Well tonight we are landing the plane on our “Yellow Brick Road” series on purity. Over the last few weeks we’ve talked about the importance of using our brains and protecting and monitoring our hearts and tonight I want to look at what it takes to have courage in the midst of temptation.

Now what do I mean by temptation? When you came in tonight you were handed a slip of paper that had a question written on it. That question read, *“Name 2-3 temptations you have related to purity.”*

Many of you answered that question so allow me to read through some of the answers to that question.

These and probably more are the temptations that I’m talking about tonight that you and I have to find the courage to deal with.

Now I say that we have to figure out a way to have courage to deal with these types of temptations because you either deal with them or you give in to them. There isn’t a middle ground. I think a lot of the time we buy into this idea that we’re not pure but we’re not impure, we’re not out looking for impurity but at the same time we’re not pursuing purity, we kind of think that we’re somehow in neutral. There is no neutral. You are either walking towards purity or walking away form purity.

James 1:14-15 (NLT) says, *"Temptation comes from our own desires, which entice us and drag us away. These desires give birth to sinful actions. And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.”*

Listen, what James says here pretty clearly maps out that the temptation can drag us away and give birth to sinful actions and then he drives home the point when he says, *“And when sin is allowed to grow, it gives birth to death.”*

If you convinced yourself that you’re somehow in the middle of the road on the topic of purity in your life, if you’ve convinced yourself that you are still waiting to decide where you’re going to land on this whole idea…hear this, you’ve already made your decision because if you’re not moving towards greater purity, you are moving away from it.

Listen, now is the time that you have to decide how to deal with and have courage in the face of temptation. There can’t be waiting. This isn’t a decision that can be made down the road. If you lack the courage to do the right thing, you are already moving backwards.

Courage starts now but let’s chat about this for a minute. What does that look like? I hear you say that I should have courage but courage to do what? Let me give you two examples of what I’m talking about.

**First, you have to have courage to establish boundaries.** Please hear this, I’m talking to you. I don’t care if you date all the time or if you’ve never really dated anyone, the bottom line is that you have to set some boundaries up in your life that deal specifically with your sexually purity.

Let me give you some examples of what your boundaries cannot look like…

* I won’t put myself in a situation with a guy or girl that I don’t want to be in.
* I won’t go past the point of being able to say this is too far.
* I’m going to gouge my eyes out so that I never again have to gaze upon a member of the opposite sex.

Those are boundaries that simply won’t work. Some of those boundaries won’t work because they are obviously unrealistic. Gouging your eyes isn’t a good idea. But here’s the deal, the other ones aren’t realistic either. They’re not realistic because your body is not wired in a way to make those things happen.

Going up to a certain point with a guy or a girl and then simply shutting down doesn’t work. Now the argument could be made that girls are wired in a way that it makes maybe a little easier but it’s still difficult. But listen, guys simply do not have that same wiring.

Why do I tell you that? I tell you that because if you are a guy and you want to be committed to living a life of sexual purity then you must ram the stake in the ground way back away from where you know you shouldn’t be with a girl. Why? Because once you get those thoughts in your mind you are like a freight train and there isn’t a whole lot, other than a cold shower or a slap in the face that’s going to stop things from spiraling out of control. That’s why you have to have the courage to establish boundaries.

If you’re a girl and you are committed to staying sexually pure with the guys that you date it’s your responsibility to establish boundaries far away from where you know he shouldn’t be. If you, as a young woman are wanting to stay sexually pure then you need to have the courage to establish boundaries in the long before there is a need for those boundaries.

We hit on this idea in week one when we talked about using your brain and not thinking that *“It’ll never happen to me”.* So what we’re talking about tonight is really the second part of that idea. First you have to realize that no one is exempt from temptation and then secondly, you have to have the courage to do something about it.

Like I’ve never met a high school couple who got pregnant and they were like, “Oh, we’re so excited to start our family even though I have volleyball practice everyday after school and I’m going to have to find a babysitter in order to attend homecoming.”

People never say that, instead they say, things like, “Well, we didn’t mean for it to go that far, it was just so hard to stop.” Well duh… Those types of comments are simply the result of people not having the courage to set up the right kind of boundaries with the opposite sex.

Here’s the thing, boundaries don’t just apply to guy/girl situations. Think for a minute about the amount of courage that’s needed to not participate in the impure talk that goes on in the locker room. What about the courage it takes to not scroll onto inappropriate social media feeds when you’re by yourself?

Paul in the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 16:13 (NLT), *“Be on guard. Stand firm in the faith. Be courageous. Be strong.”*

2 Timothy 1:7 says, *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love, and self-discipline.”*

Let me suggest to you that if you are walking with God, in a personal relationship with Jesus then God has already placed inside of you everything that is needed to have the courage you need to face temptation.

* He’s already given you the courage to be honest with your connect group about what your struggles are.
* He’s already given you the courage to be honest with your parents about where you struggle and where you need help.
* He’s already given you the courage and the words to tell your boyfriend/girlfriend that you’ve got boundaries and rules for your relationship.

And if that’s already inside of us, then we just have to move on it. It’s not us having the courage, it’s us having the courage because of what God has placed in us.

**The second area that I want to hit on briefly is having the courage to walk away.** Here’s what I mean by this, we have this fear that if we walk away from situations or friends that we know are impure that we’re somehow going to be abandoned. So we live with this fear of:

* Being alone
* Sitting alone at lunch
* Never having a date
* Never going to homecoming or prom
* Never having any friends

It’s like we become trapped by our own fear into continuing towards impurity because we think that purity automatically equals loneliness. We look around and we don’t see anyone else living a life of purity so we feel alone in our journey.

Listen to whatMoses says in Deuteronomy 31:6, *“So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the Lord your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.”*

This is Moses speaking to the Israelite people who were getting ready to go into battle, a battle that they knew God told them to go into and yet they were fearful so God reminds them to be of courage, He reminds them that He will be with them and they He will not abandon them.

Listen, that’s the same reminder that God gives us. He says, “I will not abandon you”. He says, I’m sending you into a battle of purity versus impurity and when it looks like impurity is going to win out, when it looks like everyone around you is fighting for impurity, when it looks like you are the only one in your class or on your team or in your entire school that’s fighting for purity, God says, “I am still here”.

Guys, we have the courage to walk away from relationships and friends and environments that are dragging us towards impurity. You are not trapped, you are not forced into it, you are not destined to spend your life alone and without friends because of your stance on purity. God is with you. He has surrounded you with people in your connect group and in our student ministry as a whole that are on the same journey you are on.

We have to develop some courage in the area of purity. Courage to set the right boundaries and courage to believe that God will not abandon us.

Pray with me.