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Theme: Self Control

Scripture: Titus 2:11-14 (NIV) *“For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope - the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”*

A Thought: The genesis for this writing came to me as I was responding to a friend’s “face book” update. As I was reading I noticed on the right side margin of the page there were numerous advertisements. One in particular caught my attention. A young attractive women dressed for a beach outing in a very revealing and skimpy attire. The caption read Learn a Foreign Language in 30 Days or something like that. Why is this type of advertisement on a “face book” page that is viewed not only by adults but by children? So I checked it out. Yep, the caption was correct. The text of the message was straight talk and a sales pitch to learn a foreign language and by the way no woman in sight. I immediately checked out other “face book” entries that I had not opened. And yes there were various advertisements promoting everyday products with enticing sensual veneers. All in the pretext of course to titillate our God given desires reserved only for our spouses. The fact is gentlemen this is the “new normal” in today’s world. Therefore without God in our lives the world is cognizant of our appetite for the naughty (read Romans 7:21-25). No getting around it. Our minds and physical body ease to a quick fix...instant gratification. The scriptures tell us that lust is a sin (read Matthew 5:27-30). It is very easy to fall into Satan’s lust-filled abyss. His grip is firm and he will not let you go. Sadly, the consequences are enormous as a few of our national and local (political, religious) leaders have experienced. Our lack of self-control disrupts our relationships and it magnifies the distrust with our spouses and love ones.

Now....what are your thoughts? Write them down.

Talk to yourself:

- Are you susceptible to lustful thoughts and actions? Yes - No- Sometimes?
- Do you browse website pornography? How often have tried to stop?
- How would you grade your relationship with your spouse, fiancée or girlfriend?
- Have you sought guidance from your pastor, therapist or other? Do you pray?
- How often do you read the Word? Attend a Bible study or attend church service?

Scriptures to read:

- Exodus 20:14; Dt., 5:18; Lev. 18, 20; Psalm 103; Proverbs 4, 5; Matthew 5:27-30,
- Mark 7:21; 8:1-11; Romans 1:24-27, 6:11-14, 8:1-15, 12:2; 1 Corinthians 6:12-20, 10:12-13; Hebrews 4:12; Philippians 4:8; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 3:3; 1Peter 1:13-14, 2:12; James 1:14-15

Quote: A. W. Tozer, *Tozer on Christian Leadership*, "Every man is as close to God as he wants to be; he is as holy and as full of the Spirit as he wills to be."

Bottom Line: In today's society we are constantly bombarded with sexual stuff that play havoc with our lustful desires e.g., bill boards, commercials, music, magazine covers, promotional materials, social media, film and television and the ubiquitous gentlemen clubs. Even the Fourth Estate (television news media) tease upcoming segments with playful naughty goings-on. There is no escape. And for those wishing for the good ole Mayberry days....good luck! Remember the 60's and 70's "everything goes" epoch? Today's Millennials see those two decades as the Mayberry days! The standard rung of purity and moral virtue is one step above ground level. Ok, too harsh you say? Alright two steps - how's that? The Lord tells us in 1Peter 1:15-16 (HSCB) the importance of moral conduct...*"but, as the One who called you is holy; you also are to be holy in all your conduct; for it is written, be holy; because I am holy."* Pure and simple? Tough admonition for most of us...right men? Seek Jesus every day and He will give you the much needed self control....2Peter 1:5-8 (NIV) *"For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith, goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness;"* Gents, "self-control." Make the effort, God expects no less from us! For "hope and forgiveness" read Psalm 103 and Romans 8:1-15.

NOW.....THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE.

Spiritual Dabbler, Your bro, Ray

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