



Flee From Youthful Lusts

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**INTERNATIONAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY
SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH
REFORM MOVEMENT
Youth Department of the General Conference**

My dear youth:

The issue that concerns us in this pastoral letter is complex and controversial. Let us then let the Word of God guide us on this walk along the path of purity: **“Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”** 2 Timothy 2:22.

Hyper sexualization

Why talk about this topic? Much has been written and said, but it is never enough, considering that sexual degradation is spreading more and more in our modern societies. We live immersed under a tsunami of sexual innuendos. Since God created the first human couple, sexuality has always existed. The Creator was the author of sex, but it had to be limited to marriage and between a man and a woman. Sex between people of the same gender was prohibited (Leviticus 18:22), as well as outside of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:22) and with animals (Leviticus 2:15). Adulterous relationships were condemned and all sexual impurity such as masturbation should not be practiced within the people of God (2 Corinthians 10:5; 1 Corinthians 6:18-19).

If God's desire had been respected, everything would have gone well, but just as the solemnity of the Sabbath was changed to Sunday; just as marriage was perverted, introducing divorce, separation, and illicit unions; just as the human diet was

distorted to end up killing innocent animals so that they served as food for humans. In this way, the sexuality that the spouses had to express was also perverted to end up being a mere biological union with no other objective than pleasure *per se*.

Today we see sex reign supreme in our modern societies. More and more young people have sexual relations at an early age, lacking psychological maturity and causing a series of negative consequences, such as: unwanted pregnancies, abortions, psychological trauma, and others. Almost everything that is offered to us in the media is impregnated with sex and since it produces high dividends, the producers of all these programs, television series, movies, etc., without any scruple, refer to sex in an open way. Full or partial nudity, eroticism, explicit genital sex, pornography, and more... is served on a tray by pressing a button, or by clicking on an internet link and a whole world of evil, extreme degeneration and horrendous sin enters homes like an honored guest.

We have witnessed the havoc that the Covid pandemic has wreaked on our world and how the media has bombarded us every day with dire news about the thousands and thousands of deaths affected by the virus. We have also seen governments implement regulations to prevent the spread of the pandemic and prevent disease... but what about the sex virus? I say "virus" because when it is practiced beyond the limits of the divine will, it produces sickness and spiritual death in the soul.

Today it is not well seen to speak out defending purity considering it as something retrograde. Modern society has overcome the traumas, they say, of past years in which both governments and churches imposed unjustified restrictions and principles that stole human freedom in the sexual area. During the Franco regime in Spain, the Catholic Church in unity with the government, indoctrinated in teaching to practice a moral regeneration of society, thus avoiding the external influences that other people from "wild Europe" brought to the country, according to the bishop of Pamplona in 1941. The Spanish had to submit to severe moral control, which sought to keep citizens within arbitrary parameters of decency. Thus, decency became a matter of public safety and the dominant church played the role of control agent. Men going shirtless on the beach were censured; women were required to wear a bathing suit that covered the entire body. The separation of the sexes on beaches and bathing places was decided, under penalty of receiving substantial fines. A police force was created that went around the beaches making sure that everyone complied with the rules, applied especially to women. In fact, they were the most fined for wearing bathing suits above the imposed measurements.

Pendulum shift

Society lived immersed in this hyper-repressive environment, according to today's modern analysts, to the point that when *Francoism* ended there was a pendulum shift that led society to the opposite side in terms of morality. This same thing happened in many other countries. The world was reconfigured with policies that favored all kinds of practices regardless of whether they were moral or not. No one could determine any longer if any custom was sinful or not. The censorship of movies, what was shown on social media, the express prohibitions on pornography and everything that whiffed of convent smell had ended.

The Spain of today has nothing to do with that of those times of repression, and that is why it is normal to see people naked on the beaches or showing some intimate part of the body without a blush. It is normal for people to walk the streets, especially women, dressed in such a way that they show parts of their bodies without the need for it. What is the *OBJECTIVE*? Perhaps to show that the woman has reached a degree of emancipation and absolute freedom and that nobody has any authority over the decisions that she makes regarding the way of dressing or acting, however extreme they may be, such as abortion freedom, in which the woman makes the decision to cut short the life of her child for the mere fact that current legislation agrees with her, arguing that she is the owner of her body and can dispose of it. It is true that she is the owner of her body, but not of the life that she carries inside her. It does not belong to her, it is a gift from God and she should protect him in a very attentive and loving way.

Vulnerable youth

The question that arises is: is this normal as far as the Christian is concerned? Does the fact that social organizations and groups, governments and feminists have managed to normalize or institutionalize immorality give us Christians the authority to place ourselves in these degraded environments and see it as something normal? Is the majority right? Can we embrace all these attitudes without breaking our faith and principles? Obviously not. Faced with this situation, it would be enough for each young Christian to strengthen himself by cultivating a deep faith, hence the enemy's attacks would have no power over him or her. But the problem is that a little carelessness is enough for the enemy to take control of the young person's mind.

Keep in mind that armies win many times when they decide to permanently and intensively bombard their targets. This is how the enemy acts, bombarding young people and adults with sex so that they fall surrendered to temptation. Boys are more vulnerable than girls to the temptation of sex, because the male brain is wired to be more sexually aggressive than the female. Hence, they are the ones who are more interested in pornography, although more and more women are also consuming it.

Victorious youth

In the life of faith there are no miraculous potions that can transform the heart, the taste, the inclinations of people, but we do have the help of the Holy Spirit as something sure and powerful, submitting to His control and guidance is the solution to our weaknesses and problems. The young person who places himself under the influence of God's power will gain great victories over sin. A pure youth will be a living and irrefutable testimony of what God can do in the human soul; the best preaching, the best example, the best argumentation in favor of the Gospel. Plunging into depraved sex in all forms or promoting it with indecent dress, damages a person's spiritual life, and can lead to a very powerful addiction, especially when consuming pornography. That is why Paul says: **"Flee sexual immorality..."** 1 Corinthians 6:18. **"Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."** 2 Timothy 2:22.

The introductory text invites the young person to *flee* from youthful passions, referring to sexual impurity. Fleeing means moving away quickly, moving away with-

out delay from anything or anyone that could harm us. Will we do it? Will we make that noble decision to grow in purity and holiness? God desires it and has provided the means to achieve it.: **“No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”** 1 Corinthians 10:13.

Conclusion

Dear youth, it doesn't matter how long the chain that enslaves you to a secret vice, to a degrading custom or habit. Just like you created that habit, you can replace it with another one, and believe me, you will feel free, happy, with new energy, and ready to do great things. There is power in the blood of Christ to free you from any habit that keeps you from purity. You don't need to sink to death spiritually. There is restoration in Christ. In this new year that has begun, make up your mind to break with every habit that does not elevate and ennoble you, you can do it with God's help. He has promised, you just have to believe it and act. By His grace you will obtain great victories. This is my wish and prayer. Amen.

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For personal and group reflection:

1. How would you define purity in the sexual life?
2. Does purity degrade the person because it represses or liberates him? Discuss
3. Why is it not easy to get rid of a habit acquired over years?
4. How can a person change the way they think and act?