

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT SERIES
“ADULTERY - FROM A LUSTFUL HEART”

Text: Matthew 5:27-30

Key Word: Adultery

Key Thought: Is There Any Way of Escaping the Trap of Lust?

I. DEAL WITH IT HONESTLY (Matthew 5:27-28)

II. DEAL WITH IT DRASTICALLY (Matthew 5:29-30)

Adultery is the first of seven vices that Jesus dealt with during His Sermon on the Mount. Take about taking the bull by the horns. We cannot deal with the topic of adultery without understanding the sin of lust.

"Lust is the ape that gibbers in our loins. Tame him as we will by day, he rages all the wilder in our dreams by night. Just when we think we're safe from him, he raises up his ugly head and smirks, and there's no river in the world flows cold and strong enough to strike him down. Almighty God, why dost thou deck men out with such a loathsome toy?"

Frederick Buechner
"Godric"

That quote describes the way lust often feels, especially when you're fighting it, but it doesn't get at the essence of lust. Buechner portrays lust like an animal instinct for sex, but that's not quite accurate. Animals don't really lust at all. They simply respond to instinct. Once or twice a year the female of any given species will emit the proper hormone.

Humans are different. We, especially males, get fixated on the sexual experience. The English word, lust, comes from the Greek word "*epithumia*." It is defined as "*a longing or a desire.*" A desire in and of itself is not wrong. Some desires are even good.

Lust is different. It's a desire for something forbidden. Lust takes our natural desire and pushes it after things that feed our feelings eventually to the point that we lose the ability to say "no." This idea was what Jesus was pointing to when He taught about the pitfall of lust.

"You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Matthew 5:27-28

Jesus equated lust with adultery. Adultery is any sex that occurs with another person who is not your spouse. He said it's not enough to simply refrain from committing the act of adultery. **If we desire sex with another, who we are not married to, we've lusted and thus violated one of the Ten Commandments which prohibits adultery.**

"In a tempting world there are many things which are designed to excite desire: books, pictures, plays, even advertisements. **The man whom Jesus here condemns is the man who deliberately uses his eyes to stimulate his desires; the man who finds a strange delight in things which waken the desire for the forbidden thing.**"

William Barclay
"The Gospel of Matthew"
Vol. 1 p. 147

How Can We Escape the Trap of Adultery Through the Sin of Lust?

I. DEAL WITH IT HONESTLY (Matthew 5:27-28)

A. Recognize That it Contributes to the Degradation of Women

Please note that Jesus didn't address the issue of lust to women. Although His words do not exclude them. It's just that men are stimulated visually and more easily than women. That's why the overwhelming majority of sexually explicit material is sold to men.

"The major factor contributing to extramarital relationships is physical and emotional attraction (78 percent), far outdistancing marital dissatisfaction (41 percent)."

"How Common is Pastoral Indiscretion?"
Leadership, Winter
1988, p. 12-13

We think that it's harmless, but one of the outcomes is the degradation of women. James Weaver, a University of Kentucky communication's professor found that men who experienced even a one-time exposure to sex scenes selected from ordinary R-rated movies - especially scenes between consenting adults or sex initiated by women - **developed a loss of respect for women and believed women to be more sexually permissive or promiscuous than they had believed before they viewed them.**

I. DEAL WITH IT HONESTLY (Matthew 5:27-28) (Contd.)

A. Recognize That it Contributes to the Degradation of Women (Contd.)

Pornography is even more damaging. In another experiment, one group of men and women were shown six pornographic videos while another group watched six hours of prime time situation comedies. **The group that had been exposed to pornography "accepted male dominance over females twenty times more than did the group that watched comedy."** The results were true even of the women who saw the pornography.

B. It Encourages Teenage Sexual Activity

Did you know that the typical adolescent now sees an average of 40,000 sexual incidents in one year on prime time TV? One article from "Focus on the Family Magazine" asked the question: *"What will a teenage boy who spends endless hours watching MTV learn about the opposite sex?" "Well he'll master a few pick-up lines, but after that, he'll discover that there are no 'average looking' women in the MTV universe. Rather, women are glamorous, well-endowed and skimpily dressed. Women also have body parts ready to satisfy a guy anytime day or night . . . Conspicuously absent is the celebration of sex within marriage. When [the writer of the article] asked Kurt Loder if he could recall seeing such a video, Loder replied, 'No I can't. I can't. There's definitely a feeling in the media today that marriage is square - it's over - that we should be talking about nontraditional marriage or something."*

If that's the message guys get, do you wonder what girls think of themselves? MTV must lead them to conclude that their purpose is to satisfy the sexual desires of men.

Unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases, abortions among teenagers have risen with teenage sexual activity. Teens are watching lust inducing programs largely because their parents enjoy it and allow it.

*** Observers have noted that certain kinds of ants have a passion for the sweet, glandular substance given off by the caterpillar of a large blue butterfly. **They become so addicted to it that they even seek out the supplier and carry him home to their nest with delight. But they unwittingly bring home an enemy in disguise, for the caterpillar gorges himself exclusively on ant larva.**

Usually such a threat to the colony would be repelled with great vigour, but the adults enjoy the tasty secretions of the guest so much that they are oblivious of the fact that they're young are being devoured in the process. ***

I. DEAL WITH IT HONESTLY (Matthew 5:27-28) (Contd.)

C. It Leads to Addictive Behaviour

It has been called that the “*Law of Diminishing Returns.*” What was exciting the first time is okay the second time, but often becomes boring the third time. There must be a new more explicit thrill. It is addictive. When Playboy came out pictures were much less explicit then they are today. The same is true for explicit magazines. As this addictive behaviour is continually fed, our society will be inundated with even more lust for depraved material.

“*Innocence Preserved*” (which can be ordered through EFC) provides information on the laws against child pornography, court cases, its prevalence and its effects. This background paper also outlines a Christian approach to the issue and ways to respond as individuals, citizens, parents and churches. A lengthy appendix includes tips for Internet-proofing children, the Criminal Code provisions on child pornography, a Question-and-Answer section and a list of further resources. “*Innocence Preserved*” includes discussion questions to stimulate informed discussion on the issue. This background paper is designed to serve as a general resource for people interested in learning about the prevalence and impact of child pornography, as well as the laws that restrict it, and in thinking through a biblical response to the issue.

Sexual activity among young teens can have negative physical effects on the rest of their lives. These effects may include sexually transmitted diseases that can lead to painful medical conditions and infertility, and pregnancy. The rate of sexually transmitted diseases among teens aged 15 to 19 is very high. For example, the reported incidence of one sexually transmitted disease, genital chlamydia, was 998.6 per 100,000 in 1996 among 15- to 19-year-olds. This was more than eight times the national rate and the highest of any age group. [1]

D. It Can Damage/Destroy a Person’s Conscience

The more sexually explicit stuff we ingest the more the voice of our conscience is choked out. Whether it’s TV shows or movies or music or blatant pornography, eventually we’ll lose the ability to judge right from wrong the more we take in.

"It starts by using the desires of our flesh to lure us into its clutches . . . Through the imagination it gains access to our souls where it affects our belief systems, seeks to bend our wills to evil and causes devastation in our emotions. Then it closes in for the kill in our spirits. It violates our consciences, quenches our ability to know right from wrong, and shuts down our ability to talk with God. Once the spirit is dead, there is no real life in the body. We may be going through the motions of living, but no one is really home inside."

Laurie Hall, “*An Affair of the Mind*”

I. DEAL WITH IT HONESTLY (Matthew 5:27-28) (Contd.)

D. It Can Damage/Destroy a Person's Conscience (Contd.)

"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness.

23. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness?"

Matthew 6:22-23

E. It Destroys Our Relationship with God

The Bible tells the story of King David, a good man who caved into his own lust and paid the price. He was wandering about on the roof of his palace early one evening enjoying the view when he spotted a woman bathing. Rather than turn away immediately, he lingered over the scene. He savoured her body and wondered what it would be like to have her. He called his servants to see if he could make her his wife on the spot. She was married. Never mind that. David was King and ordered the woman to be brought into the palace. He seduced her and they slept together. She became pregnant and to prevent the wrath of a jealous husband, David had the woman's husband killed. **A little lust produced adultery and murder.**

Aside from that it destroyed David's relationship with God. When he was confronted with his deeds, David repented. He begged God's forgiveness and got it. Psalm 51 describes the incident and reveals David's fear at losing his relationship to God.

"Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me.

11. Do not cast me away from your presence, and do not take your holy spirit from me.

12. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and sustain in me a willing spirit."

Psalm 51: 9-12

David was fearful not only that his sin displeased God, but also that the condition of his heart might actually drive that Spirit of God away. He knew that God is holy. He cannot tolerate sin in His presence. The lust of the eyes defiles the heart. It makes it unclean and disrupts our fellowship to God. We are told that only the pure in heart can see God (Matthew 5:8). We often can't see God or what He's doing in our lives because we're fixated on flesh. There's no growth in our spiritual maturity. There's no serving God. We serve our other master, lust. So is honesty the only answer to this problem. NO!

II. DEAL WITH IT DRASTICALLY (Matthew 5:29-30)

"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."

Matthew 5:29-30

Jesus said to eradicate lust at all costs. Lets take a few minutes to at least offer some constructive ways of dealing with the problem.

A. Recognize and Name the Problem

Call it what it really is. Don't say I've got a problem with temptation. Say, *"I've got a problem with the sin of lust."* That's where we must begin with ourselves and with God. Own up to and confess it.

"If we confess our sins, he who is faithful and just will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

I John 1:9

B. Stop Feeding Lust

Eliminating lustful thoughts is not easy, but it can be done. One of the ways to begin is to eliminate the sources of lust. If you know that certain magazines or books or TV shows or movies or music or internet sites entice you, cut them out of your life. Give them up. **If you're not willing to, then stop asking God to take away your lustful thoughts. You've got to do your part if you expect God to do His.**

"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."

I Corinthians 6:18

II. DEAL WITH IT DRASTICALLY (Matthew 5:29-30) (Contd.)

C. Demythologize it!

Realize that lust promises you a lie. That Sports Illustrated swimsuit girl is not going to go to bed with you. If you met her, she probably wouldn't even speak to you.

That centerfold is not as perfect as she looks. **Computer technology and airbrushing can make a plain girl look like a goddess.** Chances are that young woman has been redone by technology. Remember that these are human beings. That sweet young thing is somebody's daughter or possibly a wife. She eats, sleeps, and does things just like the women in your life.

D. Confess the Personal Price

Loss of intimacy with spouse. Loss of your own self-respect: guilt; shame.

E. Understand God's Perspective on Sex

"Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled, - for God will judge fornicators and adulterers."

Hebrews 13:4

F. Trace the Source of Your Desires

Lust arises from a legitimate set of desires. Trace your obsession to its source. **What do you really need? I need to be hugged. I need to love and to be loved. I need a father. I need to feel worthwhile and attractive to someone. I need God.** Those are real needs and five minutes alone with a Penthouse Magazine will not satisfy them.

Follow Jesus' advice and do whatever it takes to eradicate lust from your life.

Updated from SermonCentral.com
"The Naked Truth About Lust by Joel Smith"
Greer's Chapel UMC 5-21-00

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Date: Mar 2/25

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: TAKE MY LIFE (Take my Heart and Form it) - D

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- D. It Can Damage/Destroy a Person’s Conscience *Matthew 6:22-23***
- E. It Destroys Our Relationship with God - *Psalm 51: 9-12; Matthew 5:8***

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- B. Stop Feeding Lust - *I Corinthians 6:18***
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