

Prostitution

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] *Surely you know that your bodies are parts of Christ himself. So I must never take the parts of Christ and join them to a prostitute!* 1 CORINTHIANS 6:15 NCV™

Homosexual acts

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF UNGODLY PEOPLE:] For this reason God gave them over to dishonorable passions. For *their women exchanged the natural sexual relations for unnatural ones,* ²⁷*and likewise the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed in their passions for one another. Men committed shameless acts with men and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.*

ROMANS 1:26–27

This teaches that homosexual relations are unnatural. In v. 27, the phrase “received in themselves the due penalty” implies that the committing of such acts carries its own natural consequences.

Epilogue: Be Wary

Be alert and sober

So then we must not sleep as the rest, but must *stay alert and sober.*

1 THESSALONIANS 5:6

Examine and evaluate yourself

Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD!

LAMENTATIONS 3:40 ESV

Keep a clear conscience

Paul looked straight at the Council and said, “Brothers, *with a clear conscience I have done my duty before God up to this very day.*”

ACTS 23:1 ISV

Remember the persecuted

38. Major Pitfalls

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I. Pride

Pride is one of the greatest dangers to one's life as a believer, yet it is also one of the most subtle. Pride has an adverse effect on both our relationship with God and our relationships with others. The opposite to pride is humility, which correspondingly is very much a key factor in living an ongoing and effective Christian life.

Pride in Thought

Do not be proud

Hear and give ear; *be not proud*, for the LORD has spoken.
JEREMIAH 13:15 ESV

Do not think you are better than others

He [the king] *should not think he is better than his fellow Israelites*, and he must not stop obeying the law in any way so that he and his descendants may rule the kingdom for a long time.
DEUTERONOMY 17:20 NCV™

Do not be wise in your own eyes

How horrible it will be for those who think they are wise and consider themselves to be clever. ISAIAH 5:21 GW

Do not be self-righteous

Jesus also told this parable to some who were confident that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else. ¹⁰Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹*The Pharisee stood and prayed about himself like this: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people: extortionists, unrighteous people, adulterers – or even like this tax collector.* ¹²*I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get.'* ¹³The tax collector, however, stood far off and would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, be merciful to me, sinner that I am!' ¹⁴*I tell you that this man went down to his home justified rather than the Pharisee. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.* LUKE 18:9–14

up straight and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" "She replied, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you either. *Go, and from now on do not sin any more.*"
JOHN 8:3–4, 7–11

Sexual sin has ill consequences . . .

Keep on running away from sexual immorality. *Any other sin that a person commits is outside his body, but the person who sins sexually sins against his own body.* 1 CORINTHIANS 6:18 ISV

In contrast to other sins, sexual sin involves the misuse and mistreatment of one's own body. Moreover, Paul seems to imply that sexual sin adversely affects the body or one's being in a deeper way than any other sin (cf. CEV, GNT, NLT).

. . . Sexual sin ultimately results in God's judgment

Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for *God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.*
HEBREWS 13:4

Prohibited Forms of Sex

See also: *Do not rape*, p. 278; *Do not commit adultery*, p. 297

Lust

[JESUS:] You have heard that it was said, 'You must not commit adultery.'²⁸ *But I say to you, anyone who stares at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
MATTHEW 5:27–28 ISV

Gazing longingly at a woman with sexual desire, is committing adultery in one's heart and in a spiritual sense.

Sex apart from marriage

[MOSES, SPEAKING OF ANY WOMAN WHO HAD HAD PREMARITAL SEX:] *She has done a disgraceful thing in Israel by having sexual relations before she was married.* You must get rid of the evil among you.
DEUTERONOMY 22:21B NCV™

Further Warnings about Riches

Riches are not secure

[PAUL, INSTRUCTING TIMOTHY WHAT TO TEACH BELIEVERS:] Tell those who have the riches of this world not to be arrogant and *not to place their confidence in anything as uncertain as riches*. Instead, they should place their confidence in God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 1 TIMOTHY 6:17 GW

Life does not last and the dead cannot take their riches with them

Surely one sees that even wise people die; fools and spiritually insensitive people all pass away and leave their wealth to others. PSALMS 49:10

For we *did not bring anything into the world, and surely we cannot take anything out of it.* 1 TIMOTHY 6:7 ISV

Hoarding riches will bring ill consequences in the afterlife

[JESUS:] But *woe to you who are rich, for you have received your comfort already.* ²⁵*Woe to you who are well satisfied with food now, for you will be hungry.* LUKE 6:24–25A

Sexual Sin

Avoid sexual sin

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] But *among you there must not be either sexual immorality, impurity of any kind, or greed, as these are not fitting for the saints.* EPHESIANS 5:3

The experts in the law and the Pharisees *brought a woman who had been caught committing adultery*. They made her stand in front of them ⁴and said to Jesus, “Teacher, *this woman was caught in the very act of adultery.* ... ⁷When they persisted in asking him, he stood up straight and replied, “Whoever among you is guiltless may be the first to throw a stone at her.” ⁸Then he bent over again and wrote on the ground. ⁹Now when they heard this, they began to drift away one at a time, starting with the older ones, until Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. ¹⁰Jesus stood

Pride in Action

Do not exalt yourself . . .

Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, And do not stand in the place of the great; ... PROVERBS 25:6 NKJV

The second part seems to speak of claiming a place among the great.

. . . Honor others, rather than yourself

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Love each other as brothers and sisters and *honor others more than you do yourself.* ROMANS 12:10 CEV

[PAUL, TO BELIEVERS:] Instead of being motivated by selfish ambition or vanity, each of you should, in humility, be moved to *treat one another as more important than yourself.* PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Do not boast about yourself

Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. PROVERBS 27:2

Outcomes of Pride

Pride is very detrimental to a relationship with God

[MOSES, TO THE ISRAELITES:] ... *make sure that you do not become proud and forget the LORD your God* who rescued you from Egypt, where you were slaves. DEUTERONOMY 8:14 GNT

[A PSALMIST, TO GOD:] *The wicked are too proud to turn to you or even think about you.* PSALMS 10:4 CEV

In their pride, the wicked have no desire and see no need to seek God, often due to a perceived self-sufficiency. Being “full of themselves” they have no room for God in their lives.

Pride is associated with self-deception and flawed understanding

[GOD, TO THE NATION OF EDMOM:] *Your pride has deceived you. Your capital is a fortress of solid rock; your home is high in the mountains, and so you say to yourself, ‘Who can ever pull me down?’* ⁴*Even though you make your home as high as an eagle’s nest,*

so that it seems to be among the stars, yet I will pull you down.

OBADIAH 1:3–4 GNT

[PAUL, SPEAKING OF A TYPICAL FALSE TEACHER:] *This person is full of pride and understands nothing, but is sick with a love for arguing and fighting about words.* 1 TIMOTHY 6:4A NCV™

Pride leads to one's downfall

Before destruction the heart of a person is proud, but humility comes before honor. PROVERBS 18:12

Antithesis of Pride: Humility

Humility is the opposite of pride. It is a most critical attitude for maintaining one's guard against things that can cause one to fall – spiritually and otherwise. This is in contrast to pride which opens oneself up to many kinds of destructive dangers (as reflected in the previous section, *Outcomes of Pride*).

Be humble – particularly before God

This is what the LORD requires from you: to do what is right, to love mercy, and to *live humbly with your God.* MICAH 6:8B GW

Then he [an angelic messenger] said to me, “Don't be afraid, Daniel, for from the very first day you applied your mind to understand and to *humble yourself before your God*, your words were heard. I have come in response to your words.” DANIEL 10:12

Be humble towards others

Be humble and gentle in every way. EPHESIANS 4:2A GW

[PETER, TO BELIEVERS:] And all of you, *clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.* 1 PETER 5:5B

Remember the persecuted

II. Riches and Sex

Riches and sex are both good in themselves; in fact they are blessings from God. However they both are easily and often misused, bringing ill effects for both ourselves and others. Indeed, few things have the capacity of riches or sex for both good and harm. So it should be no surprise that they feature so prominently in the Bible's teaching on our relationships with others and moreover our relationship with God.

Riches and Godliness

Riches are a barrier to a relationship with God

Do not accumulate for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But accumulate for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ... ²⁴“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money. MATTHEW 6:19–21, 24

Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “*How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!*” MARK 10:23

Riches even draw one away from God

But people who want to get rich keep toppling into temptation and are trapped by many stupid and harmful desires that plunge them into destruction and ruin. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, in their eagerness to get rich, have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with much pain.

1 TIMOTHY 6:9–10 ISV

So, do not love money and be content with what you have

Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for God has said, “I will never leave you or abandon you.”

HEBREWS 13:5 ISV