask: WHAT do you WATCH? On TV, NETFLIX, AMAZON PRIME? Again, OLD-FASHIONED. But, let me ask ... Do you NOT THINK that what we have been EXPOSED TO over the past 40-50 YEARS and what we’ve SEEN with our EYES has NOT had an IMPACT on what our WORLD looks like TODAY?!? I’m a PASTOR, so I’m kind of NAÏVE. But, if YOU DON’T THINK what we’ve been WATCHING over the past DECADES has NOT affected the HEARTS of PEOPLE and CHANGED our SOCIETY; you are WAY MORE NAÏVE than ME!

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Eph 4:29). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 6:22-23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁶ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ps 101:3). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

I'm not sure if you REMEMBER this, but there was a DAY, a couple weeks ago when the NEWS was FOLLOWING THREE PUBLIC SHOOTINGS in ONE DAY! Can you even REMEMBER a TIME when there was NOT at least ONE Day out of WEEK or a MONTH when SOMEONE didn't see it as their RIGHT, due to their DEPRESSION or MENTAL weakness or their CLAIM to being a VICTIM, to PULL out a GUN and SHOOT as many INNOCENT people as POSSIBLE?!? You DON'T THINK their HEART was CHANGED by what they SAW? You DON'T THINK that is connected to VIDEO GAMES and MOVIES and TELEVISION SHOWS they've seen?

You DON'T THINK that we have a SEXUALLY MESSED UP SOCIETY because of what we've SEEN over the PAST NUMBER of DECADES? You DON'T THINK our CHILDREN are AFFECTED by KIDS SHOWS that SHOW KIDS being incredibly DISRESPECTFUL of their PARENTS and ADULTS in GENERAL?

You DON'T THINK we have THOUSANDS of our Children and Grandchildren running around with ZERO UNDERSTANDING of what a GOOD and GODLY RELATIONSHIP can LOOK LIKE because of what we've SEEN over the past DECADES? You're NAÏVE!

Jesus WARNED LONG AGO that it is IMPORTANT to PAY ATTENTION to what we SEE ... Matthew 5:29 = ²⁹ *So if your eye—even your good eye—causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.*⁷ Listen, if we took this LITERALLY, we'd ALL be BLIND. BUT, Jesus is expressing the IMPORTANCE of what we LOOK AT! It's LIFE or DEATH and we should go to WHATEVER LENGTH NECESSARY to PROTECT ourselves and our PURITY!

Is what you are allowing into your eyes LIGHT or DARK. Our HEARTS will follow... That gets us to our LAST DECISION ... God BLESSES ME when I have a ...
... A PURE HEART

See, SEXUAL IMPURITY really has nothing to do with our BODY PARTS. It has EVERYTHING to do with the CONDITION of our HEARTS. If your HEART is NOT right, it is going to lead to ALL KINDS of CONSEQUENCES!

When I talk to people who have been INVOLVED in SEXUAL IMPURITY, they often say things like ... *"I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF!"* And, they're right. They COULDN'T! BECAUSE a HEART DISCONNECTED from GOD has very LITTLE HOPE. Your HEART, without being in a RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with GOD does NOT have the STRENGTH on its own to LIVE a LIFE of PURITY.

And, some of you are SITTING here today and you're saying, *"I DON'T CARE about a LIFE of PURITY!"* Here's the PROBLEM: Unfortunately, your DECISIONS will AFFECT others AROUND you and AFTER you in a SCARY WAY. And, if that's your ATTITUDE, you are INCREDIBLY SELFISH, and your HEART is SICK. Jesus talks about this ... Matthew 15:19 = ¹⁹ *For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.*⁸ Would you please CIRCLE the word "HEART" and then write off in the margin, *"A heart Not Surrendered to God."* Jesus is talking about our NATURAL, SINFUL Hearts that have NOT COMMITTED to GOD.

That VERSE is why I CRINGE when I hear ANOTHER DISNEY SHOW or MOVIE tell our KIDS to FOLLOW THEIR HEARTS! If JESUS is NOT LYING, PLEASE do NOT FOLLOW your HEART!

⁷ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 5:29). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁸ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Mt 15:19). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

But, God does NOT want to LEAVE us with our OWN, SINFUL HEARTS! He loves us TOO MUCH to NOT INVITE us to a NEW and CLEAN HEART! He loves US as His CHILDREN ... That's what this NEXT VERSE is about ... Proverbs 27:19 = ⁹ *As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.* ⁹ If you are going to CHANGE your LIFE toward PURITY and BLESSING from GOD, you must CHANGE your HEART! Jeremiah reminds us AGAIN, that the LORD looks at our HEARTS ... and it MATTERS! Jeremiah 17:9-10 = ⁹ *"The human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?"* ¹⁰ *But I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives. I give all people their due rewards, according to what their actions deserve."* ¹⁰ We are REWARDED ... Blessing or Curse ... according to our ACTIONS.

BUT, if you remember a couple weeks ago, when I was talking to the WOMEN, God offers us a CHANGE of HEART. We can have HEALING and RENEWAL to our PURITY if we will just ASK. This is GOOD NEWS for MANY of US today! This means, NO MATTER WHAT we've DONE in the PAST, we CANNOT OUTSIN GOD'S LOVE and FORGIVENESS ... His GRACE is Sufficient! It means we can COME BACK to GOD TODAY and be FORGIVEN and PURIFIED ... Look at this: Isaiah 1:18b = *Though your sins are like scarlet, I will make them as white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, I will make them as white as wool.* ¹¹ God can TAKE our PASTS out of the picture and RENEW US ... allow us to START OVER! When we've been FORGIVEN, God looks at you and NO LONGER SEES IMPURITIES! He cleans you up and NOW SEES in YOU a CLEAN HEART!

Please HEAR ME ... NO ONE is TOO IMPURE for GOD to CLEAN UP and call SINLESS! If you have started to feel GUILTY about your PAST, you are IN the RIGHT PLACE! Jesus can FORGIVE YOU! Please hear this GRACE ... God does NOT give us what we DESERVE according to our ACTIONS. We DESERVE to DIE ETERNALLY, and God gives us ETERNAL LIFE INSTEAD! Here's a PRAYER you might want to PRAY AGAIN and AGAIN (Long-time Followers of Jesus too!) ... Psalm 51:10 = ¹⁰ *Create in me a clean heart, O God. Renew a loyal spirit within me.* ¹²

Doesn't SOMETHING inside of you make you want to be PURE? Create in me a CLEAN Heart and renew a RIGHT SPIRIT within me... Let's PRAY!

Next Steps: *I will memorize 1 Corinthians 6:19-20*
I will read Matthew 5. For extra credit I will read Matthew 5-7
I will commit to purity in my relationships
I will begin praying about who to invite with me for Easter, April 21st

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

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Pr 27:19). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
¹⁰ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Is 17:9-10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
¹¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Is 1:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
¹² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Ps 51:10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.