"AN ADULTERER AT HEART"

Matthew 5:27-30
4/9/2017

INTRODUCTION: Verse 27

***Are you an adulterer in your heart?**

How can I conquer lustful thoughts?

I. By Realizing That a Lustful Heart is the Equivalent of Committing Adultery (v. 28)

II. By Removing From my Life Anything That Causes Me to Stumble (v. 29-30)

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"It was said by them of old time" - lit. It was said to the ancients. This command came from God to the O.T. Israelites.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery" - The seventh commandment (Ex. 20:14), restated in Deut. 5:18 and Lev. 18:20 - "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her."

The Old Testament penalty for adultery was death (Lev. 20:10 - "And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.")

SEE: Lev. 20:10-13 - God's Law against sexual immorality.

Those who practice an unrepentant lifestyle of adultery will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9; Gal. 5:19, 21)

Why is adultery wrong?

1) **It is contrary to God's plan for marriage** (Heb. 13:4 - "Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge")

2) **It is destructive to marriages**

a) It is a violation of the marriage covenant (Prov. 2:17 - "Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God")

b) It results in guilt and sorrow and misery (Prov. 5:4, 11-13)

c) It results in illegitimate children (Prov. 5:17) [Today it is a prime cause of abortion]

d) It results in deep hurt and vengeance on the part of the adulterer's spouse (Prov. 6:27-35)

e) With all of the sexually transmitted diseases prevalent today, it often leads to permanent illnesses or a premature death (Prov. 7:21-22; 25-27)

3) It is stealing what is not yours! (I Thes. 4:6 - "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")

***Are you an adulterer in your heart?**

How can I conquer lustful thoughts?

I. By Realizing That a Lustful Heart is the Equivalent of Committing Adultery (v. 28)

"Whosoever" - No one is exempt

"Looketh" - (present tense) - a long look, or a second look

When an immodestly dressed woman crosses your path, that first look is not sin, but it's that second look or the prolonged look that indicates a sinful heart.

"You can't keep birds from flying overhead, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair."

The look is not a casual glance, but a planned stare "for the purpose of feeding his inner sensual appetites as a substitute for the act" (Wiersbe, p. 24)

"On a woman" - the same principle applies to women who lustfully look upon men.

The reason why Jesus singled out the male looking at the female is because He knew that men are more prone toward being aroused by the appearance of a woman than a woman is toward a man. Depraved men take notice of the external looks of a woman, whereas women tend to take notice of a man based on his intelligence, strength, wit, charm, romance, etc.

Ladies, beware of how you dress (I Tim. 2:9-10 - "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works.")

If lustful looking is so grievous a sin, then those who dress to expose themselves with the desire to be looked at and lusted over are equally or more sinful.

"Looketh on a woman" - This look does not have to be in real life, but may be:

1. on TV/videos/movies
2. in pornography
3. in peep shows at Times Square

"to lust after her" - The word "to" (pros) shows the intention or purpose of the look. It is not wrong to look at women. It is wrong when your "look" has as its goal a selfish, lustful, covetous gratification.

"Lust" - (epithumeo) = to have a strong desire for something. Desire is not wrong. But misplaced desire or desire outside of the will of God is wrong.

The word "lust" in this verse refers to a vain, base, immoral selfish craving or longing for that which is not yours. "Lust" is essentially "covetousness" (the tenth commandment), which is a desire to have that which does not belong to you.

"Hath committed adultery . . . already" - At the very moment that one entertained selfish, lustful thoughts, God up in heaven registers an act of "adultery."

"Jesus is not saying that lustful desires are identical with lustful deeds and therefore a person might just as well go ahead and commit adultery. The desire and the deed are not identical, but, spiritually speaking, they are equivalent." (Wiersbe, p. 24)

"In his heart" - Sin goes deeper than an act. God weighs the thoughts and intents of the heart. He looks at the heart. One can be free of committing the act of adultery, yet be guilty of adultery 10,000 times!

What we are in our heart is what we really are - in God's sight.

True righteousness is a heart matter. "You are what you think." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

Every act of adultery started out as a "heart problem" (Mk. 7:21 - "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.")

Real sin flows from and takes place first in the heart (or thoughts) of man.

"In his heart" - Since people are not animals, we have an aspect of our nature that goes deeper than our carnal flesh. People sin against their body by committing sexual sin (I Cor. 6:18) and sin against their "spirit" when they entertain evil thoughts.

Christian, remember, both your "body" and your "spirit" are God's (I Cor. 6:20)

Satan today is placing an overemphasis on sex to cause people to become obsessed with it. Once he can obsess a person with such thoughts, he can then provide a setting at the wrong place and at the wrong time to tempt that individual to experiment and gratify that obsession that he has caused.

Immoral sexual lust is not a biological need (like the need for food and sleep), but a perverted obsession.

In a child's life, sexual lust does not exist until fuel is supplied; books are read, pictures are seen, etc. The more fuel you feed a passion, the more it grows.

Jesus is not teaching that sex is a dirty thing, but it is a holy thing (It is to be sanctified and preserved for marriage).

II. By Removing From my Life Anything That Causes Me to Stumble (v. 29-30)

"Offend" - to cause to stumble and fall. The greek word referred to a stick in a trap that would spring and close the trap when an animal would touch it (Reinecker, p. 15).

Jesus is saying that if your eyes should look upon something that would trap you and detract your sight from ever seeing God's plan of salvation, it would be better off if you had no eyes than to forever end up in hell fire.

"Whole body" (cp. v. 30) = even unbelievers will be resurrected, only to be judged at the Great White throne and then to be hurled physically into a literal lake of burning fire (Dan. 12:2; Rev. 20:13-15). Their body will never consume.

"Hell" (cp. v. 30) = gehenna (meaning "the land of Hinnom" - II Kings 23:10). A reference to the continual place of burning ("where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched")

Why does Jesus mention hell in a context of sexual sins? Because of all the sins that enslave the mind and body and remove one's interest from spiritual matters, sexual sins are at the top of the list.

"Sin is like a whirlpool. It sucks you down very quickly. And sexual sin is the quickest way down!" (Prov. 2:18, 19 - "For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.")

The "eyes" are that body part which triggers the lustful thought, and the "hands" are that which grasp that which is forbidden resulting in a sinful act.

Jesus on more than one occasion spoke of plucking out the eye and cutting off the hand that would cause you to stumble (cp. Mk. 9:43, 47; cp. Mt. 18:8, 9).

He also made mention of the "foot" (Mk. 9:45=-46 - "And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off, it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

Jesus is not really encouraging bodily dismemberment. But he is saying that you

would be better off losing anything in this life that would keep you from Heaven in the next life.

Victory does not come by amputating certain parts of your body, but by purifying the desires of the heart.

"The eyes and the hand are usually the two 'culprits' when it comes to sexual sins, so they must be disciplined" (Wiersbe, p. 24) (I Cor. 9:27)

CONCLUSION:

What disciplines should be incorporated into your life to avoid such sin?

1) **Turn off the sexual sewage drain**

(sexually explicit TV, video, magazines, music; don't go to certain beaches)

In 1988 TV averaged "at least one sensual-arousing scene for every 40 minute segment" (Ronald E. Johnson, Fund. Journal). And according to Dr. James Dobson, this new TV season will be the worst ever.

Job 31:1 - "I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?"

Ps. 119:37 - "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; and quicken thou me in thy way."

2) **Don't be idle; be busy serving Christ**

II Tim. 2:22 - "Flee also youthful lusts; but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

3) **Realize that women are not sex objects but people with an eternal soul who**

need Christ

It is vain to lust after external flesh.
"Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh…" (2 Corinthians 5:16)

4) **<u>Read God's Word</u> every day to purify your mind**
Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. (Psalm 119:11)
And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:23)

5) **When you do have a wrong thought, confess it to God as soon as you are convicted**

Don't let sin build up in your life.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

6) **When tempted to take an indiscreet "look" counter the temptation by praying** for your family and friends to be pure (if married, thank God for your spouse)

But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (James 4:6-8)

7) **Seek to satisfy your spouse's sexual desires so he/she will not be driven to "look" elsewhere** Prov. 5:18-19)

"Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." (I Corinthians 7:3-5)

Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times;

and be thou ravished always with her love. (Proverbs 5:18-19)

The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet. (Proverbs 27:7)