



HILLSIDE'S JULY – AUGUST SERMON SERIES AND DAILY MATERIAL

It is not easy to follow the Lord Jesus.

He said things that sometimes seem to us to be impossible or undoable. Should you mutilate yourself (“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off”) or love your enemies (“I tell you: love your enemies”) or never find fault (“Do not judge”)?

But behind all these statements of Jesus there are the most wonderful keys to life. Not only do they make life possible, but are secrets that create the way for us to a meaningful life and good relationships.

Week 1: The Key of Being Poor in Spirit

Week 2: The Key of Commitment

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

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MONDAY

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Daily Reading

Psalm 52

2 Samuel 11:1-12,25

AVOID BEING IN THE WRONG PLACE

2 Samuel 11:2 NIV *“² One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,”*

Meditate on the passages and consider how sin has no respect even for those who love God very much. Think about what David could have done differently. How would you have handled his situation and what do you have in place to protect you against the attacks of sin?

After you spend some time with these Scripture passages, proceed to read the meditation below:

Someone once said the following about this incident in David’s life: *“He was at the wrong place at the wrong time, and then he made wrong decisions.”* Radical decisions against sin require you and me to always be aware of the time we have at hand, of where we are, of the decisions we make. Stephen Covey wrote in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* that between the stimulus and response there always is a period of time where you have the chance to make a decision. David had this too, and he made the wrong decision.

The thing we should note from David’s story is that you and I submit to sin even in the slightest way, there are also deadly and destructive consequences on those around us. Sin never takes place in isolation. You and I may think that we do it on our own until it is revealed. Then we see the destructive effect it has on other people. David’s child died, and afterwards, the sword never departed from his family again. That is sin at its best! Many times, there is forgiveness and restitution, but the results can linger in our lives for many years to come. Wounds are healed, but the scars remain.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, today I want to ask that I will immediately listen when Holy Spirit warns me against being in the wrong place at the wrong time where I can make wrong decisions.

Amen.

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TUESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Genesis 3:1-6

DEAL DECISIVELY WITH DECEPTION

Genesis 3:1 NIV *“3 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”*

Eve simply moved too close to the edge of the precipice. Then the precipice swallowed her – and her husband with her.

Her first mistake was that she had listened to the devil’s whole story. She should not have given him the chance to even open his mouth. If he manages to get a foot in the door, it does not take long before he has moved in and taken over your life.

The devil is very cunning. It is not difficult for him to talk a weak person into doing something. And if someone is under the influence of the devil’s sly words, it leads to the next step: You look at things around you from the wrong perspective.

Eve looked at the fruit (that God forbade them to eat) and she saw a delicious and attractive fruit that was good to eat.

What should she have seen? A great God that stood above everything and who had given them a fait commandment. If God is not in the picture, one only sees half the picture. The devil clouded her eyes so much that she only saw the part that would destroy her. She did not see the love and faithfulness of her Father.

*Prayer: Lord, help me to be quick to raise a standard against the seductive words of Satan.
Amen.*

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WEDNESDAY

Daily Reading

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Genesis 39: 1-23

FLEE FROM IMMORALITY

Genesis 39: 6-8 NIV ⁶ Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, ⁷ and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"
⁸ But he refused..."

First get quiet and then meditate on this: Joseph was a human being just like us who was tempted just as we are. He remained standing – to the end. Talk to the Holy Spirit about Joseph and ask what principles He wants you to embrace. After you have spent time with this passage of Scripture, proceed with the meditation below:

What helped Joseph remain standing when he was alone in a strange world with no support or friends was the background and upbringing with which he arrived in Egypt. His foundation was good and strong. Never underestimate the value of upbringing that you give your children – the godly values that you demonstrate to them. Keep on imparting them and persevere. Our foundation is one of the only things that will keep us upright in times of temptation.

Joseph was also someone who had his borders in place (in contrast to a man like Samson). He knew where to draw the line with Potiphar's wife – he knew when it was time to flee. Joseph had established borders and his decisions entrenched them. It is no use if you and I have the most wonderful borders in place, but do not apply them. Even in prison Joseph was not prepared to sink to the level of the other prisoners, but rose above the others thanks to the decisions he had made and the borders he had established for himself. Remember, Christians with strong values may initially be judged and laughed at, but in the long run they will be rewarded and will reap dividends. See it in the life of Joseph. Make right decisions, live within the borders God demands of you, and He will notice it and lift you up.

Prayer: My Father, thank you for the heroes of the faith in the Bible who were and are such wonderful role models to me. Make me and mould me so that I can also be a role model to others in the times we live in. Amen.

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THURSDAY

Daily Reading

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Daniel 1: 1-21

SECRETS OF SUCCESS

Daniel 1: 8 NIV ⁸ *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way.*

After you have finished reading, meditate on the type of life Daniel lived. He is one of the characters in the Bible about whom nothing negative is said. What was his secret? After you have spent some time reflecting on the passage of Scripture, continue with the meditation below:

We like to read Daniel, especially the well-known stories, because he is a role model to us. But he only did what God had asked him to do. Remember: he was not a spiritual “superman”. Who among us would be prepared to make the decisions he made and then to still pray three times a day? But that was exactly the reason for Daniel’s success. The more we make the right decisions, the more we by choosing right withstand the devil and temptation, the more we succeed.

Furthermore, Daniel made friends with the right people. He did not stand alone, and that is an essential factor in our journey. Good Christian friends are a tremendous help in this life, and we should therefore pursue accountable relationships with a godly group. It is likely that Daniel and his three friends encouraged and prayed for each other continually. Don’t underestimate the value of Christian friends.

The Word and prayer are linked, and while he prayed three times per day, he no doubt, also spent time in the Word. In this regard, read his prayer in chapter 9: 1-3 which contains another secret of Daniel’s success. Spend time in the Word and prayer and you will see it will strengthen you, nourish you, renew your mind and supplement your armour so that you can remain standing. Daniel is a beautiful example of someone who did not make even the slightest compromises with sin, but only did the normal things God required of him.

Prayer: Father, remind me that I must stay aware of making the right decisions every moment of the day, and that I should not start a day without spending time in the Word and talking to You. Amen.

FRIDAY

Daily Reading

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Numbers 20: 7-12

IN YOUR ANGER DO NOT SIN

Numbers 20: 10-11 NIV ¹⁰...Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" ¹¹ Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff..."

Most of us have a problem with our temper from time to time. If resentment starts influencing your actions and you allow it to control and drive you, then you will end up doing something you are very sorry about later on.

This was the case with Moses. He became irritated with the people who regularly resisted God. He rebuked them and in his anger he did what the Lord had NOT commanded him to do: he struck the rock instead of speaking to the rock.

God nevertheless, made water come out of the rock as He had promised but, punished Moses severely: Moses would not lead the people into the Promised Land.

In the heat of the moment, Moses did not restrain his bad temper but simply allowed his anger to control him. He did not cautiously handle the pull of his own temperament.

Don't become a slave to your own resentment. It clouds your good judgment causing you to act impulsively in disobedience. It resists God's will and gives priority to your own will.

Prayer: Lord, help me to establish restraints in my life to prevent my temperament from ever controlling me. Amen.

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SATURDAY

Daily Reading

Week 3: The Key of Living a Pure Life

Genesis 13: 7-12

DO NOT LOVE THE WORLD

Genesis 13:12 ⁴² *Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom.*

Abram and his nephew Lot shared the same land. Because they owned large flocks and herds a quarrel arose about pasture and they decided to separate. Abram graciously allowed Lot to choose the area where he wished to live. Lot chose the fertile Jordan valley, but the problem was that it was very close to the sinful city of Sodom. We read elsewhere that Lot frequently sat and chatted at the city gates of Sodom.

Because of his decision Lot came dangerously close to destruction, too close in fact – it later cost him his wife’s life.

Lot’s wrong and reckless decision led to him and his family moving into the sinful city of Sodom at some stage. There they probably lived in luxury.

It took an angel of the Lord to lead them out of there whilst God was destroying the city with fire and brimstone.

The attachment of Lot’s wife to her life of luxury caused her to look back rather than pursuing to completion the way of escape that the angel had shown them.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to remain cautious and to keep safe distances. Don’t let me be reckless with regards to sin. Amen.
