

LESSON 5: TRUE FREEDOM: MORAL PURITY

Objective: This lesson is intended to help us understand that “true freedom” (e.g., having our physical drives under the control of the Holy Spirit) can only come from God’s Holy Spirit. In this unit we define terms that scripture uses to describe moral impurity. We then discuss six steps that lead to moral impurity and seven steps to achieve victory over such sin. The lesson ends with a discussion of three basic drives that exist in humanity: the spiritual, psychological and physical.

1 John 3:4:

... **sin** is the transgression of the law.

2 Nephi 12:10-12:

And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God, **he will justify in committing a little sin: yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this.** And do all these things, for to-morrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, **God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God.**

Proverbs 4:23:

Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.

2 Timothy 2:22:

Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of **a pure heart.**

2 Corinthians 7:1:

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, **let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness** of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

2 Nephi 3:31-34, 53-54:

... my heart exclaimeth, O wretched man that I am; yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh. **My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which doth so easily beset me.** And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins ... **Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?** May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite?

2 Corinthians 11:2 (the Corinth church as a chaste virgin):

For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as **a chaste virgin** to Christ.

Galatians 5:16:

This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.**

Alma 19:1-6, 17 (Alma 2 to Corianton):

And now my son ... **thou didst go on unto boasting in thy strength, and thy wisdom.** And this is not all, my son. Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me; for **thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron, among the borders of the**

Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel; yea, she did steal away the hearts of many; but this was no excuse for thee, my son. **Thou shouldst have tended to the ministry, wherewith thou wast entrusted.** . . . Behold, O my son, **how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites: for when they saw your conduct, they would not believe in my words . . .**

Alma 19:74-75 (Alma 2 to his son Corianton):

Behold, I say unto you, **Wickedness never was happiness.** And now, my son, **all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state,** are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity; **they are without God** in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore **they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.**

Galatians 5:19-25:

Now **the works of the flesh** are manifest, which are these:

adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like;

of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that **they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.**

But **the fruit of the Spirit** is:

love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;

Against such there is no law. And **they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.** If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

1 Timothy 1:5:

Now the end of the commandment is **charity out of a pure heart,** and of a good conscience, of faith unfeigned [unpretended].

Psalms 119:9-12:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee; oh let me not wander from thy commandments. **Thy word have I hid in mine heart** [memorized], that I might not sin against thee.

Matthew 6:14:

And **suffer us not to be led into temptation,** but deliver us from evil.

3 Nephi 8:47 (Jesus to 2,500 Nephites):

. . . Ye must watch and pray always, lest ye be **tempted** by the devil, and ye are led away captive by him.

1 John 2:15-16:

Love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all in the world that is of the **lusts of the flesh,** and the lust of the eyes, and the **pride of life,** is not of the Father, but is of the world.

WHAT IS TRUE FREEDOM?

Alma 17:65 (Alma 2 to Helaman):

. . . teach them **an everlasting hatred against sin** and iniquity.

Becoming a Disciple of Christ

After we experience salvation and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit to reside within us, God calls us to become disciples (e.g., sanctification). This includes a call to true freedom or moral purity.

“Moral freedom” is having our physical drives under the control of the Holy Spirit. Moral freedom is not the right to do whatever we want; it is **the power to do what we ought**. God’s grace gives us **the desire and power to do his will** (1 Corinthians 15:10 & Jacob 1:8)

John 7:38-39:

He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, **out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water** (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was promised unto them who believe, after that Jesus was glorified.)

Ephesians 3:16-19:

That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, **to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love**, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. And **to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.**

DEFINITIONS

- **“Hedonism”** – refers to **pleasure seeking** (not a scriptural term). This is not necessarily a violation of God’s commandments unless it is out of balance and pleasure-seeking dominates the attention of a person’s soul.
- **“Lasciviousness”** – refers to **“improperly stirring up God-given physical desires.”** (Mark 7:20, 2 Corinthians 12:21, Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:19, 1 Peter 4:3, Jude 1:4, Jacob 2:66, Alma 11:29, Alma 21:11, Alma 21:122, 4 Nephi 1:18).
- **“Concupiscence”** – is a condition of the soul in which **“sensual lusts are stronger than spiritual desires.”** When we violate God’s limitations in this area, there is an immediate sense of guilt. (Romans 7:8, Colossians 3:5 and 1 Thessalonians 4:5)
- **“Reprobation”** – After a time, old forms of pleasure no longer satisfy. When old forms no longer satisfy, **“sensual desires increase until they dominate the soul.”** (Romans 1:28, 2 Corinthians 13:5-7, 2 Timothy 3:8, Titus 1:16).

HOW DOES MORAL IMPURITY BEGIN IN OUR LIVES?

Six Steps Toward Moral Impurity

We are all more susceptible to temptation when we fail to pray, avoid time in God’s word, are discouraged, are depressed, feel distanced from God, or are alone. The story of Adam and Eve’s temptation in the Garden of Eden provides explicit detail about how the enemy works in the lives of people and how sin, guilt and conscience play a role in the development of moral impurity.

1. Natural Curiosity

There is nothing wrong with curiosity that is under the control of the Holy Spirit. Like Adam and Eve, God has placed a prohibition on us. We are not to gain knowledge of evil by way of experience. Instead, we are to *discern* by the Spirit when something is evil and then reject it.

Romans 16:19:

For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf; but yet I would have you **wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.**

2. Awakening of Conscience

Our conscience acts as an alarm system. It issues an alarm when something is evil or wrong. It causes us to ask, "Is this right for me to do?" If we choose to ignore the alarm sounding in our conscience, we will begin to *rationalize* why it's right to do.

2 Nephi 12:10-12:

And there shall also be many which shall say, Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God, **he will justify in committing a little sin: yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor; there is no harm in this.** And do all these things, for to-morrow we die; and if it so be that we are guilty, God will beat us with a few stripes, and at last we shall be saved in the kingdom of God. Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner, **false, and vain, and foolish doctrines**, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, **and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord**; and their works shall be in the dark; and the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them.

3. Sensual Focus

Satan lied to Eve and denied God's commandments. Doubts were planted in Eve's mind about what God had actually said and his reasons for saying it. She focused on the forbidden fruit until she lusted after it. Satan twisted God's word and gave her a rationalization to sin. This is what Satan does with each of us as well. If we continue to focus on what is forbidden, our *resistance* will break down.

Genesis 3:10-11:

And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die**; for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. **And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make her wise**, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

4. Violation of Conscience

Eve took the fruit and violated God's command. It's possible for us to be caught in bondage to a sensual habit. Perhaps we can remember a time when we consciously did something that we knew was wrong.

Romans 6:15-16:

What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace: God forbid. **Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are** to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

5. Awakening of Guilt

Sin causes shame and fear. Guilt is to the conscience just as pain is to the nervous system. Pain warns us that something must change or it will cause damage. In like manner, guilt makes us aware that sin is doing damage to our conscience.

Genesis 3:12 & 14:

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they had been naked . . . And Adam and his wife went to hide themselves from the presence of the Lord God, amongst the trees of the garden.

6. Response to Guilt

The response of Adam and Eve to this sin was to cover it up. They sewed fig leaves together to cover their nakedness and then hid from God. The lack of repentance caused both Adam and Eve to blame someone else for their transgressions. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent (Genesis 3:17-19).

Incomplete repentance leads to compensation (e.g., sewing the fig leaves) so we can be respectable to people around us. However, it separates us from God, leads to further bondage to sin and causes us to justify greater immorality.

SEVEN STEPS TO CONQUER SIN IN OUR LIVES

1. STOP RATIONALIZING

1 Timothy 4:2:

. . . in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; **speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared as with a hot iron.**

Eve

Eve believed Satan's lie, "Ye shall not surely die" (that she would not be cast from the presence of God in the garden). David believed it would be a small thing to murder Uriah and sleep with his wife, that God would overlook it. When believers choose moral impurity, they also **believe a lie** that it is just a small thing that God will overlook.

Genesis 3:10-11:

And the serpent said unto the woman, **Ye shall not surely die;** for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it became **pleasant to the eyes**, and **a tree to be desired** to make her wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat.

In Genesis 3:11, Eve **saw** that the fruit was "pleasant to the eyes" and created a strong "desire." In 2 Samuel 11:2, David **"saw"** a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon." In both instances, we have **a powerful visual image that creates a burning desire in a person's heart.**

Eve "took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." When we sin, we sometimes find comfort in **involving other people**. It makes us feel better if we can get others to participate.

David

In 2 Samuel 11, instead of feeling shame for sleeping with Uriah's wife, **King David** tried to get Uriah to return to his own home and sleep with his wife, Bath-sheba (v. 8). David was hoping it might cover up the fact that she was carrying David's child. **Uriah**, a faithful soldier, refused to sleep in comfort while his fellow soldiers were suffering in battle (v. 9-11). **David** then involved army commander Joab in his subterfuge and had Uriah murdered with the words of this letter, "Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him that he may be smitten and die." (v.15). David involved Joab in his scheme, and his heart was hardened because **he had no mercy for Uriah**.

In 2 Samuel 12, the secret sins of David were exposed for the world to see. To illustrate the gravity of David's sin, Nathan the prophet told King David the story of **a rich man who had taken a poor man's precious lamb from him**. In

2 Samuel 12:5, "David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, **the man that hath done this thing shall surely die**. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." In verse 7, **Nathan turned to David and said, "Thou art the man!"**

In front of his royal court, this sin of David was recorded for future generations to read about. This was God's message that Nathan delivered to King David.

2 Samuel 12:7-9-10:

Thus said the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul. And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things. **Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?** Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and has taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore **the sword shall never depart from thine house;** because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

In like manner, God could look at the blessings he has bestowed on each of us. He could say:

"I anointed you to be the head of your household, to lead your family by your example. I delivered you out of hardships and poured out blessings and riches upon you. I gave you a companion and a family. Why have you despised me? Why have you put my commandments aside? How can you think that your sins are hidden? How can you think I somehow don't see everything you do?"

2 Timothy 3:1-9:

This know also, that **in the last days** perilous times shall come. For **men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;** having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts [Bath-sheba & David], **ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth**. Now as Jannes and Jambres [magicians under the Egyptian Pharaoh] withstood Moses, **so do these also resist the truth; men of**

corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further; for **their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was** [Eve's folly recorded in Genesis and Nathan saying, "Thou art the man!"].

People who choose moral impurity don't want to think how powerful sensual images will be for the remainder of their lives. Satan's lie that Eve would "not surely die" proved to be false. She was cast out of the garden. David's machinations to cover his own sins were exposed by Nathan the prophet when he loudly proclaimed to David, "Thou art the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7) **For both Eve and David, choosing moral impurity eventually led to great sorrow!**

2. LET MY HEART GRIEVE WITH SORROW & MOURNING FOR MY SINS

When I've succumbed to temptation, **I should view my sins as if I were the Roman soldier hammering the nail into the Master's wrist and feet.** It would help to recognize the wretchedness of my sins, how foolish I am, and how far removed from God's holiness my heart has been and to pray, "Lord, help me see my sins from your perspective and give me the capacity to grieve over them."

Alma 19:112-114 (Alma 2 to Corianton):

And now, my son, I desire that ye should let these things trouble you no more, and **only let your sins trouble you, with that trouble which shall bring you down unto repentance.** O my son, I desire that ye should deny the justice of God no more. **Do not endeavor to excuse yourself in the least point, because of your sins, by denying the justice of God,** but do you let the justice of God, and his mercy, and his long suffering, **have full sway in your heart; but let it bring you down to the dust in humility.**

2 Nephi 3:31-34, 50-54:

Nevertheless, the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, **my heart exclaimeth, O wretched man that I am; yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh. My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which doth so easily beset me.** And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins . . .

Pornography

Just as David was so easily led to gaze upon the sensual image of Bath-sheba before him and lust in his heart, today it's even easier for people to access pornography through electronic devices. This is possibly the greatest threat to moral purity among Christian believers that exists today. It is an ever-present danger to our souls sitting in our pockets!

Like Nephi, we are "encompassed about because of the temptations and sins that does so easily beset us. And when we desire to rejoice our hearts groan because of the sins" in our lives!

Pornography acts as a lever to pry our hearts away from Christ and change our loyalty to a different master. The enemy of our souls wants us to give up, surrender, to conclude it's impossible to overcome this temptation. Like David, you might find it easier to cover up sin in your life and delay your repentance. But if you are trapped in a continuing cycle of sin, you are lying to yourself!

If you were caught in such moral impurity before you ever made a covenant with Christ and that habit continued with you as a new Christian, it must end. Even if you succumbed to immorality *after* making a commitment to Christ, it's never too late to change that pattern of sin.

If we want to know true moral freedom, if we want to be victorious Christians, that habit must be broken. There is no shame in seeking counsel and accountability from a fellow believer who can help you alter this pattern in your life.

Romans 6:6-7 & 12-13, 16:

Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him**, that the body of sin might be destroyed, **that henceforth we should not serve sin**. For he that is dead to sin **is freed from sin** . . . **Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body**, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but **yield yourselves unto God**, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For in so doing **sin shall not have dominion over you** . . . Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, **his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

Such impurity makes us the servant of sin. It diverts us from the path of sanctification. We will never understand true moral freedom if we are caught in a cycle of impurity.

Galatians 5:1 & 13:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage . . . For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; **only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh**, but by love serve one another.

We cannot experience this liberty without breaking the cycle of moral impurity in our lives. We cannot become truly devoted disciples of Christ without utterly destroying this influence. If we think God does not see the lust and dirt in our hearts, we're lying to ourselves. He sees it all, and he weeps for his creation.

Alma 17:65 (Alma 2 to Helaman):

. . . teach them **an everlasting hatred against sin** and iniquity.

James 4:6-10:

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, **God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. **Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.**

When I inadvertently view evil or when I am tempted to look at evil on my television or cell phone or computer, I must **flee evil**. In my mind, I must equate such activity with literally driving the nails into the hands of my crucified Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To **flee** this circumstance, I could:

- turn off that electronic device,
- **humble** myself in deep contrition and say a **prayer** to God to give me strength,
- cancel any subscription to a service that regularly delivers ungodly images into my home.

- learn to mourn and grieve in sorrow the sin in my life.
- ask someone to be my partner to guide me and hold me accountable to keep my heart free from such temptation.

2 Samuel 12:5-7:

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

So the first two steps in crawling out of the mire of sin are to:

- stop rationalizing (lying to myself), and
- learn to grieve with sorrow over my sins.

This is illustrated by the righteous indignation David felt about the rich man who had stolen the poor man's precious lamb. We must each learn to develop that same righteous indignation about the sins in our own lives. That indignation must give way to sorrow, brokenness and contrition. That is the only way the cycle of moral impurity can be broken.

3. CRY OUT TO GOD FOR MERCY IN BROKENNESS & CONTRITION

When our sins cause us to feel distance from God, we tend to believe the lie that we won't be forgiven. But God promises in scripture that his mercy is extended to every person who will repent. David believed that he could be forgiven. Alma 2 prophesied that, on condition of repentance, God's arms of mercy are extended toward us.

Alma 3:57:

Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men; for the arms of mercy are extended toward them, and he saith, Repent, and I will receive you.

Enos 1:4-10:

. . . and I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication, for mine own soul; And all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came, I did still raise my voice high, that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me saying, Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away. And I said, Lord, how is it done? And he said unto me, because of thy faith in Christ, whom thou hast never before heard nor seen.

Psalms 51:1-9:

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts; and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

Mosiah 2:3:

And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying, O have mercy, and **apply the atoning blood of Christ, that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.**

Helaman 2:71:

... remember that **there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ . . .**

2 Samuel 12:13-18:

And David said unto Nathan, **I have sinned against the Lord.** And Nathan said unto David . . . **by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die . . .** And the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David and it was very sick. **David therefore besought God for the child; and David fasted, and went in, and lay all night upon the earth.** And the elders of his house arose, and went to him, to raise him up from the earth; but he would not, neither did he eat bread with them. And it came to pass **on the seventh day, that the child died.**

4. ASK GOD TO CREATE A PURE HEART IN ME (Give Me Righteous Desires)

Distorted thinking is what led to my sinful condition in the first place. I lied to myself. I excused certain behavior as being acceptable to God. I hoped that he would overlook it.

Having a pure heart means that God will restore right thinking to my mind. A pure heart will not make any allowance for sin.

2 Timothy 1:6:

... **stir up the gift of God, which is in thee** by the putting on of my hands.

Psalms 51:10-19:

Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; and **my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise.** For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt offering. **The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart,** O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion; build thou the walls of Jerusalem. **Then shalt thou be pleased** with the sacrifices of righteousness, with burnt offering and whole burnt offering; then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

2 Nephi 3:53-54:

Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite?

5. CHANGE MY THOUGHT LIFE BY ENGRAFTING GOD'S WORD INTO MY SOUL

In order to change my behavior, I will change my thought life by engrafting God's word into my soul.

Scripture meditation will replace time I previously spent aimlessly watching media, seeking pleasure and entertainment. This will give me a constructive way to change my thought life.

Psalm 119:9-12:

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee; oh let me not wander from thy commandments. **Thy word have I hid in mine heart**, that I might not sin against thee.

James 1:21:

Wherefore lay aside all filthiness and superfluity [excess] of naughtiness, and **receive with meekness, the engrafted word**, which is able to save your souls.

Enos 1:4:

... and **the words which I had often heard my father speak, concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart.**

Joshua 1:8:

This **book of the law** shall not depart out of thy mouth; but **thou shalt meditate therein day and night**, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for **then thou shalt make thy way prosperous**, and then thou shalt have **good success**.

Romans 6:1-6, 11-14, 16 & 23:

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid. **How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?** Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so **we also should walk in newness of life**. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; Knowing this, that **our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin** . . . Likewise **reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof**. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For in so doing **sin shall not have dominion over you**; for ye are not under the law, but under grace . . . Know ye not, that **to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? . . . **For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**.

6. IDENTIFY WAYS MORAL IMPURITY TRIES TO ENTER MY LIFE & REMOVE THEM

If we cannot raise a hedge of protection against evil influences in our homes, there is no place left to hide. In a rainstorm, it is one thing to hold an umbrella over our heads and have a small hole leak a drop at a

time. But when our homes cannot provide a refuge from evil influences, it's like exposing ourselves to pouring rain without any umbrella at all! How can we raise an umbrella of protection over our families and tear the grip of evil influences from our lives?

1 John 2:15-16:

Love not the world, neither the things that are of the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **For all in the world that is of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.**

Psalm 101:1-8:

I will sing of mercy and judgment; unto thee, O Lord, will I sing. I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. **Oh when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes; I hate the work of them that turn aside; it shall not cleave to me.** A froward heart shall depart from me; I will not know a wicked person. Whoso privily slandereth his neighbor, him will I cut off; him that hath a high look and a proud heart will not I suffer. **Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house; he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.** I will early destroy all the wicked of the land; that I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

2 John 1:9-11:

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in **the doctrine of Christ**, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. **If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeed.** For he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds.

2 Nephi 3:29-66 (Nephi's psalm):

Nephi had the mind of Christ (e.g., the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling within him) and he was therefore able to **"delight in the scriptures."**

- Meditation: Nephi's heart meditated on the scriptures.
- Writing: Nephi wrote the scriptures for others' benefit.
- Delight: Nephi took great pleasure in the things of the Lord.
- Prophecy: Nephi pondered the revelations he had seen and heard.

For **my soul delighteth in the scriptures**, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children. Behold, **my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord**; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.

With this meditation and study, Nephi came to realize there was a wide disparity between himself and God. "His flesh" or "his iniquities" or, in other words, "his sins" caused his heart to groan because **they separated him from a holy God.**

Nevertheless, the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth, O wretched man that I am; yea, my heart sorroweth

because of my flesh. **My soul grieveth because of mine iniquities. I am encompassed about because of the temptations and the sins which doth so easily beset me.** And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins;

In **delighting in the scriptures**, Nephi gained the insight that God in his condescension (deserving glory but lowering himself instead) had poured out abundant mercy upon Nephi and blessed him despite his own unworthiness. **This caused Nephi to “wax bold in mighty prayer” that God might lift him from the mire of sin:**

- Why should my heart weep?
- Why should I linger in the valley of sorrow?
- Why should I yield to sin because of my flesh?
- Why should I give way to temptations?

This is the very same struggle that every believer experiences. We all want to be free of the sins that so easily beset us. To do this, Nephi had to trust in a power greater than himself. **Trusting in our own strength will never get us there.** It is only by a miracle and a power outside ourselves that we will ever come to “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13 and Matthew 5:50). **It is only by God’s grace that we will ever gain the “desire and power to do his will”** (1 Corinthians 15:10 and Jacob 3:8).

Nevertheless, **I know in whom I have trusted.** My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions . . . And **by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer** before him . . . **O then, if I have seen so great things; if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men, hath visited me in so much mercy, why should my heart weep, and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow . . . And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations . . .**

In verse 46 of Nephi’s psalm we see a turning point where he is resolved to be a victorious Christian who wants to know the liberty that comes with living in moral purity. It’s at this point that Nephi asks God, **“Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin?”**

Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul . . . Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say, O Lord, I will praise thee forever, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation . . . **Wilt thou make me that I may shake at the appearance of sin? . . .** therefore I will lift up my voice unto thee; yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen.

If Nephi lived today, he would probably never turn on a television. He probably would never aimlessly scroll through a streaming device. He may or may not make very limited use of a browser. He would not listen to comedies with raunchy, unwelcome humor. He would not expose himself to movies designed to cause their audience to succumb to increasing degrees of filth. Perhaps he wouldn’t even attempt to lead a boycott to overturn all of this debauchery. **For him personally, it’s possible that he would resolutely and unhesitatingly close all these channels of communication like an iron door, never to be opened again!**

If we were to guess, **Nephi’s joy would not be found in** plays, movies, sporting events, television, extravagant vacations, beautiful clothes, elaborate homes, fancy cars, sumptuous meals at exclusive

restaurants, achieving massive profits on the stock exchange, hobnobbing with celebrities or beautiful people. He would probably see these as vacuous activities that do not bring lasting happiness.

Instead, Nephi would probably go out on the street and look for someone who is suffering. “Suffering from what?” you might ask. He would tell that person I have a cure, I have an answer, I have a fix for that. We would imagine that he might know how to use the power of Jesus Christ to heal every spiritual and physical wound in this world. When he found someone suffering, **his joy would come in telling someone, “I know a cure for that; Jesus is the answer!”**

To some degree this is what it means to become a disciple of Christ and a sanctified people. As his grace molds us into people who will not return to the old pattern of sin, there will begin to be power to live as victorious Christians in true freedom!

We have entered this commentary on Nephi’s psalm in more than one of these modules because it’s extremely important to those on a quest to arrive at “the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

3 Nephi 13:5:

Therefore what manner of men ought ye to be? Verily I say unto you, **Even as I am.**

7. REGULAR SELF-EXAMINATION & AN ACCOUNTABILITY PARTNER

In Alma 16, Alma 2 organized a missionary team to go preach to the poor Zoramites on the Hill Onidah. Alma 2 and Amulek preached very effectively to that group. However, Alma 2’s son, Corianton, undermined the effectiveness of these two sermons by the moral impurity he displayed when he left the mission and had a relationship with a harlot. **When Alma 2 called on his youngest son to repent, he told Corianton to do three things:**

- **“Repent & forsake your sins”** – cease to do evil; learn to do well (Isaiah 1:16-17)
- **“Cross yourself”** – In other words, he should perform regular self-examination, as all believers are obligated to do at Communion.
- **“Give heed to your brothers’ counsel”** – When we are ensnared in a sinful condition, we need others’ help to lift us out of a condition that could be compared to quicksand. We need others to help pull us out.

Alma 19:1-10, 12, 17 & 19 (Alma 2 to Corianton):

And now my son . . . **For thou didst not give so much heed unto my words as did thy brother, among the people of the Zoramites.** Now this is what I have against thee; **thou didst go on unto boasting in thy strength, and thy wisdom.** And this is not all, my son. Thou didst do that which was grievous unto me; for **thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron, among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel;** yea, she did steal away the hearts of many; but this was no excuse for thee, my son. **Thou shouldst have tended to the ministry, wherewith thou wast entrusted.**

Alma 2 described the three most abominable sins in verses 7-12:

Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord; yea, **most abominable above all sins, save it be the shedding of innocent blood, or denying the Holy Ghost?** For behold, if ye deny the Holy Ghost when it

once has had place in you, and ye know that ye deny it; behold, this is a sin which is **unpardonable**. Yea, and whosoever **murdereth** against the light and knowledge of God, **it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness**; yea, I say unto you, my son, that it is not easy for him to obtain a forgiveness. And now my son, I would to God that ye had not been guilty of **so great a crime**. I would not dwell upon your crimes, to harrow up your soul, if it were not for your good. But behold, ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent, they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

Alma 2's remedy for Corianton's sins in verses 13-16:

Now, my son, I would that ye should **repent, and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things**; for except ye do this, ye can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. O remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things. **And I command you to take it upon you to counsel your elder brothers in your undertakings**; for behold, thou art in thy youth, and ye stand in need to be nourished by your brothers. **And give heed to their counsel**; suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing; suffer not that the devil lead away your heart again, after those wicked harlots.

Alma 2 described how Corianton, by his example, caused the Zoramites to disbelieve in verses 17-20:

Behold, O my son, **how great iniquity ye brought upon the Zoramites: for when they saw your conduct, they would not believe in my words . . .** Therefore I command you, my son, in the fear of God, that you **refrain from your iniquities**; that ye **turn to the Lord with all your mind, might and strength**; that ye **lead away the hearts of no more, to do wickedly . . . acknowledge your faults**, and retain that wrong which ye have done; **seek not after riches, nor the vain things of this world**; **for behold, you cannot carry them with you**.

Romans 16:19 (Paul commending the saints in Rome for their good example):

For **your obedience is come abroad unto all men**. I am glad therefore on your behalf . . .

THOSE WHO WERE NEVER TAUGHT THE TRUTH

1 John 3:4:

. . . **sin** is the transgression of the law.

Romans 4:15:

. . . where **no law** is, there is **no transgression**.

Romans 5:13:

. . . yet sin is not imputed to **those who have no law**.

Romans 10:13-14:

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? **And shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?**

Luke 12:57 (v. 48 in KJV):

But **he that knew not his Lord's will**, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom the Lord has committed much, of him will men ask the more.

2 Nephi 6:51:

Wherefore he hath given a law; and **where there is no law given there is no punishment**. And where there is no punishment, there is no condemnation. And where there is no condemnation, the mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement.

James 4:17:

Therefore to him that *knoweth* to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

John 9:41:

Jesus said unto them, **If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.**

1 Timothy 1:12-13:

And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord . . . for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; **but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.**

Mosiah 1:107:

. . . his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died, **not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned.**

Mosiah 1:114-115:

Even if it were possible that **little children** could sin, they could not be saved; but I say unto you, they are blessed. For behold as in Adam, or by nature they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins.

Mosiah 8:55-62:

And there cometh a resurrection, even a **first resurrection** . . . They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them: thus **they have eternal life** through Christ, who has broken the bands of death. And **these are those who have part in the first resurrection**; and **these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them . . . And little children also have eternal life . . .** the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him, and die in their sins . . . that have **willfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them**; these are they that have no part in the first resurrection.

Alma 7:21:

For it is because of the traditions of their fathers that cause them to remain in **their state of ignorance**; therefore **the Lord will be merciful unto them . . .**

Alma 15:56:

. . . **he that knoweth not good from evil is blameless**; but he that knoweth good and evil, to him is given according to his desires; whether he desireth good or evil, life or death, joy or remorse of conscience.

3 Nephi 3:19-21 (Nephites in iniquity just before Christ comes):

And thus in the commencement of the thirtieth year . . . they were in a state of **awful wickedness**. Now **they did *not* sin ignorantly**, for **they knew the will of God** concerning them, for it had been taught unto them; therefore **they did willfully rebel** against God And now it was in the days of Lachoneus . . .

Alma 16:141:

And now how much more cursed is he that ***knoweth* the will of God and doeth it not**, than he that only believeth, or only has cause to believe, and falleth into transgression?

Moroni 8:20 & 25-26:

Little children . . . it is awful wickedness to deny the pure mercies of God unto them, for they are all alive in him because of his mercy . . . For behold that all little children are alive in Christ, and also all they that are without the law. **For the power of redemption cometh on all they that have no law.**

D & C 76:4h-i & 6c:

And this is **the gospel** . . . he came into the world, even Jesus to be crucified for the world, and to bear the sins of the world . . . **saves all the works of his hands, except those sons of perdition, who deny the Son after the Father has revealed him**. Wherefore he saves all except them . . . Behold, these are **they who died without law** . . .

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE “SPIRIT,” “SOUL” & “BODY” OF MAN?

Spirit

Psychology refers to the “mind” of man. Theology refers to the “spirit.” For our purposes in this set of lessons, we will refer to those as the same thing. It could be said that the spirit is comprised of mind, will and emotions. In like manner, we often refer to God as “spirit” or an immaterial intelligence.

Body

Our spirits were first created by God and then our bodies. The body contains the physical sense receptors, such as touch, smell, hearing, etc. It contains the physical data that is gathered from our surroundings.

The **soul** of a man is the essence of that man. We think of “spirit” as referring to the **immaterial aspect** of man’s existence. Body then refers to the **material aspect**.

D&C 98:5j:

Therefore, care not for the body, neither the life of the body; **but care for the soul, and for the life of the soul**, and seek the face of the Lord always, **that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life.**

Christians debate about whether the essence of a person is comprised of two or three parts. In other words, is there a separate spirit, soul and body? Some use

1 Thessalonians 5:23 to suggest that there are **three parts** (man = spirit + soul + body).

1 Thessalonians 5:23:

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole **spirit and soul and body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

TWO PARTS FORM THE ESSENCE OF HUMANS

The other view among Christians is that there are **two parts**: merely a spirit and body. Restoration scripture explains that **the “spirit” and “body” comprise the “soul” of man** (spirit + body = soul).

D&C 85:4a:

Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you, is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. And **the spirit and the body is the soul of man**.

COMPETING DRIVES WITHIN A PERSON

Regardless of whether we believe there are two parts or three parts, in the past, some theologians and ministers have identified different competing **drives** that they believe form the essence of man:

- Spiritual
- Psychological
- Physical

1. MORAL FREEDOM

Some Christians believe that when a person has achieved a genuine moral freedom:

- The **spirit** is dominant.
- The **psychological** is in harmony with the spirit.
- The **physical** is ruled by the spirit.

2. CONCUPISCENCE

Some Christians think that when a person is serving a spirit of “lasciviousness” or “defrauding” as Paul called them:

- The **spirit** pretends to be religious
- The **psychological** is prone to pseudo-intellectualism
- The **physical** is sensual.

3. REPROBATION

- The **spiritual** aspect of man is weak.
- The **psychological** aspect of man is prone to delusion.
- The **physical** is depraved.