

"WINNING THE BATTLE AGAINST LUST"

Matthew 5:27-30

Let's get something straight. We are all sinners by nature and by choice. For those of you who are saved, you need to remember that your salvation is a result of God's grace *ALONE*. Jesus died on the cross to redeem you from your sins and He was raised from the dead so that you might be justified before the Creator God. Your salvation is eternally secure in Christ. Glory to God!

I want to welcome you to an ongoing battle for purity, righteousness, and holiness as the Holy Spirit conforms you to the image of Christ Himself!

Galatians 5:16–24... But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. **17** For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. **18** But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. **19** Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, **20** idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, **21** envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. **22** But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, **23** gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. **24** Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Romans 6:11–14... Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. **12** Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts, **13** and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin *as* instruments of unrighteousness; but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. **14** For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

The Christian life is a battle you were designed to win! Don't forget. Jesus also calls us to be the salt and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). We are a city on a hill that is intended to shine for all to see God's glory.

Two recurring themes run through the Sermon on the Mount, and they are summarized for us in the words Jesus uses...

I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets—5:17

But I say to you—5:22, 28, 32, 34, 44

These parallel themes help us to understand what Jesus was seeking to do in the Sermon on the Mount. On the one hand, He is preserving and fulfilling what God had previously revealed in the Old Testament. On the other hand, He is extracting the true meaning of Old Testament law by initiating a break with the Jewish, rabbinical teaching of the day. Keep in mind that it was focused on externals—*keeping rules, being religious, seeking to earn God's favor*. Belonging to our Lord's kingdom requires internal righteousness. This internal righteousness “*surpasses that of the Scribes and Pharisees.*”

Jesus illustrated this by zeroing in on six practical issues...

The first issue has to do with the prohibition of murder (21–26).¹ A couple of weeks ago, we examined the internal application. Jesus went deeper than actual murder by concentrating on the danger of anger. I hope that battle is going well for you.

The second issue has to do with the prohibition of adultery (27-30). Once again Jesus confronted the Scribes and Pharisees concerning their focus on externals. They viewed adultery as being the act, while Jesus stated emphatically that it was a heart issue. The seed of adultery is lust.

¹ Iain D. Campbell, [Opening up Matthew](#), Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2008), 45.

1. THE COMMANDMENT

Matthew 5:27... "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'."

Don't miss this. God's design for sex was established at the outset of creation. He created sex to be enjoyed in the confines of a loving, committed marriage relationship and gave His blessing to this expression of love!

__ *Proverbs 5:15-20*

__ *Song of Solomon*

__ *1 Corinthians 7:1-6*

Adultery is a sin against...

Self—Dr. Rogers said, *"There is no sin that will do you more spiritual, psychological, and physical damage than immorality."*

Family—Adultery rips to shreds the self-image of a spouse that's been cheated on. Furthermore, it tells the children that their mom or dad is not worth much.

Church—It brings shame upon the Body of Christ.

America—Adultery tears the moral framework of our nation.

God—David cried out to God, "Against You and You only have I sinned."

2. THE CLARIFICATION

Matthew 5:28... "but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Is Jesus really saying what it sounds like he’s saying? Is He saying that even a little fantasizing is off limits? What could be wrong with staring at a person if we’re committed to not touching them? What’s so bad about watching a risqué movie or glancing at a pornographic image on the phone as long as we’re not physically breaking our commitment to our spouse?

LUST—A quick survey through the Bible reveals that this problem has been around for a long time. Take for instance the situation that developed between *Joseph and Potiphar’s wife*. This woman lusted for the young, virile Hebrew slave. Then one day she made her move, but Joseph resisted and ran out of the room.

Then, there is the well-known episode between *David and Bathsheba*. Looking over his balcony, he saw the beautiful wife of Uriah bathing below. Desire flamed up and set its hook in David. In a matter of minutes, he acted out his fantasies. There are others—*Samson, Judah, and Amnon* among others. Here’s the issue. This problem has been around for a long time.

Today the problem of lust has degenerated into big-time business and has seeped into our lives like raw sewage from a busted sewer line. Let’s break the verse down to make sure we get the real meaning.

“I” is emphatic. Here Jesus is asserting His authority. Listen, Jesus was dead serious here because He was dealing with a deadly serious problem. Much was at stake!

“Looks” is a present participle. It literally refers to intentional and repeated gazing.

“To lust for her” speaks of a strong desire that follows the repeated gazing we just mentioned. Don’t miss this—Jesus is referring to a man who intentionally goes to a pornographic website or who intentionally stares down a woman for the purpose of arousing himself. Here’s a shocking development. Even women are getting into pornography.

Look at Jesus' evaluation of lust. He said that if you look on a woman to lust for her, you have already committed adultery in your heart. Do you see the seriousness that Jesus attached to the problem of lust? Ladies, I want you to listen to Arthur Pink's commentary on this verse...

If lustful looking is so grievous a sin, then those who dress and expose themselves with the desire to be looked at and lusted after...are not less but perhaps more guilty.

Ladies and gentlemen, we must not pass off these words as overkill!
Adultery begins with the seed of lust in your heart.

Matthew 15:18–20... "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. **19** "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. **20** "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

3. CORRECTION

Matthew 5:29–30... "If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** "If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell."

Jesus used a metaphor here to underscore the drastic measures that are required to avoid sexual sin. Please understand that our Lord was not demanding literal mutilation. He used the right hand and right eye because in Jewish culture they represented a person's best.

"Stumble" means to cause to fall. This same word was used in Greek culture to describe a bait stick that springs a trap shut when an animal touches it.

The Bible warns over and over that this unrepentant lustful lifestyle will doom a person to hell. **(1Cor. 6:9-11; Rev. 21:8)**

Andy Stanley observed...

But if there's more to this life than what meets the eye ... if there is a God in whose image you've been made and in whose image every woman you've met has been made, if sex is a creation that was created with a purpose and if part of that purpose is to enhance the expression of intimacy between two people ... and if that fragile, wonderful, delicate experience we term intimacy can be damaged or broken through abuse, then your sexual conduct matters a great deal. So you have to decide what you believe. Not just about sex. About everything. Once you decide, the answer to your important question will be clear. Perhaps uncomfortably clear.

Lust is no laughing matter. It has the power to suck you in, wrap its tentacles around you, and literally enslave you in an addiction. Ladies and gentlemen, the health and welfare of your families are on the line. I want to close by sharing with you some practical ways you can defeat lust.

Confess your sin to Jesus.

1 John 1:9... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 28:13... He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes *them* will find compassion.

You must not conceal your sin or excuse your sin. You must be willing to confess it and forsake it and pursue holiness.

Surrender your heart to Jesus.

Remember, the issue of lust and adultery begins in the heart not in the action itself. You can't change yourself. You can't make yourself righteous. The good news is that Jesus has provided for your forgiveness and He has the power to make you right with God by imputing His righteousness to you. But you must repent of your sin and place your faith in Jesus Christ who died for your sins on the cross and was gloriously raised from the dead!

2 Corinthians 5:17... Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *he is* a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Discipline your mind and heart.

Author and pastor John Piper said...

We must not give a sexual image or impulse more than five seconds before we mount a violent counterattack with the mind. I mean that! Five seconds. In the first two seconds we shout, "No! Get out of my head!" In the next two seconds we cry out: "O God, in the name of Jesus, help me. Save me now. I am yours." In the final second, replace the image with a powerful, positive image. *Citation: John Piper, from the sermon "A Passion for Purity versus Passive Prayers," www.desiringGod.org (11-10-99)*

2 Corinthians 10:5... *We are* destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and *we are* taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Avoid tempting situations.

When we encounter temptation, we should immediately reject it as Joseph did when he was tempted by Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:11–12). Hesitation opens the door to enticement. Romans 13:14 calls such hesitation "making provision for the flesh."

1 Corinthians 10:13... No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

Seek to honor the Lord.

Sex is bigger than we often realize and more powerful than we often admit.

1 Corinthians 6:19–20... Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? **20** For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.