

The Sin of Sensuality

Romans 13:13–14

What Is Sensuality?

- The English word *sensuality* means “the enjoyment, expression, or pursuit of physical, especially sexual, pleasure” and translates the Greek word *aselgeia*.
- The Greek word *aselgeia* occurs ten times in the NT, translated “sensuality,” “lewdness,” “licentiousness,” and the like (Mark 7:22; Rom 13:13; 2 Cor 12:21; Gal 5:19; Eph 4:19; 1 Pet 4:3; 2 Pet 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4).
- Sensuality prevents entrance into heaven (Gal 5:18–21).

A Universal Problem

- Sensuality is not a new or local problem; people have struggled with the temptation to indulge the flesh from the first sin onward (Gen 3:6; Jas 1:14–15; cf. 1 John 2:15–17).
- The idol of “Self” demands self-gratification; it always disappoints, however, and eventually deforms and destroys us (Ps 115:4–8; Eph 4:17–19; Jude 4; cf. Rom 1:21–32).
- Sensuality, says Jesus, comes from within a person and defiles him or her (Mark 7:21–23).

Lawless Expression

- Sensuality expresses itself in “wanton acts or manners, filthy words, indecent bodily movements, and the unchaste handling of males and females” (Thayer, s.v. “ἀσέλγεια”).
 - If we use our words (e.g., personal conversations, phones calls or texts, online social media) to convey illicit thoughts and feelings, we practice sensuality (2 Pet 2:18).
 - If we fail to clothe ourselves, partially or totally exposing our nakedness to someone(s) not our spouse, we practice sensuality (1 Tim 2:9–10; cf. Josephus, *A.J.* 20.108–12; *B.J.* 1.439?).

Lawless Expression

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 - If we handle others inappropriately and lustfully (e.g., lewd dancing, flirtatious gestures, unlawful sexual contact), we practice sensuality (1 Pet 4:3; cf. 1 Cor 7:1–9).

Clothing Ourselves with Christ

- We must never give Satan a foothold in their lives lest he enter and wreak havoc on us spiritually, emotionally, and physically (Rom 13:14b; Gal 5:18–21; cf. Eph 4:27).
- If we are struggling with sensuous thoughts and behaviors, we must stop (Rom 13:13; 1 Cor 15:34; 1 Pet 4:3).
- But it is not enough to put off the old self; we must also put on the new self, that is, Jesus Christ himself (Rom 13:14a; Eph 4:20–24; Gal 3:26–27).

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