

Matthew 5:27-30: Abolishing All Adultery

- Safe to say: This is one of the most convicting passages in all Bible.
- This really digs into one of the most prominent & obvious sins we deal with: sexual immorality.
- Jesus gets right to the heart of all lust / pornography / coveting with our eyes / most advertisements we see on TV or driving around
- We see the dire warning: that if we don't get this under control we could end up in hell.
- And he commands us twice to chop stuff off that causes us to sin.
- Whatever else we can gather from this passage: this is strong warning.
- And it's a warning to all of us.
- B/c many go whole lives w/o committing adultery, few go even 1 day w/o looking on someone with lust.
- Two initial thoughts before we jump into the text:
- 1) Not just for men, although Jesus seems to assume men. **Read 28**
- Gives an example of a man looking at woman, but Jesus isn't giving women a pass.
- It could be reverse: women struggle with lust.
- Could be someone w/ same sex attraction issues.
- All the **Lev. 18** list: close relatives (cousins) / parents / siblings / grandchildren / in-laws / homosexuality / bestiality - these are all called abominations to the Lord.
- Point is: not just a married man lusting after a woman who is not his wife.
- It is anyone lusting after someone other than their spouse.
- 2) Although Jesus is saying that adultery of heart will send you to hell, he's not saying that there is no difference b/n actual adultery and your thought life.
- Can't say: "Well, my boyfriend and I are sinning by looking at each other anyway, might as well sleep together."
- Should be patently obvious that the actual act of adultery is worse than simply lusting.
- Point: we don't have a free pass to lust & God just shrugs his shoulders.
- It's adultery in our heart - this was always the intent of the OT Law.
- Not just the physical act, but the desire for a person who is not your spouse.
- God would never rubber stamp lust in the OT and say "We'll at least you're not committing adultery" at the same time lust would not get you stoned to death with stones.
- What I want to do is ask 4 questions about this text to help understand it.
- Caveat: By the nature this is a difficult topic, so I'm going to be honest, but hopefully tactful enough so that this is PG.

1) Q: When is it lust? **Read 28**

- Maybe an obvious question, but an important one: how do we know when we've sinned?
- ESV: Lustful intent / NIV: Lustfully - but what does that mean?
- Is it just looking at a woman? Taking a second look?
- Should you just take one really long look at the cute guy in the grocery store line?
- There are several clues to help us:
- Gk: Literally "everyone **looking**" - there is an ongoing sense where we feed our heart through our eyes.
- Listen: reason sexual immorality is so rampant is b/c we desire it.
- People wouldn't sin if they didn't like it - let's not kid ourselves.
- The height of human pleasure is the sexual experience - there's a reason sin in this area is so rampant.
- We know we have a problem when we continually put wood on the fire - when we are continually feeding our sexual desire with looking at others.
- Men: This means you have to force your eyes not to look at what's on women's t-shirts / glittery stuff on the back of their pants / or the lady jogging down the side of the road.
- Ladies: might not struggle in the same way / romance novels / sexually suggestive TV shows / songs that are pornographic
- The one who is looking - constantly looking - feeding his sexual desire is committing adultery in heart.
- Gk: Lust - ἐπιθυμέω - a desire to have sexual relations with someone who is not your spouse.
- **1 Tim 5:1**: Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.
- When you are looking at other people in a way other than as your parents or your siblings - there's likely a problem.

- I would even say a desire for any kind of relx. that is only had w/ a spouse.
- Should not be more emotionally intimate w/ anyone than your spouse.
- Caveats: Not wrong to look at an attractive person.
- Not wrong to appreciate someone's looks - although we need to be careful what we say about peoples' looks.
- D.A. Carson: "This is not a prohibition of the normal attraction which exists between men and women, but of the deep-seated lust which consumes and devours, which in imagination attacks and rapes, which mentally contemplates and commits adultery." (Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and Confrontation..., pg. 47).
- That's the issue: what do we do mentally - in our heart - with this person?
- What's our heart desire?
- It is wrong to look at them to simply gratify our own hearts - to use their beauty or body to fuel our passion.
- That's why staring at someone's backside / chest / legs is out of bounds:
- Unless that person is our spouse there's nothing there that we need to appreciate or inspect.
- That's not ours - that's theirs.
- C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity) gives a parable to show how odd it is that we go crazy of sexually explicit things:
- "Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate on to the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let every one see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon, would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food? And would not anyone who had grown up in a different world think there was something equally queer about the state of the sex instinct among us?"
- This how corrupt our desires can be.
- People who say "I can look but not be tempted": baloney.
- Not only do images affect us more than we ever imagine, for longer than we imagine, they are ingrained in us as the basis of how we view all women.
- But this is what we're doing when we feed this desire.
- It's different if it's our spouse.
- If we're married their bodies are ours: Paul says of married people that our bodies are not our own, but our spouse's (**1 Cor. 7:1-8**)
- **Prov. 5:19:** Solomon says of a man's wife: Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight!
- Desire within one-man/one-woman marriage is great.
- It's like a fire inside of a wood stove - that's a good thing; but take that fire outside of the wood stove and it burns the house down.
- Talk more in a bit: modesty is so important for guys & gals.
- We don't want to dress in such a way as to potentially cause someone to view us lustfully.
- This is what Jesus is getting at: the internal desire for to see things and do things only someone's spouse should see and do.

2) Q: What does it mean to cut off parts? **Read 28-30**

- Very graphic language - but what do we do with it?
- I think most people know on some level this is hyperbole: exaggeration for effect.
- Once: Had a man honestly ask why we shouldn't take this literally.
- Answer: Because no one in the Bible or in Church history ever has.
- When we come to something in the Bible that seems so over the top no one could possibly do it, we have to think about what is being said. Is it literal?
- Bible often uses graphic language to describe getting rid of sin:
- **Rom. 6:6:** Our old self was crucified - it was killed/hanged/gas chambered/electrocuted.
- **Col. 3:5:** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
- **Gen. 4:7:** Either you rule over sin or it rules over you but only one can live and be king.
- Also, would cutting off our hand actually cure the problem? No.
- What about gouging out our eyes? No.
- Just outward conformity/outward adjustments will not change our heart → God doesn't want mutilation.
- Jesus throughout the sermon is concerned that our actions and our hearts line up.
- What is Jesus saying? What are we to do here? What does the hyperbole suggest?
- Sum: We need to make radical changes to guard ourselves from lust.

- Not just be willing / think they're a good idea / pray about making changes.
- If your heart is caught up in lust, you need to start chopping some stuff out of your life.
- Maybe you stop watching movies / surfing the internet /
- I've told many young men to get rid of their smart phone! / stop hanging out in places where you know you'll be tempted (pool / gym / commute route) / dating don't ever be alone.
- **Job 31:1-3:** "I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin? What would be my portion from God above and my heritage from the Almighty on high? Is not calamity for the unrighteous, and disaster for the workers of iniquity?"
- In Job's time a virgin was a young girl - we'd say a teenager;
- Godliest man on the planet saying, "the temptation is so real I have covenant with my eyes that I won't look."
- That's what it means to cut off parts: Do whatever it takes to not fail in this area.
- "Well, we're all going to fail" - maybe.
- Let me ask: Do you lock your doors at night? Of course. Why? To keep robbers out. But if they really want in won't they get in? Yes. But you do what you can to keep them out, don't you?
- Same with lust. Yes it may happen, but in the mean time we do everything we can to keep our minds and our hearts safe just like we do everything to keep our families safe.
- If not, we're really just inviting disaster.

3) Q: Will I really go to hell if I lust? **Read 29-30**

- Answer: Yes - Jesus threatens hell twice in just 2 verses.
- Truck load of verses:
- **Turn to 1 Cor. 5:9-13** - context: man sleeping with mother in law - not even pagans did that (vs. 1). **Read**
- **Turn to 1 Cor. 6:9-11. Read**
- **Turn to Gal. 5:16-21 Read**
- **Turn to Col 3:5-11 Read**
- **Turn to 1 Thes. 4:3-8 Read**
- **Turn to 1 Tim. 1:8-11**
- So many other passages - the whole council of God → flee from sexual immorality.
- Hear me clearly: If you are here secretly harboring lusts and adulteries in your heart, the Bible gives you no comfort or assurance that you are saved.
- Do I believe in eternal security? With all of my heart.
- But the Bible gives nothing but warnings of hell for those who willfully engage in sexual immorality.
- The issue is not someone who struggles with lust / is trying to put it off / does everything they can to kill sin.
- It's not someone who is actually doing things to put this sin off.
- Problem is just whining about it / complaining about it / confessing it but not taking steps to destroy it.
- Issue is someone who will thumbs up to "no adultery" all the while desiring sexual gratification in their heart.
- It's the pastor who secretly has eyes for his secretary / teenager who has posters of cute guys w/ shirts off / married man who uses privacy browsing on his phone so his wife can't see what pages he's been to / following people on twitter or instagram that post pictures or links that we shouldn't look at.
- Called "Instaporn" for a reason.
- Sexual sin has always been a plague - that's why we are called so often to kill it.

4) Q: What can I do?

- First, be reminded of the grace of Jesus: His blood washes away all of our sins.
- There have been times in my own life (early on as a Christian) where I was caught up in sexual immorality in one way or another → guilt, shame, sadness, dishonor → my only hope then (as now) was Jesus's blood.
- Have to remember, more than that, the grace of God gives us the power to flee from sin & overcome it.
- Do you realize you don't need sex? **Turn to Prov. 6**
- You know what happens if you go 10 minutes without air / 5 days w/out water? A month w/out food? Die.
- You know what happens if you go 20 years without sex? Nothing. **Read 6:27-35**
- Point: we all have compassion on a thief who steals food if he's hungry; but never on an adulterer. Why?
- Because they didn't need it to survive.
- The grace of God that forgives sins, will empower us to overcome sins → Jesus tells us to gouge out our eyes and cut off our hands (do radical things) expecting that we can and will.
- Second, need to hide the Word of God in your heart - memorize it. **Read 20-24**
- The commands of God are designed to keep you from the evil woman.

- “But she’s not evil” - she is if she’s going long with your immorality.
- We need constant reminders of just how dangerous sexual immorality is.
- Third, beware of not just looks but words. **Read 23-24**
- I would imagine most sexual immorality happens because so and so is funny / cute / makes me feel good / we “click” / I can trust them / they “get me” → it begins with words.
- Smooth tongue = you love everything they have to say, you could spend hours with them, watch out.

- Beloved, guard your heart, your eyes, and where you are. **Pray**