


**Jesus—Outside the Lines**  
Part 3: Purity—a Tool or a Weapon?

# TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS

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**Talk** together about the glory of God's kingdom. —*Psalm 145:11*  
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —*Joshua 22:5*

## Questions for Reflection

- What is something you find disgusting? **What** makes that so repugnant, repulsive, so repulsive to you?
- What was a situation in which you felt "excluded"? How was that situation resolved?
- Read Luke 10:25-37. Contrast the self-righteous lawyer's question (v. 29) with Jesus' question (v. 36).

Explain this observation: "*Neighbor*" is not a description of **what someone is in relation to you**, but rather "*neighboring*" is **an action you do toward others**. Do you agree or disagree—and **why**?

- Read Leviticus 15:25 & 27, and then, keeping this context in mind, read Mark 5:25-34. Describe how this woman likely felt throughout this incident. What do you think she felt...
  - in v. 26?
  - in v. 27-28?
  - in v. 29?
  - in v. 30b?
  - in v. 31-33?
  - in v. 34?

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What do you think is the significance of Jesus calling her "daughter"?

How can you express similar warmth and acceptance toward those who are needy and hurting around you?

## Application-Challenge

- Go and demonstrate mercy over sacrifice this week. Identify a person or situation that you've been afraid will contaminate you and turn it around. Start thinking about how your hope and joy and peace can infect them. How could an encounter with radical, Christ-focused love impact them?
- Start learning your neighbor's names, what they do for a living, if they have kids, etc. If you already know that kind of stuff, take the next steps: start to learn what they care about, what they are excited about, what is troubling them, etc.

**Take One Step:** What is one small, concrete step of obedience you will put into practice this week?



## Sermon Summary

We have been examining our relationships with people who are “different” from us in some way. Maybe they don’t go to church, or they are from a different ethnicity or political party, but somehow they are different. First we explored the truth that understanding grace as an absolutely free gift that cannot be deserved means that we are in no way superior to or more righteous than anyone else. Then we looked at the idea of a moral circle—the group of people we reserve our most loving, most generous self for. We place people outside the circle for all kinds of reasons, but Jesus was different. He died even for those who rejected him. This week we are going to explore how the concept of disgust relates to our view of evil, sin, and our neighbors. Disgust is a useful survival tool for humans. The primary function of our “disgust impulse” is to reject items that have been contaminated. We see it at work primarily with food: the dog licks your ice cream cone...you shouldn’t eat it. The clean and the pure are inside certain boundaries, and the unclean and contaminated are pushed out. Disgust is a gut reaction more than a reasoned, studied conclusion. Researchers asked people if they would wear a sweater that had been worn by Adolf Hitler. Almost universally people said no and were revolted by the idea. There’s no logic to this—evil doesn’t “rub off” onto the sweater and then “rub off” onto you. But as I said, our views on disgust and contamination aren’t about logic.

There appear to be **four principles** we associate with “contamination”: **[1] Contact:** Contamination is caused by contact or even mere physical proximity. **[2] Dose:** The amount doesn’t matter—we think even microscopic amounts of the pollutant cause harm. **[3] Permanence:** Once contaminated, always contaminated. **[4] Dominance:** Pollutants are stronger than pure objects. Contaminated things ruin pure things, not vice-versa. When applied to foods, these concepts may offer protection—but when applied to people, they’re damaging and divisive. Remember last week’s “moral circle”? That reveals what we identify as clean and safe. The concept of disgust means we build walls to keep the “unclean” on the outside. We don’t associate with contaminated people because **contact** with them might contaminate me. Any **dose** of “contaminated behavior” in person makes them unclean—one strike and you’re out! And once a person has been pushed outside the walls of the “pure,” it’s **permanent**; there’s no path back in. Finally, contamination is more **dominant** than purity; they sully us, Christ’s ministry through us doesn’t purify them.

Jesus didn’t use this terminology, but he certainly taught about it (see Matthew 9:9-13). Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Wow! Jesus understood that tax collectors and sinners couldn’t contaminate Him. God desires mercy, not mere sacrifices which are so easy to give (Hosea 6:6). The Pharisees didn’t simply do their best to follow the commands of scripture—that’s a good goal for all of us. The Pharisees added to and altered commands of scripture to fit their agenda. Then they could self-righteously point out sin in others, thus highlighting their own abstinence from that sin. But they missed out on mercy. They established their own clear divide between the righteous and the sinners so that everyone else knew that they were unclean. And because they Pharisees didn’t think they needed to receive mercy or grace from God, they extended none to others either. They totally missed the entire message of the scriptures, and so Jesus told the parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Pharisees thought it was OK not to love contaminated people; they are “non-neighbors” so we’re off the hook for loving them. Right?

I love how Jesus answers this man’s question. Who is my neighbor? It’s not about examining the situation or the person and determining if they are pure or impure and whether or not they fit inside your circle. **We** are supposed to **make** everyone our neighbor. The Pharisees clearly thought that moral pollutants are more **dominant** than purity (and, of course, they wrongly thought that they themselves were morally pure!). Yet 1 John 4:4 says: “You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them (the evil spirits), because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world”, therefore our response shouldn’t be to retreat or withdraw, but to engage. What if the hope, the joy, the peace, the love that Jesus has brought into your life could overcome the darkness and the brokenness of the world around you? We are God’s messengers telling all creation that He is victorious over sin, and death, and everything that is unclean.

Church: “God desires mercy, not sacrifice. He has not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Let’s go learn what that means. Let’s stop shrinking away from the world, scared of how it might contaminate us, and instead let’s pursue our neighbors with the confidence that Christ in us is more powerful than anything around us. Let’s join with God in his mission to redeem and restore creation.

## Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*The Scriptures have so much to say about shame—and how it is removed. Below is a small sampling. For each of the passages below, circle the word “shame” or “ashamed”, and then look for the words or phrases which indicate WHY or HOW shame came, or was removed. Ask yourself: “How is MY situation like or unlike THAT situation?”*

### **Monday**

- Psalm 14 (circle a word in v. 6)
- Psalm 25 (circle words in v. 2, 3, 20)
- Psalm 31 (circle words in v. 1, 17)

### **Tuesday**

- Psalm 69 (circle words in v. 6 and 19 [2x])
- Psalm 71 (circle words in v. 1, 13, 24)
- Psalm 119 (circle words in v. 6, 31, 46, 78, 80, 116)

### **Wednesday**

- Isaiah 30 (circle words in v. 3 and 5 [2x])
- Isaiah 44 (circle words in v. 9 and 11 [2x])
- Isaiah 45 (circle words in v. 16, 17, 24)
- Isaiah 54 (circle words in v. 4 [2x])

### **Thursday**

- Jeremiah 3 (circle words in v. 3, 24, 25)
- Jeremiah 6 (circle words in v. 15 [2x])
- Jeremiah 8 (circle words in v. 9, 12 [2x])

### **Friday**

- Jeremiah 17 (circle words in v. 13, 18 [2x])
- Jeremiah 48 (circle words in v. 1 [2x], 13 [2x], 20, 39)
- Jeremiah 51 (circle words in v. 17, 47, 51)

### **Saturday**

- Ezekiel 16 (circle words in v. 27, 52, 54, 61, 63)
- Summarize everything you’ve learned about shame from your study this week.
- Adam tried to cover his shame. (It doesn’t work!) Will you “drop the fig leaf”?

