

**Third Presbyterian Church**  
**Bible Study**  
**Sermon on the Mount – Lesson 12**  
**“Battling Lust”**

**Matthew 5:27-30 (NIV)**

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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.

Discussion Questions:

1. Research the definition of covenant. Then explain covenant to someone who is not saved.
  - a. How is covenant different from a contract?
2. Adultery is derived from the root word “adult” which means to break. So, in context and adulterer is a covenant breaker.
  - a. Is sexual sin the only way to break the marriage covenant? What are other ways?
  - b. What are ways we break our covenant with God?
  - c. Discuss the grace of God when we break covenant with Him?
3. What is the difference between temptation and lust?
  - a. Why is lust a sin?
  - b. The sermon calls the sin of lust misplaced worship. Explain.
4. Discuss the following statement from the sermon: “we can’t control the thoughts that come into our mind but we can control how long they stay there.”
  - a. Why is it important to evict certain thoughts from our mind?
5. Why does scripture tell us to resist the devil and he will flee, but also tells us to flee from sexual immorality. Is this a contradiction? Why can’t we just resist sexual immorality? Please discuss and explain your answer.

6. Why is it improper to state “God is surely tempting me now?”
  - a. Read and discuss James 1:13-14
7. Discuss how prayer is a powerful toll to combat lust?
8. Why does the church community feel that not taking care of our bodies physically is permissible but are dogmatic about other sins?
9. Share your major takeaways from the sermon/lesson this week.

### **Commentary**

#### **The Real Meaning of Adultery, 5:27-30**

(5:27-30) **Introduction— Immorality— Adultery:** immorality and adultery cause great destruction and hurt and pain—both within and without a person. There are at least three reasons why a person commits an immoral act.

1. The ego: the sense of conquering, taking, capturing, controlling, knowing, seeing, experiencing, enjoying, and on and on—a person's ego is boosted and inflated.
2. The inner need for attention and sharing.
3. The raw lust of the flesh.

Immorality is so common that it is often thought excusable and acceptable if it is agreed to by the partners, and if other lives are not directly affected.

Man has always tended to glorify the body and the flesh: exposing the body, dressing the body for sexual attraction, looking at and observing the body and its movements—all are often acceptable practices of society. Inward desire (lust) and the act of sexual pleasure itself are often thought to be so much a part of nature and normality that to restrict them is considered abnormal and straight-laced.

Christ is strong, insistent in His demand for purity—so strong that He insists on radical surgery rather than allowing the hand or eye to sin. "An immoral eye and hand will carry the whole body into hell," Christ says: "so pluck out the eye; cut off the hand." But what do we say? "He doesn't mean this literally." And we use this fact as a way to water down the sharpness and the strictness of His point. However, we ignore and neglect His words to our doom. This is His very point. We may...

- fantasize and lust as a result of reading immoral magazines and books.
- lustfully look at the movements of a person walking (and call it recognizing beauty).
- dress to sexually attract.
- take pleasure in the stimulation and sensation of sex.

But Christ clearly warns: lustful looking, touching, and behavior will cause the whole body to be cast into hell. The matter is so serious that radical surgery is called for. No diluting, no evading, no explaining of His words and what He means can change the severe judgment that awaits the immoral person.

1. The law (v.27).
2. The real meaning (v.28).
3. The two guilty culprits: the eyes and hands (v.29).
4. The danger (v.29).
5. The answer (v.29-30).

### **DEEPER STUDY #1 (5:27-30) Adultery— Sex**

#### **DEEPER STUDY #1**

(5:27-30) **Adultery— Sex**: the Bible does not teach that sex is wrong. But the Bible does teach that sex can be used wrongly, and the wrong use of sex is sin. Sex has been given by God for at least three reasons.

1. Sex causes a person to be attracted to another person. Therefore, sexual attraction is one of the major tools that brings about marriage (Genesis 2:18, 21-25).
2. Sex is a tool with which to love. Sex, properly rooted and expressed in God, is one of the deepest and richest involvements and expressions of love (Ephes. 5:28-32).
3. Sex creates life. God has given man the privilege of being sub-creators of life—under Him (Genesis 1:29).

**1. (5:27) Adultery— Immorality**: the law against immorality is the seventh commandment (Exodus 20:14; Deut. 5:18). Note that God's law is given for three reasons.

1. To assure the respect and protection of all families and neighbors. God will take vengeance upon those who destroy families through adultery.

**"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14; cp. Deut. 5:18).**

**"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17).**

**"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified" (1 Thes. 4:3-6).**

2. To protect a man from judgment, the judgment of perishing in hell (Matthew 5:30).
3. To protect a man from sinning against his own body

**"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).**

**2. (5:28) Adultery— Eyes— Hands**: the real meaning of adultery. Adultery (*emoicheusen*<sup>PWS: 64</sup>) is often said to be sexual unfaithfulness by a married person. This is true, but it is much more. Man's idea of adultery is

shattered by Christ (see Deeper Study #5—Matthew 19:9). Christ says adultery is not only the actual act, but adultery is committed by any one of five acts:

- ⇒ A deliberate look.
- ⇒ Passion within the heart: desiring and lusting.
- ⇒ The actual act of sex with someone other than one's own spouse.
- ⇒ Divorce relationships (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9-11; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18).
- ⇒ Spiritual unfaithfulness toward God or apostasy from God (Matthew 12:39; Matthew 16:4; Mark 8:38; James 4:4; cp. Ezekiel 16:15f; Ezekiel 23:43f).

Simply stated, Christ says there is eye adultery, heart adultery (lust), and body adultery. This is a shattering revelation that strikes at the experience of every young person and adult. There is no question: many dream and imagine, and if they had the opportunity they would commit the act. All they lack is the chance and a boost to their courage to sin. (Cp. James 1:14-15.) The eyes can lead to lust by looking upon persons or pictures or stimulating objects. The eyes can be used sinfully in several ways.

- ⇒ To look and search for another person in order to lust.
- ⇒ To let another person know that one is available.
- ⇒ To attract, suggest, and entice.
- ⇒ To gratify lust where an experience is not possible.

There are two other matters that need to be thought about at this point.

1. Suggestive communication. This can arise from (a) unclean talk such as jokes, foul words, and suggestive statements made in passing; (b) luring talk that arises when sharing with the opposite sex. This tends to lead a person to let down his guard or to play loose with his conviction and mortal commitment. Such sharing often dallies with enticing phrases and suggestive propositions that arouse pleasure. Suggestive conversation can occur anywhere: at work, at school, at parties, over the phone, or just standing around talking.
2. Dress. This arises from exposing parts of the body or from following the latest fad in dress that might be designed to display or attract. (See note—' 1 Tim. 2:9-10; cp. Mark 12:38.)

There is real danger in using one's eyes sinfully. Peter warns that a person can lose control: "Having eyes full of adultery...that cannot cease from sin" (2 Peter 2:14). A person can actually become enslaved and bound by sex.

The seriousness of adultery is seen by the drastic action suggested by Christ in Matthew 5:29-30. Adultery is a work of the flesh that will not inherit the Kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). It is a serious sin, very serious. There is the possibility of the whole body being cast into hell (Matthew 5:29-30). The believer can conquer the eyes and lust and can keep from committing adultery by doing a few simple things.

1. In relation to others...
  - a. Stay away from places that *lend* themselves to suggestive lust.
  - b. Stay away from persons who *might* be suggestive and enticing—no matter how enjoyable and pleasing.
  - c. Refuse invitations to functions or socials that *might* lead to suggestive conversation or enticement.

2. In relation to self:

- a. Dress decently: dress to please the Lord (1 Tim. 2:9).
- b. Behave at all times as a genuine Christian believer.
- c. Build a testimony by conversation and behavior as a Christian believer.

3. In relation to the eyes and mind.

- a. Make a covenant not to look at or think about immoral persons, places, or things; and don't. Job said of himself: "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maiden" (Job 31:1).
- b. Keep the eyes and mind upon things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Phil. 4:8). Start immediately: begin to think upon the positive and the moral day by day. Keep the mind upon the positive for the rest of your life.
- c. Learn to captivate every thought (2 Cor. 10:3-5, esp. 2 Cor. 10:5).
- d. Resist the first thought—turn the mind and body immediately to other matters. Get busy at something else without hesitating, and stay there—stay busy.

4. In the presence of others.

- a. Guard one's self at all times.
- b. Flee when suggestive statements are made: excuse yourself—show displeasure by statements or force if necessary. Get away immediately, not allowing the pleasing words to stimulate and gratify your flesh. The flesh revels in expressions of pleasure and appreciation over the way one looks, dresses, works, serves, performs, and on and on. A person must simply appreciate such and then move on—immediately. Linger to enjoy and revel in appreciative remarks *will* lead to attraction. Everyone is human.

**"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19).**

**"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5).**

**"The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words" (Proverbs 15:26).**

## **DEEPER STUDY #2 (5:28) Lust**

### **DEEPER STUDY #2**

(4:1-3) **Lust—Desire**: the word is used three times in James 4:1-3. In James 4:1 and James 4:3 the word *hedonon* is used. It means out of your sinful, sensual pleasures. In James 4:2 the word is *epithumeite* which means a yearning passion for

Note that desire, lust, a yearning passion for is not always evil. In James 4:5 the Spirit "lusts to envy." In Luke 22:15 Christ desires (yearns) to eat the passover with the apostles. What is it that distinguishes a good desire from an evil desire? At least two major things.

1. Motive: if one desires the necessities of life, his desire is good. The necessities—food, clothing, shelter, love, care—are essential for the fulness of life. When a man seeks God for these things, God provides the necessities.

2. Greed: desiring food is good, but if one desires food to "consume it upon [his] lusts," that is, he desires food and food and food, it is wrong passion. It becomes sinful, sensual pleasure. Desiring love is good, but if one desires love to *consume it upon his lusts*, that is, he desires love and love and love, it is wrong passion (1 Thes. 4:5).

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**3. (5:29) Adultery:** the two guilty culprits in adultery—the eyes and hands. Why did Christ use the eyes and hands to illustrate His point? Probably because a man is moved primarily by thoughts that arise from sight, and a woman is moved primarily by touch. It is the eye and hand that are the culprits in adultery (cp. Mark 9:43-48).

**4. (5:29) Adultery:** the danger is twofold.

1. Offending or stumbling. The word "offend" (*skandalizei*<sup>PWS: 2749</sup>) means to stumble; to be baited; to be lured; to be tripped up. The eyes and hands are stumbling blocks.

2. Being condemned to hell. The sin is serious, extremely serious. Unless the sin is dealt with, it will cause a person to be cast into hell (see Deeper Study #2—Matthew 5:22).

**"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).**

**"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness....they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19, 21).**

**Thought 1.** The sin of immorality ruins the body as well as the soul. This is a terrible fact, yet it is a fact that is seldom considered

**"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body" (1 Cor. 6:18).**

**5. (5:29-30) Adultery:** the answer to solving the problem of adultery is threefold.

1. Surgery: cut out the offending body member. The lustful look and the lustful touch should be cut out of one's life—completely.

**"The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward [suggestive] tongue shall be cut out" (Proverbs 10:31).**

**"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:30).**

2. Death: let the offending body members perish. What feels good and pleases the flesh is not always good. Self-denial is sometimes called for (see Deeper Study #1—Luke 9:23).

**"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13).**

**"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephes. 6:13).**

3. Repentance: turning from being cast into hell. Note an important fact: Christ does not *appeal* for a man to forsake adultery; He *warns* man of the consequences of adultery. Some sins have to be restrained by warning, not by appeal. A man has to be warned about the lust of the flesh (see Deeper Study #1—James 4:1-3; note—James 4:2). Adultery is a sin that feels so good and seems so natural that it can be easily rationalized. The warning given to adulterers is "thy whole body shall be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:30).

**Thought 1.** "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

**Thought 2.** The members of the body are not to be yielded to sin. The members of the body are to be *counted dead* with Christ (see outline—Romans 6:11-13).

**"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:11-13).**

**Thought 3.** A man must repent, that is, *turn from* adultery to God. (See note Repentance—Matthew 4:17.)

**"I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).**

**"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).**

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