

How to Walk in Christlike Purity in a Sex-Saturated Society

Rahab's rehabilitation is one of the most remarkable stories of redemption in all of Scripture. It's the story of how God turned a harlot into a heroine of faith. A heroine is defined as "A woman noted for her courage or ability and admired for her brave deeds and noble qualities." It all took place in ancient Jericho, the first city Israel defeated during its conquest of Canaan.

Joshua was one of the original 12 spies Moses sent out 40 years earlier. There were 12 spies, but only two (Joshua and Caleb) were wise. It has been said, "Ten brought back gripes, but only two brought back grapes." The 10 returned with an evil report of unbelief that swept like a virus through the camp. Instead of entering Canaan Land within a year of their exodus from Egypt, Israel spent 40 years on a spiritual treadmill wandering in the wilderness. Joshua learned a valuable lesson and only sent two spies to scout out Jericho (it's much easier to get two people to agree than 12). The spies providentially landed on the doorstep of a helpful prostitute named Rahab.

The fact that Rahab had stalks of flax on her roof and scarlet colored thread in her house leads some scholars to believe she was a fabric maker and/or a cloth dyer. Flax was used to spin linen which was used to make clothing. Some sources suggest the word "harlot" can be translated "innkeeper," so some speculate that Rahab ran a motel of sorts where she "entertained" her guests. Herbert Lockyer, in his book, *All the Women of the Bible*, commented, "The Bible makes no attempt to smooth over the unpleasant fact that Rahab had been a harlot. Three times over Rahab is referred to as 'the harlot,'

and the Hebrew term *zoonah* and the Greek word *porne* have at no time meant anything else but 'harlot'—a woman who yields herself indiscriminately to every man approaching her.”

As a prostitute, Rahab was enslaved by sexual sin. Her life was a moral train wreck before God rescued her. Illicit sex is one of many vices Satan uses to keep people in bondage. No, God is not anti-sex. After all, He invented it! But He is against sexual behavior that is destructive to us physically, emotionally and spiritually. God designed and intended for sex to be a beautiful gift for married couples to share and use to express their mutual love. “Marriage is to be honored among everyone, and the bed undefiled. But God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers” (Heb. 13:4). God established boundaries in His Word to protect us from the harmful consequences that result from promiscuity. God is not an overbearing killjoy in heaven who wants to deprive us of fun. Rather, He is a loving Father who wants to protect us from disease, broken relationships, premature pregnancy and many other negative factors. Which would you prefer, a fence at the top of a cliff or an ambulance at the bottom? The fence is God’s boundary for sexual behavior. The ambulance is His grace that will rescue us if we fall, but it cannot erase all the heartache caused by our poor choices. The old adage is still true—an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The problem is we live in a sex-saturated society. Temptation lurks everywhere. You can’t even watch sports or the news without being bombarded by lewd commercials and previews for trashy shows and movies. Magazines and music videos scream sensuality. Pornography floods the internet like an open sewer. Technology has made sin more accessible than ever. Remember, though, it is not a sin to be tempted—it just means you’re human. Welcome to the club. Martin Luther said it best, “You can’t keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair.” Likewise we can’t prevent every impure thought from crossing our mind, but

we can choose not to dwell on, act on or allow them to take root in our heart. We must remain ever vigilant to avoid Satan's sinful snares and shun the very appearance of evil.

A scarlet rope gave a harlot hope. Rahab agreed to tie a scarlet rope in her window after helping the spies escape. That red rope is a reminder to us to keep our eyes fixed on the blood of Jesus. Our victory begins and continues by looking to and believing in Christ's atoning work on the cross. Notice only one family was saved from Jericho, and only one family will survive the final judgment to come on this prodigal planet—the blood-washed, born again, family of God.

After Jericho fell, Rahab left the cursed city, renounced her harlotry and joined up with Israel (Josh. 6:25). She later married one of the spies she had hidden, Salmon. Together they had a son named Boaz, who married Ruth. They, in turn, had a son named Obed, whose son, Jesse, had a son named—you guessed it—David (Ruth 4:21-22). Wow! What a miracle of grace! Rahab, the former harlot turned housewife, became the great-great - grandmother of King David. It gets better too. Rahab was also one of only four Gentile women included in the lineage of Jesus along with Tamar, Ruth, and Bathsheba, all of whom had checkered pasts (Matt. 1:1-6).

Rahab was also one of only two women (Sarah being the other) listed among the heroes of faith. "By faith the prostitute Rahab, when she received the spies with peace, did not perish with those who did not believe" (Heb. 11:31). Furthermore, she was cited as an example of how works compliment and evidence faith in justification. "Likewise, was not Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way?" (James 2:25) God turned a harlot into a heroine of faith and an ancestor of Christ. That's what His grace can do! And if God redeemed and rehabilitated Rahab, there's no telling how He'll transform your life if you let Him. So, how's your rehab coming along?
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