



Off the Cuff: Part Two - Study Guide

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Have you ever been served a glass of water that looked cloudy, or even tinted in color? There can be something disturbing about that. Or, have you ever received jewelry, medication, or maybe even baby shampoo of questionable quality? There are some areas in life that we just appreciate or even demand purity. The confidence of knowing something is without contaminants, harmful additives, or pollutants is reassuring. This week we are taking a look at some tough *Off the Cuff* questions concerning purity—not of water, but of lifestyle.

Where Am I Today?

- 1) When thinking of purity as a way of life, often what comes to mind is relational and sexual virtue. How would you describe a life of purity? Give yourself a personal mental rating of where you are in this area.

Into the Bible

- 2) We can't get very far into tough questions on purity without wanting to take a look at homosexuality. It's not a new concept to humankind by any stretch of the imagination. However, it still brings new challenges with each passing generation. Fortunately, there is great news for our curiosity, as God had some folks write about this very topic! Check out the following verses. What can you best determine to be

OFF THE CUFF

PART TWO – STUDY GUIDE

God's view concerning homosexuality? Does your personal view differ from His, as to it being a sin? Are homosexual female relationships held to the same standard as male ones?

a. **Leviticus 18:22**

b. **Romans 1:26-28**

3) What if sexual abuse, lack of a father or mother figure, or life commonalities led me to same sex relationships? Could that mean that God created me sinful? Let's look to the early days of creation for a possible answer:

a. **Read Genesis 2:18-25.** Do these verses suggest how the Creator God intended His design of humanity to be? Elaborate.

b. **Read Genesis 3.** When did sin enter the world? Did God tell Adam and Eve that there would be some challenges ahead? Discuss.

c. Sin is so toxic it contaminates generations upon generations, building on itself. Why do you think we take on natural sin tendencies, sometimes dating all the way back to our childhood? Do we have hope? Look to **Romans 5:12-15** for insight.

OFF THE CUFF

PART TWO – STUDY GUIDE

- 4) The scarlet F. It's not a four-letter word, but it should be—fornication. "I am living with someone who I am not married to, is that a sin?" "Casual sex, it's just sex right? I mean everyone is doing it, you can even catch it on regular TV networks these days." "You know you got to try it before you buy it." "If it makes me feel important, wanted, and loved, how can it be bad?" If you have been alive on planet earth anytime since David and Bathsheba had their rendezvous, you have probably heard one of these phrases! Look at the verses below in light of these everyday statements.

Discuss:

- a. **Hebrews 13:4**
 - b. **Hebrews 12:1-3**
 - c. **1 Corinthians 6:12-20**
 - d. **1 Corinthians 7:8-9**
- 5) "We really are in love, and didn't God create us to have sex?" God created us as sexual beings, absolutely. Praise Him for that! However, He knew where we would go wrong with it and gave us some guidelines. Humans have perfected the art of bad choices in the bedroom, and some extremely tough life circumstances can result. Discuss the following:
- a. "I know God doesn't want us living together, but I can't live on my own now. We share our income." (**1 Kings 17:1-6, Luke 12:22-31**)
 - b. "Is abortion a sin? Can I still go to heaven? Will my baby be there?" (**Exodus 20:13, Romans 3:22-25, John 3:16, Isaiah 7:13-16, Deuteronomy 1:39, 2 Samuel 12:23**)

How Does This Apply?

- 6) Why are we asking? Yes, in all of these questions, why are we asking and taking such bold stances for our sin? It's worth repeating because is it really possible to move forward if we refuse to analyze what is going on in our heart? All the things discussed today are great questions and are in great need of understanding. What is at the heart of why we resist so adamantly?
- Is the problem that we are afraid of potentially not knowing God?
 - Do we secretly just want to be loved, feel important, or fit in?
 - Do we want a religion that tailors to the bible of me and not God's Word?
- 7) There are three sentences in Paul's writing to the Galatians in chapter 5 that disturbed me for years until finally God revealed it in a single word, *prasso*. It goes something like this, "*The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this [prasso] will not inherit the kingdom of God.*" (**Galatians 5:19-21**)

WOW! I mean Paul is the same guy I had studied for years who talks about freedom from performing for God's acceptance, called grace; and total eternal assurance in His love, never to be taken away! So what in the world is this? Prasso. It's a word used in this passage that translates as "practicing." As in a lawyer practicing law, or a doctor practicing medicine—it's a *lifestyle* of practicing.

- Did Paul fall to sin after salvation? (**Romans 7:21-25**)
- What is the difference between struggling with sin, and "prasso" sin?

Digging Deeper on Your Own

- 8) Do we make it too easy to come to Christ today? Meaning, do Christians shy away from telling folks about the *new* life of following Christ? Paul issues some very strong warnings about the changed life versus an unchanged lifestyle. Paul had a very large ministry within pagan cultures, the Corinthians and Galatians to name two. Corinth contained at least 12 temples during Paul's time, the most infamous dedicated to Aphrodite, the goddess of love. The sexual experience was a common practice of paganism. Sexuality was a part of worship. However, it was the kind of sexuality that is not relational, not monogamous. Several churches were confused in how they were supposed to blend Christ with their culture and Paul took it extremely seriously!

Prostitution in the temple was common, and furthermore, the prostitutes of Corinth were dedicated to the service of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and sex. So widely known was the immorality of Corinth, the Greek verb "to Corinthianize" came to mean "to practice sexual immorality." **Read 1 Corinthians 6:12-20.** We conclude that change is part of the Christ experience, but a willing change. Christ paints this beautiful picture of marriage, monogamy, and how He is like the groom of the Church. What can you correlate between this imagery of marriage and Paul's ideas of our new lives in Christ so that we leave our old way? **Read Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:6-9, Ephesians 5:29-32, John 3:28-30 and Revelation 19:6-9.**