

# THE MEASURE OF A MAN

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We are attempting to measure ourselves as men according to the characteristics the apostle Paul listed for mature spiritual men. We first saw that you were to be “blameless” and we compared it to getting a background check. It’s a summary characteristic that says there is no glaring problem or inconsistency in your life.

The second characteristic is that you be “the husband of one wife.”

1 Timothy 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife...**

Titus 1:5 For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you -  
Titus 1:6 if a man is blameless, **the husband of one wife...**

Seems an odd way of wording things. It’s literal rendering is even more odd: “a one-woman man.”

Maybe it would help to know that in the Roman culture of the first century it was not uncommon to be a three-woman man!

- One of the women would be your legal wife with whom you had children.
- A second woman might be a slave with whom you had sex.
- A third woman might be a prostitute you visited down at the pagan temple.

This seems strange to us because we have been influenced by Hebrew and Christian morality. But in the first century this was the norm.

The issue Paul was addressing here is much broader than whether or not you are married. **He wasn’t really referring to marital status at all. He was referring to moral purity with regards to sexual behavior.**

Before we move on let me clear-up two common misconceptions with regards to leaders in the church:

1. There are some who say that this verse forbids remarriage after the death of a spouse. It doesn't. The Bible permits and honors second marriages under the proper circumstances.
2. There are some who say that this qualification automatically disqualifies divorced men from positions of leadership. It doesn't because, remember, Paul was not referring to marital status. There are biblical grounds for divorce that would not disqualify a divorced man.

The times Paul wrote in were wicked. The believers in these two churches, at Ephesus and Crete, were mostly Gentiles. The men were used to very loose morals with regards to sexual behavior. So it was important to establish that leaders especially needed to adopt biblical morality and practice sexual purity.

It seems sexual sin is a favorite device of Satan's to overthrow the leaders in God's church. All of us could name famous or local pastors or elders whose ministries have been destroyed because of sexual sin.

As with all these characteristics, what is imperative for leaders is also essential for any Christian man who wishes to be godly. In Paul's day you couldn't say that because you were not interested in being an elder therefore you could remain a two- or three-woman man. No, every Christian man is to be one-woman man.

This suggests two lines of thought. One is the avoidance of sexual sin. The other is the advancement of your marriage.

'Sex,' using the term broadly, is getting tougher to avoid.

On the tube... A 2007 study by Reuters found that the supposed family TV hour, between 8pm and 9pm, is "sexier and deadlier than ever."<sup>1</sup> One network, FOX, was tagged as having nearly 21 incidents of violent, sexual, or profane content **per hour**. (I assume that is programming. Add in commercials and it is much worse).

On the Net...

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<sup>1</sup> <http://defamer.gawker.com/hollywood/sex-and-violence/study-finds-family-tv-hour-sexier-and-deadlier-than-ever-296716.php>

- Worldwide pornography revenue in 2006 was \$97.06 billion. Of that, approximately \$13 billion was in the United States (Internet Filter Review, 2006).
- Every second, \$3,075.64 is being spent on pornography, 28,258 Internet viewers are viewing pornography, 372 Internet users are typing adult search terms into search engines, and every 39 minutes, a new pornographic video is made in the United States (Internet Filter Review, 2006).
- Twelve percent of all websites are pornographic websites. There are 4.2 million pornographic websites, 420 million pornographic web pages, and 68 million daily pornographic search engine requests (or 25% of total search engine requests) (Internet Filter Review, 2006).
- 79% of youth unwanted exposure to pornography occurs in the home (Online Victimization of Youth: Five Years Later, 2006).

In its first analysis of online media, the Parents Television Council (PTC) found that extremely graphic content and harsh profanity are just a click away for kids entering seemingly innocent search terms on YouTube, the most popular destination for online video that has undertaken several policies to control inappropriate content. The PTC's latest study, *The "New" Tube*, not only analyzes content in 280 of the most popular YouTube videos between March and October 2008 according to Compete Data Hub, but also takes into account the text commentary and advertisements that were available alongside the videos.<sup>2</sup>

If statistics are any indication, we're not doing very well as Christian men at avoiding sexual sin. A poll I recently cited indicated 50% of Christian men admitted to not just viewing pornography on the internet but having what they termed an addiction. No matter how you interpret the research, I can tell you from my own pastoring that it is a huge problem.

If you or someone you know is struggling with sexual sin, here are a few suggestions:

- Admit that it is sin; confess it to God; repent.
- Become accountable. That could mean you admit you have sinned to someone and ask them to hold you accountable. Or it could mean you make yourself passively accountable by setting up a system by which you make it harder and harder to sin. Cancel the premium channels... Or even basic cable... Only use your computer when your wife is there and do it in plain sight... Things like that.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.parentstv.org/welcome.asp>

- Make it harder for you to sin. Satan is working hard to tempt you. You should work harder to foil him. Don't expose yourself to the sources of soft-porn, like certain TV shows and movies or magazines.
- If you absolutely cannot stop, you need intervention. You need counseling or even a program. It's that serious.

Remember: You're dead to sin and alive to God. Don't yield your members to sexual sin.

Biblical morality extends beyond the physical. Jesus said,

Matthew 5:27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.'

Matthew 5:28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Looking at a woman "to lust for her" is different from simply being tempted. It is dwelling upon the temptation, acting upon it mentally.

We cannot totally avoid external temptations. We can refuse to "lust for her."

Here's some encouragement.

1 Thessalonians 4:4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,

1 Thessalonians 4:5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

"Your own vessel" is a reference to your **own body** - the vessel by which you enjoy the sexual relationship. Paul tells you that, as a Christian, you **can** exercise restraint and self-control over your sexual drives. You need not surrender to the passion of lust. Remember: God's commands are His enablings!

The other thing we want to focus on is the advancement of your marriage. The place to begin with regard to moral purity isn't on a physical level. It is with the spiritual. After all, when you got married you made spiritual promises. You promised to remain faithful no matter what. You committed to sexual purity as a voluntary act of your will.

Forget the physical and concentrate on loving your wife the way Jesus loved the church. Love her sacrificially, generously, redemptively. Concentrate on nourishing, cherishing, forgiving, cleansing, and sanctifying her.

Advance your marriage; avoid sexual sin.