

How Did We Get Here?: Hyper-Sexual Society Pleasant Plains 4-23-2017AM NICK ANGEL

- ***READ I Thessalonians 4:1-8/PRAYER*** The question is most often asked by a husband and wife sitting on opposite sides of the couch after their fourth major argument of the day. It is asked by the immensely obese man who clutches his chest as his heart aches from carrying all of the extra weight. It is asked by the young person sitting in the detention cell awaiting to hear the sentence handed down for the heinous crimes committed. It is asked by the business man who stares at this financial accounts and wonders where all of the money has gone. This question is asked in more situations than I can list this morning, but the reality of the answer to this question in each instance is not easy.
- In fact, I would suggest to you that all of these individuals found themselves in these places in their lives not because of a single factor, but because of many different factors that built up overtime and finally led to the current situation and circumstances that they find themselves in. The question is...how did we get here?
- This question, as I said, can be asked in innumerable situations and the truth of the matter is that we often find ourselves asking this same question. As Christians, as people who are seeking to live according to the holy standard of God, we often look around us and see just how far we, as a society, have gotten away from God and His Will for us...His most treasured creation of man. We stop and look around and we asked the question within our minds...or maybe we even asked it out loud, "How did we get here?"
- Again, the answer normally isn't singular in nature, but it is a result of years of doing many things against the will of God. This morning, I want to begin a series of lessons answering this question in regards to a variety of things pertaining to this life and the society and culture in which we live. Looking at a problem, wondering how it came to be, yet never looking for answers can easily drive a person mad. But taking some time to examine what led to this current point can not only enlighten us, but it can also help us to see what we can do to fix the current issues that plague us as a society.
- Now, I am not naive to think that we can actually solve all of society's problems and create some kind of utopian society in which we can live in. That just isn't what is going to happen. If you want that then you best live for God and make preparations for heaven because that is where only righteousness and goodness truly dwells. But we can still give efforts to understand how we have gotten here because it can point us as Christians in a direction that we must strive for.
- This morning, I want to begin this series of lessons that we will consider from time to time by asking how we got here in regards to the hyper-sexual society in which we live. Looking all around us, it is not hard to see that we live in a society and culture that is obsessed with sex and finding sexual fulfillment. Pre-marital sex, casual sex, teen pregnancy, unwed pregnancy, cohabitation before marriage, homosexuality, etc...all of these issues push us towards recognizing the type of society we live in. So how did we get here? How has it gotten as bad as it has where people openly flaunt their sexual deeds? How have we gotten to the point where there is no shame in such things? This is what I want to consider this morning.
- Now, let me begin by stating that the truth is that humans have always been obsessed with finding sexual fulfillment. Remember what we read just a few minutes ago? Back in **I Thessalonians 4:1-8**, the Apostle Paul is having to write such things because there were some of the Body of Christ who were participating in sexual immorality. But this wasn't particular to only the Thessalonians, but we know that Paul also had to write concerning such things to the church in Corinth. In **I Corinthians 6:15-20**, Paul implores the Corinthians to remember that their bodies were to be held in purity because they were temple's of the Holy Spirit. We can read elsewhere in Scripture about the people having prostitutes that were associated with deity worship! They thought they were worshipping some deity by joining themselves together physically. You might say, "Nick, that is a bit extreme...they were way worse back then than that we are today as a society." I would argue that we are just as bad if not worse. Even today, we have people, who claim to be Christians and religious people, who without restraint constantly engage in unlawful sexual behavior. How did we get here? Let's take a few minutes to consider some contributing factors and then some remedies for ourselves to make sure we don't wake up one day and ask how we ourselves have gotten to this place.

I. Contributing Factors:

- A. Speaking generally, I think the main cause for our hyper-sexual society is the pervasive presence of rampant sensuality.
 1. The word that stands out to me the most that I remember growing up reading in my NKJV was "lasciviousness." We don't use that word much, but modern translations often render that word as sensual...meaning *devotion to indulgence in carnal or fleshly pleasures*. It also gives the idea of *outrageous conduct, shocking to public decency*.
 2. Very simply put...sensuality is the obsession with physical fulfillment most often of the sexual nature. Again, this isn't something that is particular to our times, but it was something that was dealt with in the first century.
 3. Four separate writers record discussions on this particular issue throughout the New Testament. Jesus is quoted as condemning *sensuality* in **Mark 7:21-23** among other sins. Paul speaks in condemnation of *immorality, sensuality, & impurity* in **II Corinthians 12:21, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:19**. Peter addressed the issues of sensuality & lusts in **I Peter 4:3**. Finally, Jude speaks against licentiousness in **Jude 4**.

4. Certainly we see that this thing ought not be a part of our character as disciples of Jesus. And that is exactly where this abides...sensuality is a part of our character. It is something that originates in the heart. Go back with me to **Mark 7:21-23**, and consider with me this all important concept that sensuality, along with other sins, is a product of the condition of our hearts. But not only that...it is also important to recognize that our hearts are conditioned by what we are surrounded by and what we allow to influence us. There are things in this life that influence our hearts to be sensual in nature.
- B. The sensual mindset of this world is fueled by a few specific things that are present in our society.
 1. Sexual Clothing
 - a) Just in case someone isn't sold on the idea that clothing can be sexual in nature...consider what is said of the harlot in **Proverbs 7:10**. Here, Solomon tells us that this woman who was trying to entice the young man to sexual sin tried to do so through the *"dressing as a harlot."*
 - b) What does this teach us? It teaches us very plainly that our clothes can influence others to desire and think things of us that they ought not. As clothes have gotten tighter and tighter, lesser and lesser, and more revealing...not much is left to the imagination and it doesn't take much effort for someone's mind to go to a place where it ought not be.
 - c) When the clothes that are worn by the majority of people accentuate the parts of the body that arouse sexual excitement...how can we be surprised when our culture is obsessed with physical fulfillment? There is a reason why so much immorality and impurity takes place during times of the year such as spring break. People don't wear appropriate clothing and then mix in some alcohol and any self restraint goes right out the window. Sexual clothing certainly has influences our cultures hyper-sexuality.
 2. Sexual Dancing
 - a) I was very specific in my wording of this because it just wouldn't be accurate or truthful to simply have dancing. What seems to be appropriate dancing for joy is found in the Bible. The children of Israel danced for joy once they crossed over the Red Sea. I can't imagine that the hokey pokey would lead to sensual thoughts...however, we must also be honest and admit that there is dancing that is sexual in nature and fuels the sensuality of our culture.
 - b) The dancing referred to in this point is the same kind of dancing that was used in the murder of John the Baptist in **Matthew 14:1-10**. Herodias was incensed that John would condemn her unlawful marriage to Herod and so she sends her daughter to seduce Herod through sensual dancing...through the moving of certain parts of the body that entice sexual arousal. She enticed him to give her whatever she wanted and her desire was her mother's desire of John's head.
 - c) This type of sexual dancing is prevalent in our culture. We must not allow ourselves to be fooled into thinking that our children and young people aren't or can't be exposed to such things at school dances or parties or later on in their college years or young adult years at bars or clubs. This type of activity is absolutely present! In fact, some school districts have flat out cancelled dances because the students were uncontrollable in the way they danced with one another. It isn't much of a leap from the way that some people dance to the actual physical act itself, so we ought not be surprised when young people who are engaged in such things find themselves not stopping there, but even going far beyond those things.
 3. Pornography
 - a) Probably no greater plague among our society is there than that of pornography. The easy access, the mind altering affects, and the sensual influence on those who take it in is seen in the way so many behave towards others.
 - b) It can't be argued that the mental sexual impurity of lust that exists in such a thing is troubling (**I John 2:15-17**), but maybe just as troubling is the affect that this type of activity has on the brain of those taking it in. Pornography shapes the mind of the one who watches to no longer see others as people, but instead they are seen as objects that are meant to please me or be used by me.
 - c) Pornography dehumanizes other people in the mind of the one who watches and does nothing by fuel the fire of the hyper-sexuality of our culture.
 4. Sexualized Entertainment
 - a) Whether it be movies, TV, music, or literature...it cannot be denied that those things we intake as entertainment have become much more sexual in nature in the last few years. In past decades it was unheard of that you would see even husbands and wives in bed together on a TV show, but things have not gone far beyond that to where strangers find themselves engaged in unlawful relationships on network TV/cable...not to mention what is shown in movies, said in songs, or written in books.

- b) All of these things shape and influence our minds to firstly: desensitize us towards such a thing being inappropriate and secondly: they give us a false impression of such things. In almost all of these circumstances things are perfect. The relationship is perfect, the people are perfect, and everyone is perfectly happy. However, we know that life just isn't such.
- c) Why does this matter? It matters because we begin to wonder why our love lives as husbands and wives aren't perfect. Why can't my wife be as good as the woman on the show? Why can't my husband be as romantic as the guy in the book? They create unreasonable expectations in our minds, and then as we seek our these ideals... we are willing to go anywhere and everywhere to find such...even if that means outside our marriage.

We must be a people of mental sobriety and purity or else we will become as depraved as those in the world have become because of such things as we have just discussed. But what can be done to make sure we are not a people who have overtaken with this type of mindset? Let's consider four final things as a means of remedies to get us out of this type of ungodly mindset.

II. Remedies For Our Hyper-Sexual Society

A. Understanding Sex is a Blessing & a Privilege, Not a Right

1. Satan is the great deceiver. He is the father of lies and a liar from the beginning. One of the ways in which he lies to us and seeks to destroy our souls is by manipulating our minds into thinking that sex fulfillment is a right as humans. If it is a right then that means we are able to obtain it no matter what, but certainly this isn't the truth at all...it is a lie.
2. The truth is that sexual fulfillment is a blessing and a privilege. It surely is a good thing to be enjoyed, but God has only given it as an enjoyment to be had by husband and wife. In the beginning, Adam and Eve were joined as one flesh because they were husband and wife. The Hebrew writer is clear that sexual fulfillment reserved for those who enter into the marriage covenant, and those who live lives of fornication will be judged accordingly. **(Heb. 13:4 "Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.")**
3. We must acknowledge the fact that the physical relationship is not inherently a bad thing. It is not a dirty thing, but it is something that is good in the right context. **We must not allow the world to turn a blessing from God into something that is problematic or disgraceful.**

B. Pursuit of Purity

1. Avoiding having a mindset that is like the hyper-sexual mindset of this world requires that we recognize the better way of Jesus by living in purity. Of course that means that we avoid inappropriate physical actions, but it also means that we live a life of mental purity. **(Matthew 5:27-30)**
2. Our physical and mental purity is of the utmost importance to our Lord which is exactly why Paul wrote what he did in our opening Text of **I Thessalonians 4:3-5, "For this is the will of God, your sanctification; that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God."** If we want to be a sanctified people then we must be a people who give great efforts to pursue purity in our lives.

C. Recognize the Severe Consequences of Sexual Sin

1. While all sin will eventually bring about ultimate judgement which will result in an eternity in hell...we must recognize the fact that some sin has more severe consequences in this life than others. Sins of the sexual nature are of that sort.
2. **"Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body." (I Corinthians 6:18)** The context leads us to conclude that the immoral man is the man who sins in a sexual nature. He has sinned with his body and with that sin comes additional baggage that might not be present with other sins. Think about the sickness and disease, the mental anguish, and emotional heartache that so many have experienced because of their unlawful physical relationships or exploits. The severe consequences of sin ought to serve as a strong deterrent for us to avoid such things.

D. Open Discussion

1. Sure...I will certainly concede that discussions on these types of subjects make us uncomfortable. However, what ought to make us far more uncomfortable are the thoughts that those we love most are learning about such subjects from those who are not Godly in their character and purpose in this life.
2. If we truly believe that these subjects are of the utmost importance...if we truly believe that that these types of sins can ruin lives...if we believe that God's design for such things is the best way then we must find the courage to discuss these types of issues or else we can't blame anyone else when our loved ones find themselves drowning in these types of sins. We must be willing to discuss the dangers and struggles that exist within this topics of this sort.

Certainly we live in a world that is saturated in sensuality and these that fuel it. However, just because we live in this world doesn't mean that we are allowed to be like the sin of this world. May God help us to to be transformed in our minds so that we will be pleasing to Him in al things and especially these areas. May all the glory be to His Great Name.