

Ephesians Series

#21

The Big Three

Ephesians 5 : 3 - 7

3 But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. **4** Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. **5** For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.^[a] **6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. **7** Therefore do not be partners with them.

Paul identifies three strongholds or sinful lifestyles in a persons life [sexual immorality, impurity; greed] that are more toxic than other sinful habits or lifestyles.

Q : Why do we tend to categorize sins by degrees? Is it a healthy thing to do or should we see all transgressions as equally evil? What is the difference between the theological/spiritual impact of a sin versus the social impact of a vice or sinful habit?

Paul reveals to us that the reason these three lifestyles are toxic is because they very quickly take hold of a persons heart and become a place of idolatry.

When something has so gripped your life as to make it the significant driving force behind the decisions you make, where you put your time and energy, and where your hope for joy is placed, then it has become an object of worship.

Q : What areas is life do you think we are most susceptible to “idolizing” as defined above?

Q : What are some the tell tale signs in your own life that you are starting to “idolize” a dream, desire, object or person? Have you personally experienced the “choking out” of your faith that begins to happen when something begins to compete for your heart?

The scriptural teaching against sexual immorality, impurity, and greed is not due to a moralistic teaching but a conviction that these three, by nature, will choke out our spiritual life over time.

Q : How does this revelation of the reason scripture warns us against sin help you in coming to terms with these things?