

# LIFE IN CHRIST

A PREACHED RETREAT BY FR. RANIERO CANTALAMESSA

## SESSION 7: A LIFESTYLE OF PURITY

*“Besides, you know ‘the time’ has come: you must wake up now: our salvation is even nearer than it was when we were converted. The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon – let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light. Let us live decently as people do in the daytime: no drunken orgies, no promiscuity or licentiousness, and no wrangling or jealousy. Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ; forget about satisfying your bodies with all their cravings.”*

-Romans 13:11-14

### A. The Virtue of Purity (self-control)

- Purity was the last battle of St. Augustine before his conversion.
- Romans (and other writings of Paul) teach us the importance of upholding purity (self-control) as a virtue.
- In all impurity, we sell ourselves for something.

*“‘For me there are no forbidden things’; maybe, but not everything does good. I agree there are no forbidden things for me, but I am not going to let anything dominate me. Food is only meant for the stomach, and the stomach for food; yes, and God is going to do away with both of them. But the body – this is not meant for fornication; it is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God, who raised the Lord from the dead, will by his power raise us up too. You know, surely, that your bodies are members making up the body of Christ; do you think I can take parts of Christ’s body and join them to the body of a prostitute? Never! As you know, a man who goes with a prostitute is one body with her, since the two, as it is said, become one flesh. But anyone who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with him. Keep away from fornication. All the other sins are committed outside the body; but to fornicate is to sin against your own body. Your body, you know, is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you since you received him from God. You are not your own property; you have been bought and paid for. That is why you should use your body for the glory of God.” -1 Corinthians 6:12-20*

- We are not masters of our own bodies. Jesus acquired our bodies and souls on the cross.
- Jesus must be Lord of our bodies too.
- We are members of Jesus’ body, temples of the Holy Spirit, and we cannot forsake our body, but rather respect it.

### B. A Lifestyle of Purity

- Purity isn’t just a virtue, it’s a lifestyle.
- Purity looks different at different stages of life.
- Purity of the whole person - the heart, lips, eyes, and body.
- Purity shows the beauty of the Christian life.
- Humanity has corrupted the beauty of the body, but God has redeemed it.

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### C. Purity in the Modern World

- Today our world cares more about loving our neighbors than purity, but you cannot love someone truly without loving them purely.
- Every sin infects the moral environment of the culture.
- The early Christians inspired the Roman (pagan) world by:
  - The proclamation of the gospel (the kerygma) and
  - Their testimony of life - brotherly love and purity
- As Christians, we want to live purely, which is a value for love, not accepting what our culture teaches about human sexuality. We must hold to God's eternal law.

### D. The Power to overcome Impurity:

- Intentionally living a life of impurity prevents our prayer from being effective.
- We must break free of these sins.
- Jesus restores innocence to us through his sacrifice.

*"...be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked generation, among whom you must shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life..." -Philippians 2:15-16*
- Acquire the eyes of Jesus.
- Prayer is a tool to become pure (being in touch with the source of purity - God)
- Only through Jesus Christ can we break the power impurity has on our lives.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What stood out to you from the talk?
2. Have you ever struggled with impurity? How did it affect your life and your relationship with God?
3. What are ways you can grow in purity at your current stage of life?
4. How does our modern culture's idea of purity contrast with God's? How can we stand for truth against the culture on issues of purity?