

Counter Culture

“Avoiding Lust” - Matthew 5:27-30

Matthew 5:27-30 - “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; 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. 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. 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 is dealing with adultery, so let's define it.

Adultery, from the Greek - moichos - means to have sex with the spouse of another. So the scope is limited here. Of course, the Bible condemns all kinds of sexual immorality, but this text deals specifically with adultery, having sex with the spouse of someone else, and the lust of wanting to do so.

1. The adultery of the body

Vs. 27- “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery...’”

John 8 shows us an incident in Jesus' life when religious leaders confronted Jesus with a test case.

Our culture has accepted adultery as a norm. It may not always applaud adultery, but it excuses it and even romanticizes it. But we are not to take our cues from our culture. Jesus calls us to a radically different counter culture.

Romans 12:1-2 – “And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.”

But if you are happy to have avoided the act of adultery, Jesus is not finished with you.

2. The adultery of the heart.

Vs. 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.”

Lust is so easy, partly because it can be so private. But just because it is private does not mean it is not dangerous.

The solution is explained in dramatic hyperbole.

Vs. 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. 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.”

Eliminate the source of the temptation.

Know the avenue through which the temptation to lust happens for you.

Proverbs 4:23-27 – “Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. Put away perversity from your mouth; keep corrupt talk far from your lips. Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil.”

Don't make it harder on yourself than it needs to be.

For some, it means staying busy with appropriate activities and not being idle. Remember, David, who was a man after God's own heart, fell to the adultery of lust and then the adultery of the body. It began with idleness. In 2 Samuel 11:1-4, you can see it happen.

Change what you feed your heart and mind.

Luke 6:45 - “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.”

2 Timothy 2:22 – “Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.”

Psalms 119:9 – “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your Word.”

Romans 12:1-2 tells us to let God transform us into a new person, a Christ like person, by changing the way we think. That is done first by training our minds with God's Word.

That will lead to . . .

Philippians 4:8 – “Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Conclusion: For the adultery of the body and the adultery of the heart, there is forgiveness in Jesus. Just as for all other sin, there is forgiveness for sexual sin and for the lust of the heart. But we should not be trying to take advantage of God's grace and mercy. With grace comes great responsibility . . . to dedicate our bodies and minds to God and his purposes for them.