

# Sin Is a Mixture

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## Persistence Pays

Many years ago I met with a married woman who was deeply in love – but not with her husband. Torn between that love and her guilt, she had reached the end of her rope.

I listened to her tell me, repeatedly, how much she hated what she was doing, but I couldn't quite believe her words. Something was missing. On a whim (likely a leading of the Holy Spirit) I asked her what she liked about her love affair. That's when her protests got heated. *I hate it! It's awful! Wrong! Terrible!* We went around and around. I must have posed the same question twenty different ways.

*No really, what's good about it? – Nothing!*  
*Yet you keep doing it. You must like something about it. – No, I hate it!*  
*There must be some payoff. What could it be? – I have no idea!*  
*Still, you are drawn to it. What's the appeal?*

On and on. Maybe for half an hour. It seemed like a fruitless discussion, when a startled look appeared on her face and she started telling me through her tears how *good* it felt to be cherished. Of course it did – we're made to be cherished.

## An Honorable Resistance

She hadn't stopped her affair for a very good reason. She hated the sin, but (and this is what kept her involved in it) she thought that giving up her sin meant giving up her longing to be cherished. She really did hate the sin. She just couldn't figure out how to stop it without this deep sense of losing something that shouldn't be lost.

It dawned on me that her sin was a *mixture* – not solely evil but a combination of a good desire with bad choices. When the Spirit showed us the goodness mixed in with her sin, we could begin to think through how to honor her good desire but abandon her sinful methodology.

We began to untangle her dilemma. We talked about the deep goodness of her longing to be cherished. About God's longing for us to cherish Him. About His building a hunger for love into the deepest fibers of our being. About how we should never give up the ways we resemble the God who made us in His image. And about other ways, *pure* ways, to fill her empty heart.

To her credit, she had stubbornly refused to deny her likeness to God. And, also to her credit, she was willing to give up her affair once she understood that she didn't have to deny her built-in longing for love.

## Other Mixtures

Was her experience unique, or could this sin-mixture idea have broader application? Do godly desires have a part in our stubborn allegiance to sin? I started checking it out, and, with issue after issue, saw how we use harmful choices as we attempt to satisfy the desires God has built into us.

- A man discovers that pornography relieves his loneliness. While his involvement in pornography is wrong, his recoil from loneliness is good; it's a way he exhibits God's character. The man is SUPPOSED to hate loneliness: God says it's not good for him to be alone.

- A controlling spouse feels safe when she calls the shots. She's SUPPOSED to hunger for safety: God wants us to experience the safety He provides.
- A heavy drinker knows that a few shots of vodka will melt away his tension. He's SUPPOSED to want to relax: God calls us to rest and peace.
- A woman, stuffing her house with what she neither needs nor can afford, makes sure she is surrounded by plenty. She's SUPPOSED to desire abundance: God gives us the desire to accept extravagant gifts – *His* extravagant gifts. (He consistently provides more than we can even think of or ask for.)

In each of these situations the hunger is good...and the method of satisfying it disrupts and destroys. When good and evil come together sin results. Sin is a mixture of good and evil. Purity is quite different: purity is unmixed – just good, no evil – that's why it's called pure. Evil, on the other hand, is always impure; it's always a mixture.

Does all sin mix bad methods with godly desires? Yes, it does. Can resistance to change have its good points? Yes, it can. Do we err when we focus on the sin and ignore the good? Yes, we do. Would it help to explore other means, pure and godly means, of honoring the desires God has built into us? Yes, it will.

### **Thinking Biblically About These Events**

Do my thoughts correspond to God's? Here's what I found when I checked out His Word:

- Psalms repeatedly says that God is good. He is pure good. There is no evil in Him.
- The biblical word for pure (katharos) means unmixed. In secular life this word referred to anything that contained only one substance, for example, tea leaves (no water added). In the bible this same word refers to anything that is entirely good, i.e. not mixed with evil. GOOD = PURE = UNMIXED.
- The biblical word for impure (akatharos) means mixed. In secular life this word referred to anything that contained more than one substance, for example, tea leaves mixed with water. In the bible this same word refers to evil. EVIL = IMPURE = MIXED.
- God creates from Himself, and everything He creates is good, pure good. (1 Timothy 4:4)
- God has created us in His image. Every person, fallen or redeemed, bears a resemblance to Him. (Genesis 1:26-27)
- The Evil One can't create from himself, but must take the pure good that God has created and warp it by mixing in his malice. By this method, Satan turns purity into impurity.
- We are all born bearing the impure, evil mixture that Adam initiated. Satan's malice has deeply distorted our lives (Romans 5:12). But the image of our pure God has not disappeared (Genesis 9:4, 1 Corinthians 11:7) – our deepest desires still match the purity of God's desires..
- Sin is impure: sin is a mixture. When we sin we mix ungodly methods with godly desires.
- There is no such thing as pure evil. Every evil desire contains something of God for which we rightly hunger.

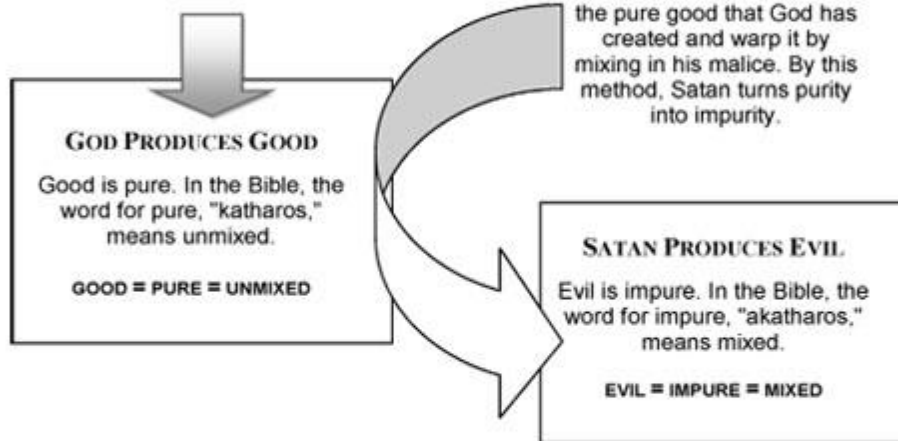
The following diagram illustrates the interplay between mixtures and purity:

# Mixtures & Purity

## GOD

God creates from Himself.  
He is entirely good, and  
everything He creates is  
also entirely good.

1 Timothy 4:4 ...everything  
created by God is good...



## AND US

Every person, fallen or redeemed, has built-in desires that reflect the character of God. Because God has made us in His image, our deepest desires match the purity of His heart.

Sin is always a mixture; it uses ungodly methods to try and satisfy godly desires.

**THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PURE EVIL.  
EVERY EVIL DESIRE CONTAINS SOMETHING OF GOD  
FOR WHICH WE RIGHTLY HUNGER.**