

“Lusting Is Loving Sin”

Matthew 5:27-28

June 1, 2025

INTRO: How many doors or windows does the/your human heart have?

Preverbal doors & windows give physical, visible, emotional, & spiritual access in & out.

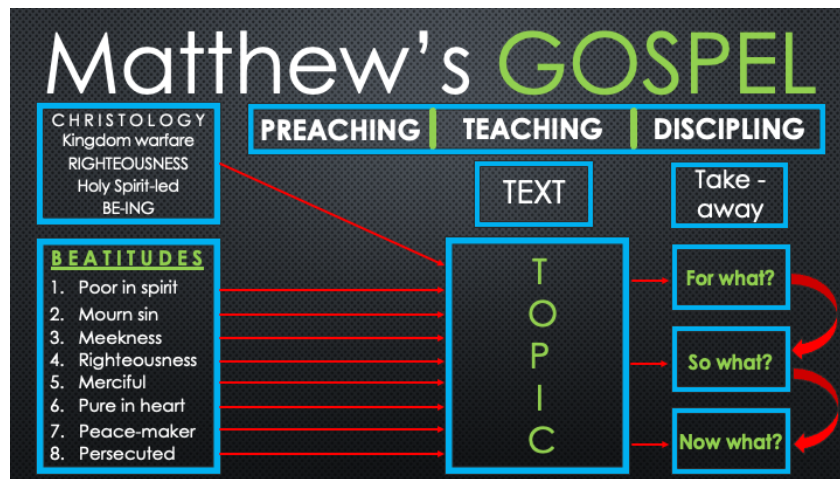
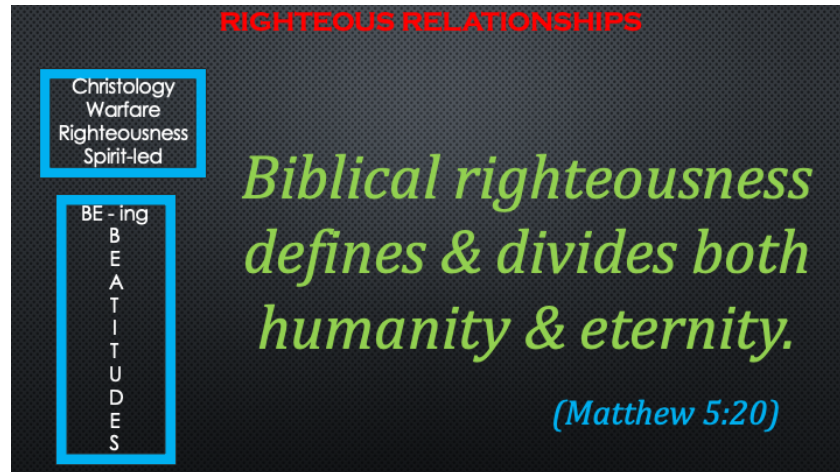
- We choose to **lock & unlock...**
- We choose to **open & close...**
- We choose to **let in & let out...**
- We also choose to clean & screen *(at least we should)!*

PRAYER

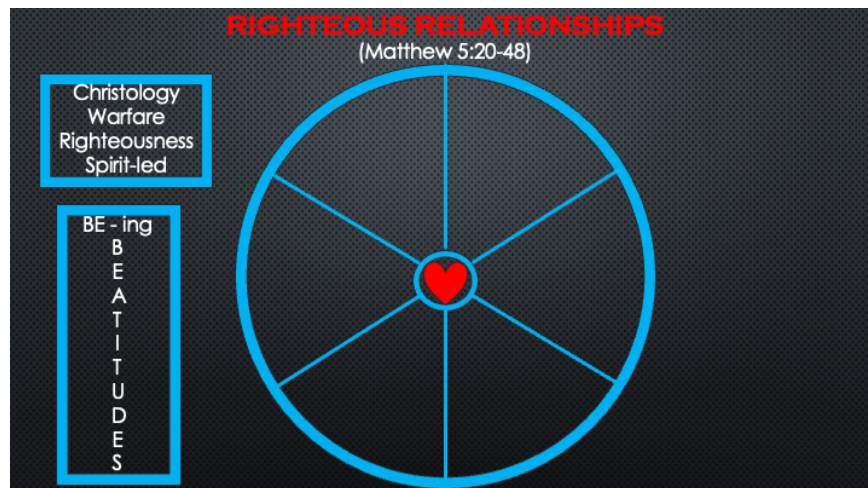
CONTEXT:

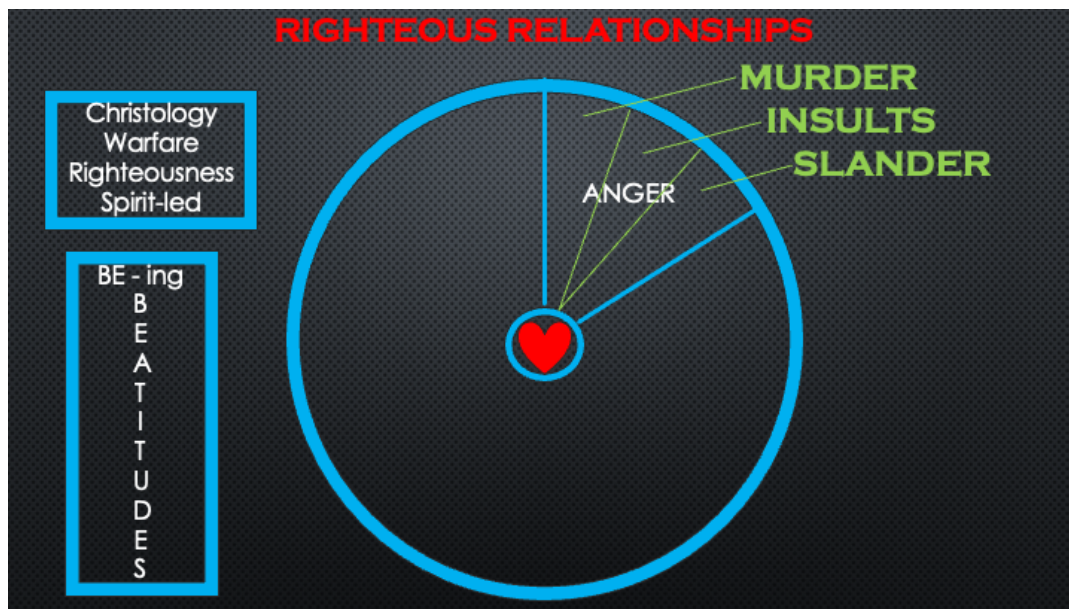
- Gospel of Matthew on The Gospel of Jesus Christ
- Structural review & Scriptural contextualization





Jesus & Scripture start us off with a 6-piece sampler...



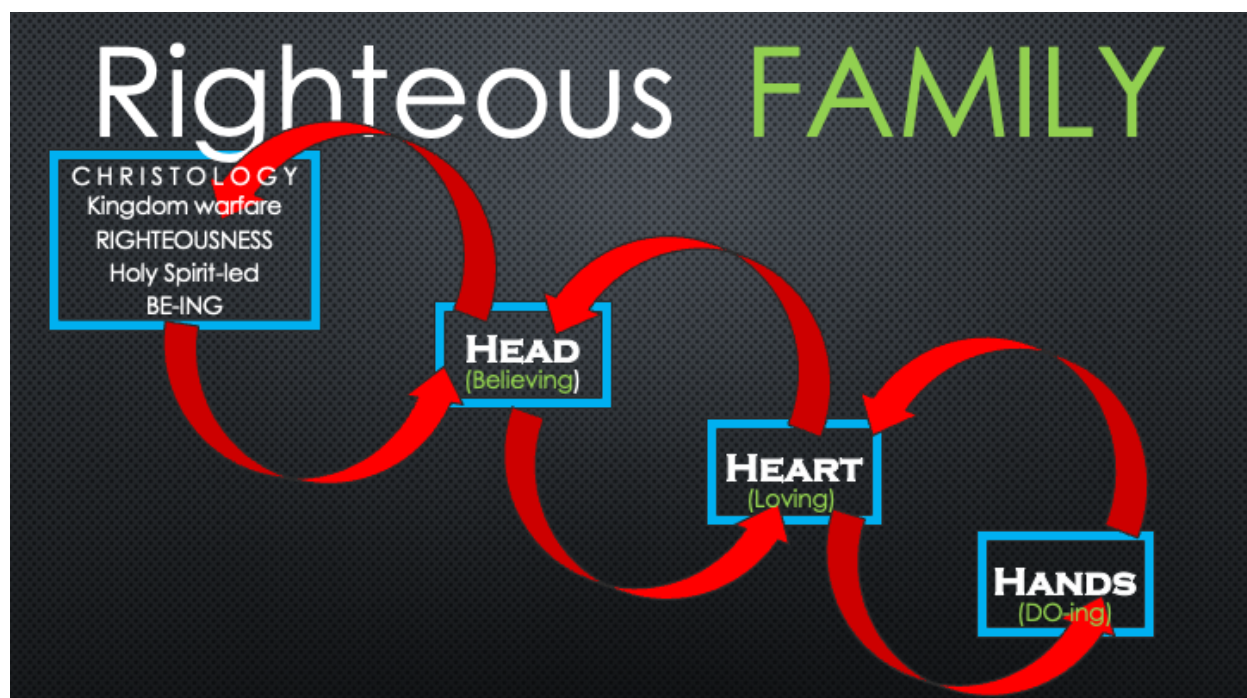


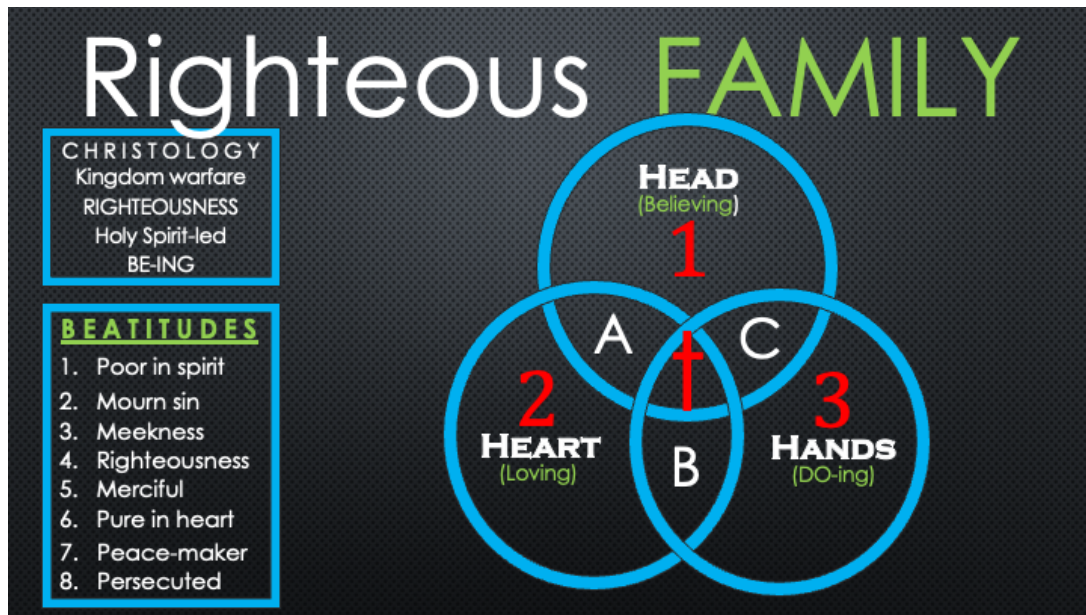
Jesus really did say & mean that unrighteous slander will be judged (apart from the Gospel) with the “hell of fire!”

Jesus really did say... stop your vertical to fix your horizontal!

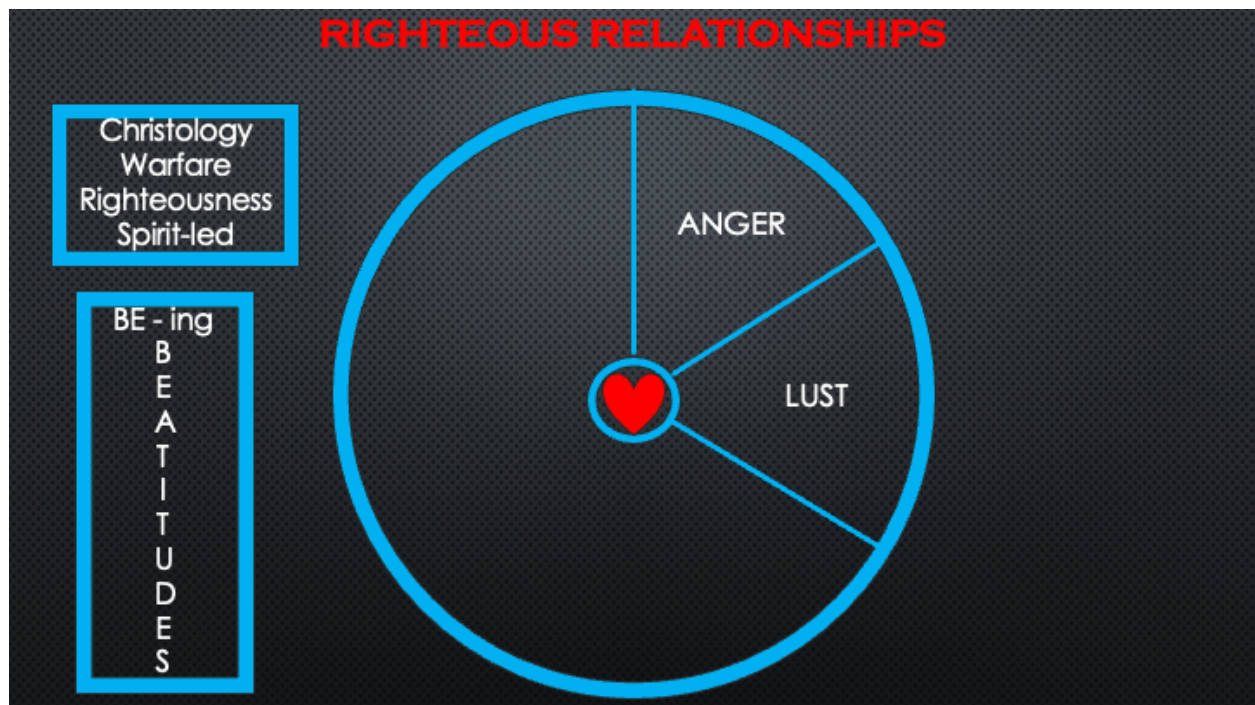
Beware the roots of bitterness that can kill & destroy you.

RIGHTEOUSNESS FORMING + FIXING = FAMILY





TODAY...



BIG IDEA: Lusting is... loving SIN
and lunging toward eternal hell.

PREVIEW:

1. Confrontation
2. Clarification
3. Correction

TEXT: Matthew 5:27-28

²⁷*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'* ²⁸*But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

I. CONFRONTATION

²⁷*"You have heard that it was said,
'You shall not commit adultery.*

A. *Affirming*

- a. You have in fact heard...
- b. It has in fact been said...
- c. *You **SHALL NOT** commit adultery.*

B. *Authority*

- a. Declared by God (the **7th Commandment**)
- b. Declared by religious leaders of all times...
- c. Declared here by *Jesus The Creator Christ!*
 - i. He is reinforcing... **NOT** abolishing!
 - ii. He is about to be shocking...

C. **Adultery** (Absolutes... Assumptions... Applications)

a. **Absolutes**

i. **TRADITION** acknowledged it is sin...

1. Note: some worldviews did/do not
2. Hypocrites agreed superficially...

ii. **DEFINITION**

1. Definitions can be right or wrong...
2. Half-truths lack essential truth. – JDP
3. Jesus corrects & fulfils definitions.

b. **Assumptions**

i. **Micro vs. MACRO**

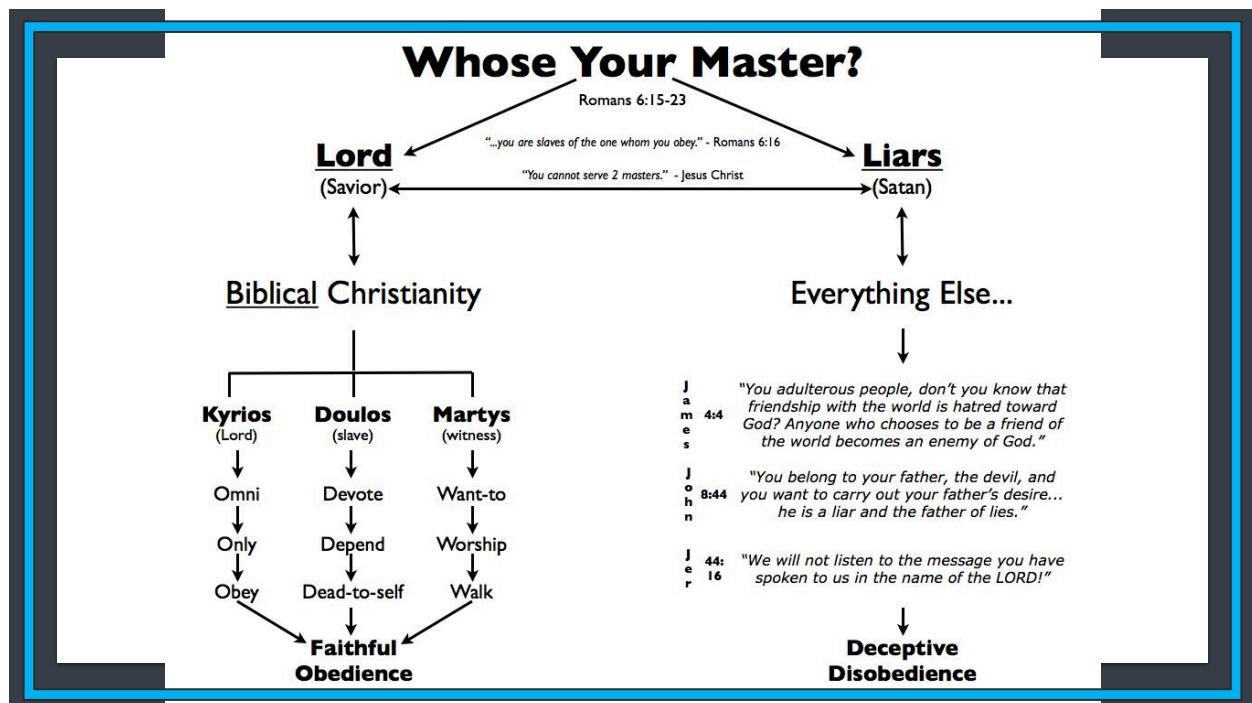
ii. **Physical vs. EMOTIONAL**

iii. **Cultural vs. BIBLICAL & SPIRITUAL**

c. **Applications**

i. **Choose** biblical righteousness or sin...

ii. **Choose** obedience or disobedience...



II. CLARIFICATION

²⁸*But I say to you...*

- A. *“But”* = contrast...
 - a. First comes the clarification...
 - b. Second, the correction will be next...
- B. *“I say”* = Christological Author/authority...
- C. *“to you”* = personal AND global...
 - a. Created beings
 - B. KINGDOM CRIMINALS**
 - c. Would-be Christ-followers (4:19)
 - d. Would-be Church/Christians
 - e. Kingdom citizens

III. CORRECTION

that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

- A. Absolutes = ...the Word & words of God!
 - a. *Everyone* = anyone meeting the condition
 - b. *Who looks* =
 - i. < physical contact but > “who SEES”
 - ii. *The 1st look sees, the 2nd look lusts!* - JDP
 - iii. *Sinful looks gaze upon & fertilize sin.* - JDP

iv. **LOOKS REALLY CAN KILL!**

v. 5 types of deadly sinful looks:

1. *“Instinctive”* (knee-jerk) lust-look
2. *“I’m just curious”* lust-look
3. *“Rationalized”* lust-look
4. *“Sneaky”* lust-look
5. *“Overt”* lust-look

c. ***With lustful intent***

Have you ever pulled a thread that never seemed to end? Sinful, ***“lustful intent”*** is a LONG **sin-thread** that is woven through the Bible... & will continue throughout eternity...

TO OPEN UP “biblical lust” IS TO LITERALLY OPEN UP ALL THE SINS OF THE WORLD AND THE SINFUL FALL OF ALL HUMANITY!

1 John 2:15-17

15Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. **16**For **all that is in the world—the lusts/desires of the flesh and the lusts/desires of the eyes and the pride of life**—is not from the Father but is from the world. **17**And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

i. **NOTE: THIS SIN HAS 2 SIDES!**

1. The **lustful-looker** is guilty.
2. The **lustful-enticer** is also guilty!

If you long to make others lust... you're wrong!

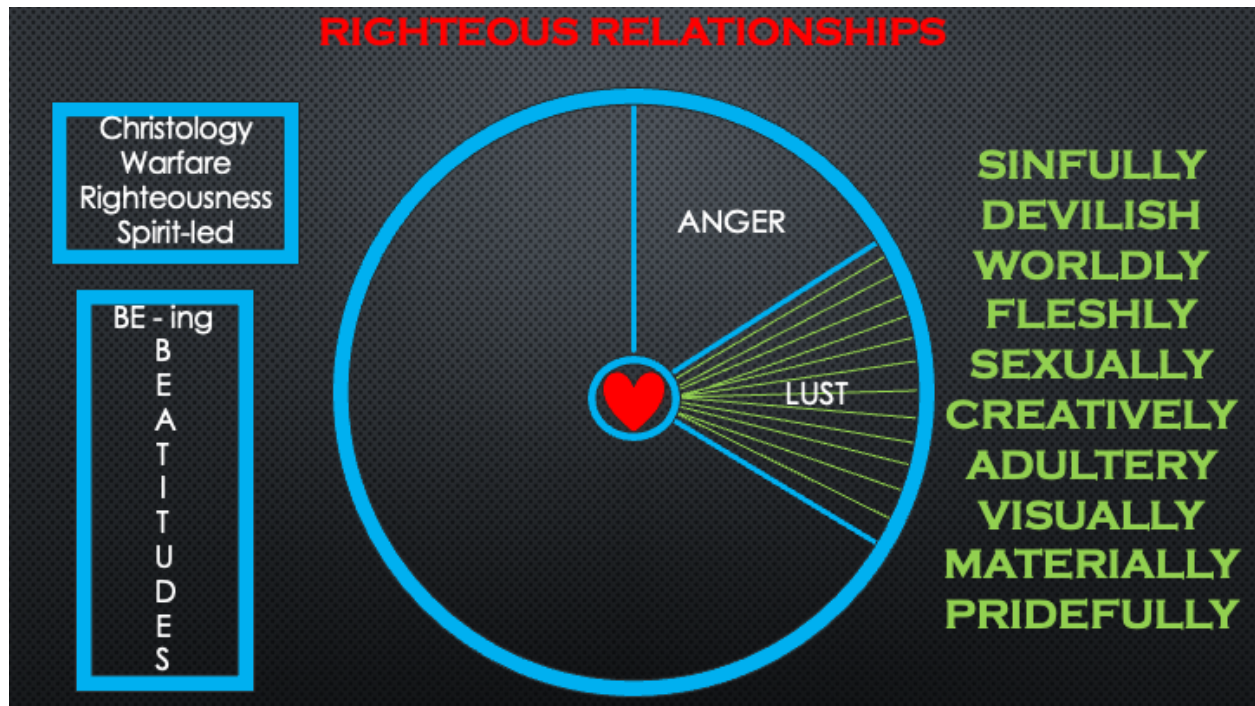
Those who lead others into sinful dynamics are accomplices to the sin-crime that follows... Those who intentionally look, dress, or act in sexually enticing ways are like the person who drives the getaway car at a bank robbery... While they may not have technically robbed the bank, they were very much an essential & guilty part of the crime.

Friend, be warned, on Judgment Day, you better not be counted amongst Satan's accomplices! - JDP

ii. **NOTE:** like anger, *“lust”* is not all bad...

1. Context & motive defines the term.
2. Song of Songs is steamy Scripture!
3. Adam's 1st look at Eve was “good”
4. Marital sexual intimacy is great!
5. Similar to: “HOMOTHOOMADON”
6. *Love & lust are at war for the heart!*

iii. **BUT... here Jesus is dealing with SIN!**



Human lusting & its loving of sin
unleashes the world, the flesh, & the devil!

- JDP

[Ephesians 2:1-3](#)

1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of **this world** and of **the ruler of the kingdom of the air (the Devil)**, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of **our flesh** and following its lusts/desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

d. *Has already committed*

- i. God sees & looks upon our hearts. (1 Samuel 16:7)
- ii. *Our hearts represent our whole.*-JDP
- iii. **HEART SINS DO NOT REQUIRE HAND SINS IN ORDER TO BE DECLARED DIRTY & UNRIGHTEOUS**
- iv. The lusting-sinner has passed the *“declared guilty”* finish-line of God's judgment... long before they think they have crossed His starting-line.

e. *Adultery*

Adultery's 3 stages:

- 1. Head
- 2. Heart
- 3. Hands

IT'S LIKE BEING 3, 6, & 9 MONTHS PREGNANT!

- i. Adultery begins by abusing God's grace!
- ii. **Adultery, by definition, is betrayal!**
- iii. *Adultery defies God's Word, will, & way.*
- iv. O.T. examples:
 - 1. Potiphar's wife (Genesis 39:9)
 - 2. David with Bathsheba (Psalm 51)
 - 3. Hosea's wife Gomer

v. **N.T. insights:**

1. Ephesians 5:3
2. 1 Corinthians 6:12-13 & 20
3. 1 Corinthians 7:2-5
4. Philippians 4:8
5. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-4
6. Galatians 5:16-25
7. Ephesians 6:16 & James 1:13-15

vi. Cultural definitions are all **WRONG!**

vii. *God's Word, will, & ways are **righteous!***

Biblical adultery is the soul-devastating & Holy Spirit enraging sin... the evil, wicked, & destructive... sinfully divisive & disobedient... 3-headed dragon... Adultery's tragic trilogy includes 1). God-defying gratification, 2). self-satisfying fornication, & 3). heart-poisoning perversion... ALL uniting in faith-less, fleshly-lust... being entertained, exercised, & exemplified in, by, & through the dirty & defiled Head, Heart, & Hands. - JDP

Adultery breaks purity, potential, promises, vows, hearts, families, futures, dreams, worship, & witnesses.

f. **With her/him**

- i. This sin is NOT isolated/individualized!
- ii. *"with her/him/them"* = others involved

VIDEO: Got Questions –

“How do my personal, private sins affect others?”

iii. **Even if unaware, others are involved:**

1. Disrespected & used...
2. Objectified & dehumanized...
3. Envied & unloved...
4. Coveted-against... & begrudged...
5. Deceived & lied-to...

g. ***In their heart.***

- i. *The lust-filled heart is the crime scene!* -JDP
- ii. God’s holy verdict for unrighteousness is based on what takes place inside defiant, dark hearts.
- iii. ***The Head knows... the Hands do... but the hardened Heart is behind it all.*** - JDP

Sexual perversions (**fornication, adultery, homosexuality, transgenderism, bestiality, pedophilia...**) are NOT about mere pleasure, self-identity, or freedom-seeking. No. ALL sin is rooted in unbelief, rebellion, & self-lordship.

- JDP

B. Assumptions

Our cultural & traditional assumptions must be refined &/or rejected... informed, inspected, & inspired... by God’s Word, will, & ways – no matter what!

VIDEO: Got Questions –
“What Is Sexual Immorality?”

HERE ARE A NUMBER OF VIDEO-HELPS TO THAT END:

- Does sex constitute marriage in God’s eyes?
<https://youtu.be/Go8JFPDxmm8?si=1kScbJQ5r-5BXfCr>
- What constitutes marriage according to the Bible?
<https://youtu.be/8EmwFk7p3Gw?si=KekRN5uvTUarGebT>
- Why did God allow polygamy in the Bible?
<https://youtu.be/51Rp33mArNY?si=1S6Amg5b04g0-Jjc>
- Why did God allow Solomon to have 1,000 wives plus concubines?
<https://youtu.be/Z3WwokIJHxU?si=O8IVCLHpS32bPSkN>
- Why did God allow incest in the Bible?
<https://youtu.be/B5dqgYkg7Jo?si=wd0GAug6wWkbWEMC>
- Why is living together before marriage considered to be sinful?
https://youtu.be/uWPdsE1jU_c?si=LKc_MzXLnfC4dm6R
- What does the Bible say about sex before marriage?
<https://youtu.be/6FLyihrm1Eo?si=j6Z3w7kr5GQXUsfF>
- Is it wrong for a Christian to have a sexual fantasy?
<https://youtu.be/46XpxHGyFBs?si=RaFz5ZBDMfdvH-rz>
- What does it mean that “the marriage bed is undefiled?”
https://youtu.be/Ruz_GSTdGX8?si=FoFrhjdx8BMvf-S
- Sex in marriage... What is a Christian couple allowed to do in sex?
<https://youtu.be/XMAV6OMhV4U?si=0YrxeVPmTuw1Bo7U>

- What is sexual immorality?
<https://youtu.be/YAiALNZekxl?si=NSzVOYP4qOE5JPXz>
- What does the Bible say about fornication?
<https://youtu.be/XMAV6OMhV4U?si=0YrxeVPmTuw1Bo7U>
- What does the Bible say about pornography?
<https://youtu.be/M4u727n4aZ0?si=vomHKt83MLEU1-Z6>
- Is masturbation a sin according to the Bible?
<https://youtu.be/YAiALNZekxl?si=NSzVOYP4qOE5JPXz>
- Is oral sex a sin? What does the Bible say about oral sex?
<https://youtu.be/SXZFt8plWro?si=LNpnpjK9u3Gapxnn>
- Is anal sex a sin? What does the Bible say about anal sex?
https://youtu.be/GM1fJcza1jY?si=pbdrPGKRUXIPt_WA
- Is being gay a sin?
<https://youtu.be/AWJ9pQg7brw?si=yGnNIWGynTX53w11>
- What does the Bible say about homosexuality?
<https://youtu.be/COIThVReilo?si=JFGBMWT8d37MEtJ1>
- Do gay people go to heaven?
<https://youtu.be/nQexJjCg5bg?si=YkWzJ649c9A6oR77>
- How many genders are there?
<https://youtu.be/dQ-lfhVBO-c?si=vkj8hqywwf3bSMZe>
- What does the Bible say about getting a sex change?
<https://youtu.be/jVPS6Bu1iEM?si=dFVMq3J3rsuhbcVW>
- How can an unmarried person relieve sexual tension sinlessly?
<https://youtu.be/M7Rz2Nfk6VE?si=NEfYo-xS2hIoOLOS>
- How does my personal, private sin affect others?
<https://youtu.be/SdthRr-SEPs?si=jCLYK-m8wRUYPAbx>

- What does it mean to make a covenant with your eyes?
<https://youtu.be/78s-jXG8hA4?si=gK6a5irB5jYGvBMG>
- How does bad company corrupt good character?
https://youtu.be/tg5k4_IDIz8?si=pUW-lanVw91_zZj
- What does it mean that godliness with contentment is great gain?
https://youtu.be/OrHK6KpDHOI?si=EW9GkP_aCRoOhBGm
- What does it mean that we have eternity in our heart?
<https://youtu.be/LyrCJL089IM?si=aibK4Uf9Gzbo-F->

C. Applications

Here's a new tool that will help to contrast big religion vs. blessed redemption... thru the filter of righteousness...

MATTHEW 3:15

Jesus replied,
"Let it be so now; it is
proper for us to do this
to fulfill all
righteousness." Then
John consented.

MATTHEW 5:20

For I tell you, unless your
righteousness exceeds
that of the Scribes &
Pharisees, you will never
enter the kingdom
of heaven.

Acts of the FLESH

Fruit of the SPIRIT

The UN-righteous

Kingdom CRIMINALS

Heading to HELL

Cultural LAWS

Personal WANTS

Occasionally LIGHT

	<p><u>The RIGHTEOUS</u></p> <p>Kingdom CITIZENS</p> <p>Heading to HEAVEN</p> <p>Biblical LOVE</p> <p>Missional WORKS</p>
	<p>Occasionally DARK</p>

<p><u>The UN-righteous</u></p> <p>Kingdom CRIMINALS</p> <p>Heading to HELL</p> <p>Cultural LAWS</p> <p>Personal WANTS</p>	<p><u>The RIGHTEOUS</u></p> <p>Kingdom CITIZENS</p> <p>Heading to HEAVEN</p> <p>Biblical LOVE</p> <p>Missional WORKS</p>
<p>Occasionally LIGHT</p>	<p>Occasionally DARK</p>



Galatians 5:16-24

16But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19**Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, **fits of anger**, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21envy, drunkenness, orgies, **& things like these**. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.**

22But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law. 24And **those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires**.

Acts of the FLESH

Fruit of the SPIRIT

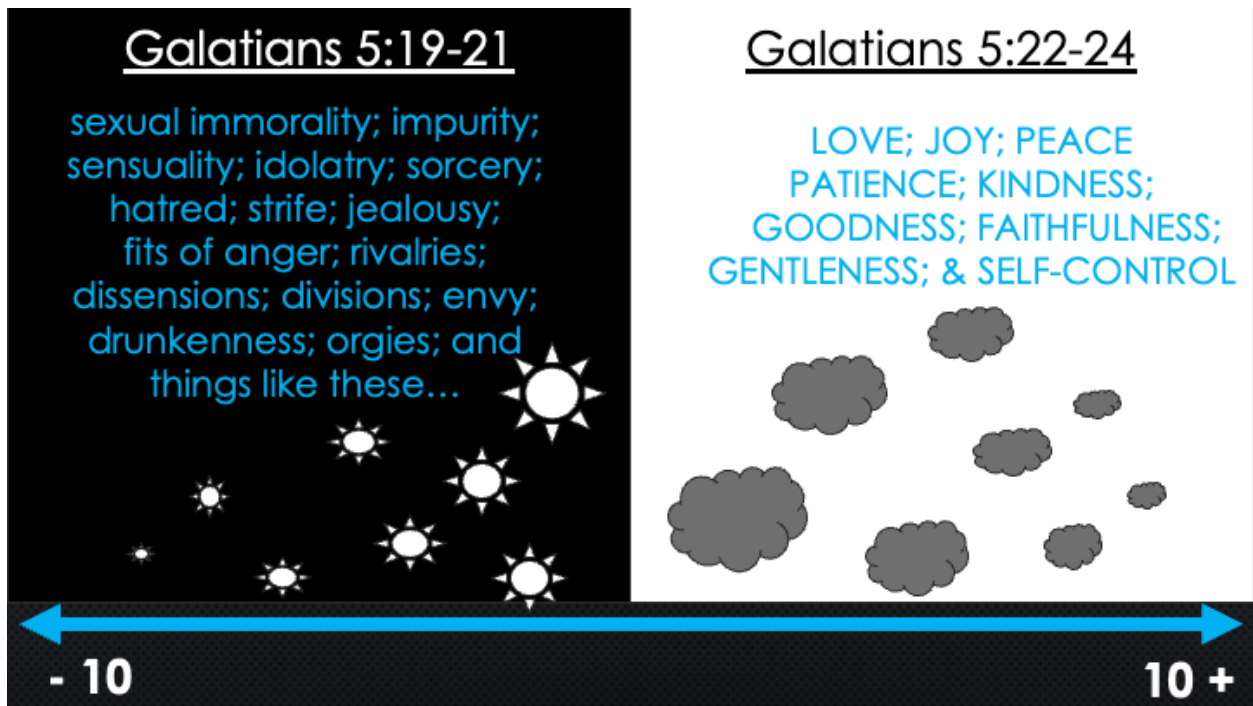


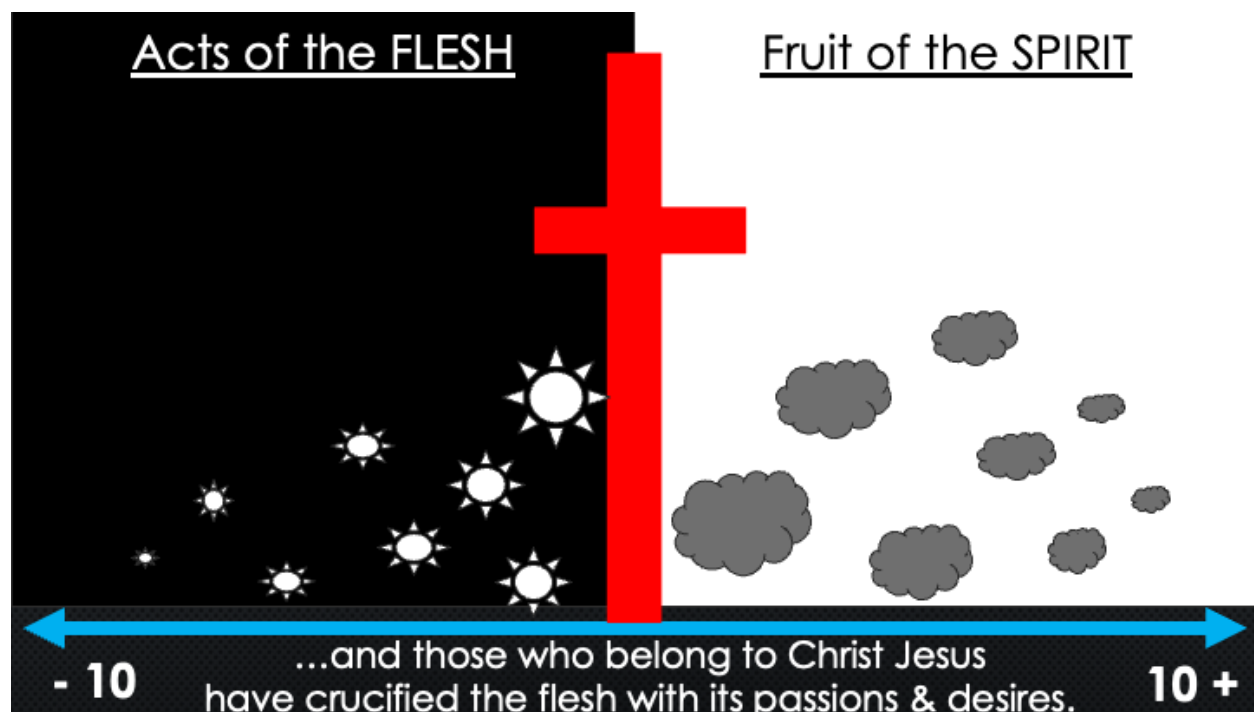
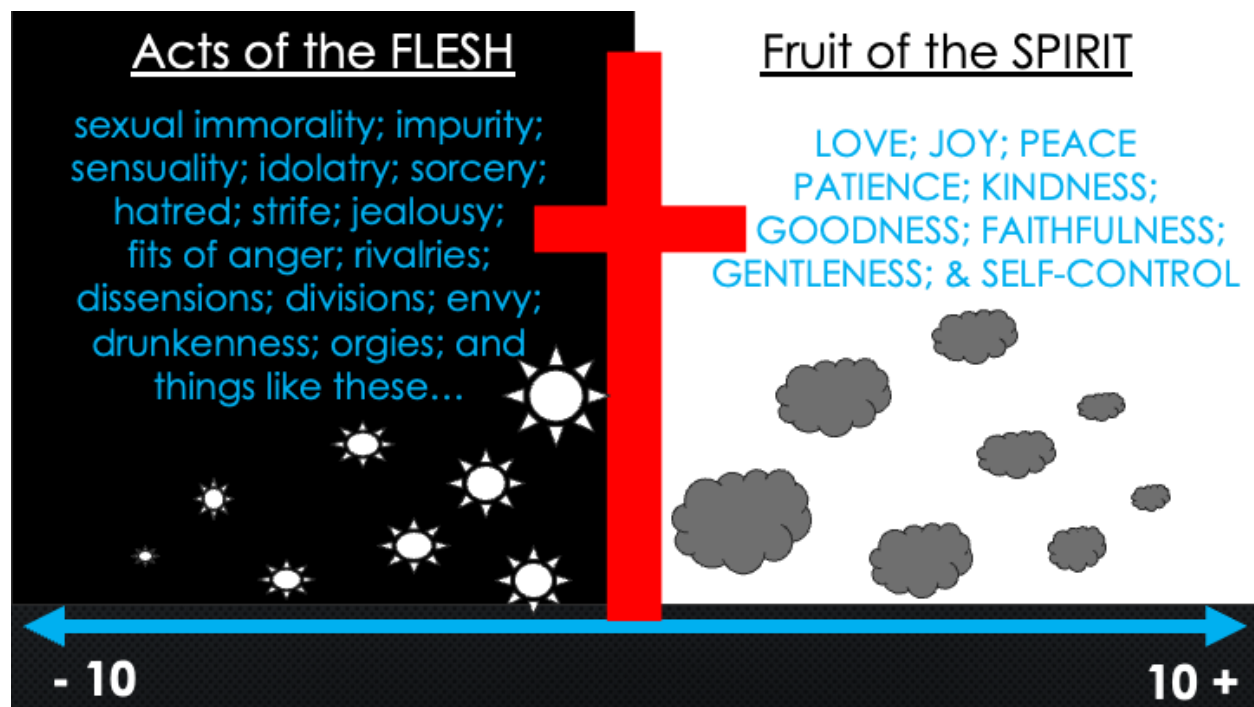
Galatians 5:19-21

sexual immorality; impurity;
sensuality; idolatry; sorcery;
hatred; strife; jealousy;
fits of anger; rivalries;
dissensions; divisions; envy;
drunkenness; orgies; and
things like these...

Galatians 5:22-24

LOVE; JOY; PEACE
PATIENCE; KINDNESS;
GOODNESS; FAITHFULNESS;
GENTLENESS; & SELF-CONTROL





REVIEW:

Remember that Christ's truth in love teachings have BOTH eternal AND contemporary impact.

Never underestimate any lustful sins of the heart...

WHEN IT COMES TO LUST & ADULTERY REMEMBER HOW SERIOUS THIS WAS/IS TO GOD:

- God (not man) created marriage
- Marriage mirrors divine vows
- Marriage mirrors Christ's mission
- Marriage mirror's our witness
- Marriage warranted the 7th Commandment.
- O.T. penalty for adultery = death for both parties!

VIDEO: Got Questions

How does bad company corrupt good character?

CLOSE:

Sexual lust is to love & intimacy
what stealing is to money & wealth... - JDP

LUST IS THE GREASE ON ADULTERY'S SLIPPERY SLOPE.

- JDP

Lust is a lie often disguised as love... in the same way that wolves are often disguised as lambs. - JDP

We need to BE honest & responsibly proactive...

In the same way that alcoholics should stay out of bars... those with a sad history or propensity for sensual sin should *avoid any & all, actual or virtual, lust-feeding dynamics.*

- JDP

It may never be popular to preach & teach, but the truth in love on lust is this...

Human lusting & its loving of sin unleashes the world, the flesh, & the devil, while simultaneously lunging toward hell!

A.W. Tozer...

“The Scramble for Popularity”

Popular Judaism slew the prophets and crucified Christ. **Popular Christianity** killed the Reformers... When it comes to religion, the crowds are always wrong. At any given time, there are a few who see, and the rest are blinded.

To stand by the truth of God against the current religious vogue is always unpopular and may be downright dangerous.... Christianity's **scramble for popularity** today is an unconscious acknowledgment of

spiritual decay & decline. Her (the church's) eager fawning at the feet of the world is grieving the Holy Spirit and embarrassing the sons of God.

The lick-spittle, (pandering) attitude of popular Christian leaders toward the world's celebrities would make such men as Elijah and history's most courageous martyrs sick to their stomach....

Lot (the nephew of Abraham) was a *“popular believer.”* He sat in the gates of Sodom. But when trouble struck, he had to send quickly for Abraham to get him out of the jam. And where did they find Abraham? Out on the hillside, far away from the fashionable crowds. It has always been this way...

For every Elijah, there have always been 400 *“popular prophets of Baal.”*

For every Noah, *there is always a vast multitude who will not believe it is going to rain.*

We are sent to bless the world, but **NEVER are we told to compromise with it.** "Lord, give me/us the spirit of Elijah; give me/us the faith of Noah.

Deliver me/us from the **scramble for popularity** and strengthen me/us to serve alone, oblivious to the roar of the crowds. **Amen."**

PRAYER

WORSHIP:

Jesus Loves & I'm Clean

KEY TEXTS:

Genesis 1:1 & 1:27 & 2:24

In the beginning God created the heavens & the earth...
God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Genesis 3:6

When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.

Ecclesiastes 2:8, 10 & 11

I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem as well—the delights of a man's heart.
I denied myself nothing my eyes desired; I refused my heart no pleasure. My heart took delight in all my labor, and this was the reward for all my toil.
Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.

Galatians 5:16-25

Keep in Step with the Spirit

[16](#)But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. [17](#)For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to

do. [18](#)But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. [19](#)Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, [20](#)idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, [21](#)envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do 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](#)And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

[25](#)If we live by the Spirit, let us also keep in step with the Spirit.

1 John 1:6 & 2:6

If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness,
we lie and do not live out the truth.

Whoever claims to be/live in Him must walk/live as Jesus did.

1 John 2:15-17

Do Not Love the World

[15](#)Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. [16](#)For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. [17](#)And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

James 1:27 & 4:4

Pure and undefiled religion before our God and Father is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself from being stained/polluted by the world.

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity/hostility with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James 3:5 – 4:2a

⁵So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things.

How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! ⁶And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell- ⁷For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, ⁸but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God. ¹⁰From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers,^e these things ought not to be so. ¹¹Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water? ¹²Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.

Wisdom from Above

¹³Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good conduct let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. ¹⁴But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast and be false to the truth. ¹⁵This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. ¹⁶For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. ¹⁷But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. ¹⁸And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Warning Against Worldliness

¹What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? ²You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel...

Romans 13:1-7

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established/instituted by God...

²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger

who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. [5](#)Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. [6](#)For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. [7](#)Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Ephesians 2:1-3

[1](#)As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, [2](#)in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. [3](#)All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Titus 1:11 & 2:15

They must be silenced, because they are disrupting/upsetting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain.

Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you.

1 Samuel 16:7

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart."

Acts 1:8

2nd Peter 1:3; Philippians 4:13; Romans 8:37

James 4:7; Romans 6:12-14

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

¹²Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

2 Corinthians 10:3-6; Eph. 6:10-20; Philippians 4:8-9

1st Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17 & 23

RESEARCH NOTES:

Ligonier.org

MAY 23, 2011

The World, the Flesh, and the Devil

EPHESIANS 2:2-3

“You once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience — among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh” ([Eph. 2:2–3a](#)).

Dwelling on past sins in order to wallow in guilt or to revel in nostalgia is never a good idea, but Paul intends neither of these things when reminding readers of their condition before knowing Jesus ([Eph. 2:1](#)). Instead, the apostle wants to draw a contrast between life apart from Christ and life in Christ so as to magnify the power and grace of God in salvation. Laying the foundation for this contrast, the apostle continues describing life outside of Jesus in [Ephesians 2:2–3](#), painting the bleakest of pictures for unredeemed sinners.

We were dead apart from Christ indeed (v. 1), but it was a state of spiritual death that did not render us incapable of action. We were all too capable of transgressing that which is holy, “following the course of this world . . . the prince of the power of the air . . . the passions of our flesh” (vv. 2–3). Here Paul reveals the three great powers that enslaved us completely before we knew Jesus and which we must continually rebel against in the course of our growth in holiness — the world, the flesh, and the Devil.

“The course of this world” (v. 2) refers to the ways of culture and society that oppose the Lord. There are ungodly trends in the world — materialism, naturalism, desire for instant gratification, and more — that once ruled all of our passions but are now defeated in Christ ([John 16:33](#); [1 John 5:5](#)). No longer our ruler, the world still appeals to our remaining sin, so we must maintain our guard lest we fall back into bondage.

In ancient times, the term air often referred to the spiritual realm of angels and demons; thus, “the prince of the power of the air” is Satan ([Eph. 2:2](#)). This leader of all that opposes God stirs up trouble all over the world, and he even endeavors to infiltrate and disturb the church (4:26–27). The Devil is fierce but easily put to flight when we resist him by the Spirit, as Jesus has triumphed over him ([James 4:7](#); [Col. 2:15](#)).

Finally, “the passions of our flesh” and “desires of the body” ([Eph. 2:3](#)) refer not to our physical bodies, as if our corporeal form is in itself wicked. After all, God created all things good, including our bodies ([Gen. 1:31](#)). The apostle is speaking of our fallen nature, which Christ has subdued. It is a resilient foe, however, that remains until our glorification. We must therefore seek daily to mortify it and deny the sins that seem the most appealing to us ([Rom. 6:12–14](#)).

Coram Deo

Paul makes a subtle shift in [Ephesians 2:1–3](#) from “you” (the Gentile Ephesians) to “we” (Jews like Paul and the Gentiles), indicating the universality of sin. John Chrysostom writes, “All are included. It is not possible to say that anyone is exempted” from the presence of sin and the enemies of the world, the flesh, and the Devil (ACCN T 8, p. 122). But in Christ we have the power and desire to resist these foes, so let us do so today by the power of the Spirit.

For Further Study

DEUTERONOMY 12:29–32JOHN 8:33–37GALATIANS 5:16–261 PETER 5:6–11

MacArthur N.T. Commentary:

Who Is an Adulterer?
(5:27–28)

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery”; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell. (5:27–30)

Jesus continues to unmask the self-righteous externalism typified by the scribes and Pharisees by showing that the only righteousness acceptable to God is purity of heart.

*Without that purity,
the outward life makes no difference.*

GOD’S DIVINE EVALUATION TAKES PLACE IN THE HEART. HE JUDGES THE SOURCE AND ORIGIN OF SIN, NOT ITS MANIFESTATION OR LACK OF MANIFESTATION. “AS [A PERSON] THINKS WITHIN HIMSELF, SO HE IS” (PROV. 23:7), AND SO HE IS JUDGED BY GOD (1 SAM. 16:7).

Jesus’ second illustration of heart righteousness has to do with adultery and sexual sin in general. In verses 27–30 He focuses on the deed of adultery, the desire behind it, and the deliverance from it.

THE DEED

You have heard that it was said, “You shall not commit adultery.”

(5:27)

As with the one relating to the sin of murder (vv. 21–26), this illustration begins with a quotation of one of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:14). In both of those cases, Jewish tradition was based on the law of Moses, at least superficially.

The sixth commandment protects the sanctity of life and the seventh the sanctity of marriage. Those who rely on external righteousness break both of those commandments, because in their hearts they attack the sanctity of life and the sanctity of marriage, whether they do so outwardly or not. When they are angry or hate, they commit murder. When they lust sexually, they commit adultery. And when they do either of those things, they choose to despise God’s law and God’s name (see Ex. 20:14; Lev. 20:10; Deut. 5:18).

ANGER AND SEXUAL LUST ARE TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL INFLUENCES ON MANKIND. THE PERSON WHO GIVES THEM REIGN WILL SOON FIND THAT HE IS MORE CONTROLLED THAN IN CONTROL.

Every person has experienced temptation to anger and to sexual sin, and every person has at some time and to some degree given in to those temptations. Because of that fact, every person is guilty before God of murder and of adultery.

Although sexual temptations have been strong since man’s fall, our day of permissiveness and perversion has brought an increase in those destructive influences that no society in history has had before (see 2 Tim. 3:13). **Ours is a day of unbridled indulgence in sexual passion. People propagate, promote, and exploit it through the most powerful and pervasive media ever known to man. It seems to be the almost uninterrupted theme of our society’s entertainment.** Even in academic and religious circles we see seminars, books, tapes, and programs of all sorts that promise to improve sexual knowledge, experience, freedom, and enjoyment.

Mass media uses sex to sell its products and to glamorize its programs. Sex crimes are at all-time highs, while infidelity, divorce, and perversion are justified. Marriage, sexual fidelity, and moral purity are scorned, ridiculed, and laughed at. We are preoccupied with sex to a degree perhaps never before seen in a civilized culture.

But the philosophy of sexual hedonism is not new to our day. It was common in New Testament times, and Paul faced it full force in Corinth. His comment “Food is for the stomach, and the stomach is for food” (1 Cor. 6:13a) expressed the common Greek notion that biological functions are just biological functions and have no moral significance. It was a belief many of the Corinthian believers had reverted to, or had never given up, in order to justify their sexual misconduct. Apparently, they were arguing, as do many hedonists today, that sex is simply a biological act, no different morally from eating, drinking, or sleeping. But Paul strongly refutes that idea by going on to say, “God will do away with both of them [that is, food and the stomach]. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body” (v. 13b). **The body is more than biological, as divine judgment will reveal. For Christians it is a member of Christ, a temple of the Holy Spirit, and belongs to the Lord rather than to us (vv. 15, 19).**

IT IS THEREFORE NEVER TO BE USED FOR ANY PURPOSE THAT DISHONORS THE GOD WHO MADE AND INDWELLS IT. CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE BUT ONE RESPONSE TO SEXUAL TEMPTATION—RUNNING AWAY FROM IT (v. 18).

The same philosophy that corrupted Corinth is today engulfing most of western society in a sea of sexual excess and perversion. In its many forms, sexual license is destroying lives physically, morally,

mentally, and spiritually. It is destroying marriages, families, and even whole communities.

Throughout history some Christians have reacted to sexual temptations and sins in ways that are unbiblical. Seeing the great power of the sex drive and the great damage its unbridled expression can cause, they have sometimes concluded that sex itself is evil and should be completely condemned and avoided. Commonly referred to today as the Victorian view, that philosophy was prevalent long before the age of Queen Victoria.

Origen (A.D. 185–254), one of the outstanding early church Fathers, was so convicted of his own sinfulness by reading Matthew 5:27–30 that he had himself castrated (*the New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. James D. Douglas [new edition; Grand Rapids, 1974, 1978], p. 733. Peter Abelard, a twelfth-century French theologian, had lived a godly life for many years. He fell in love with a young woman (Heloise) and caused her to become pregnant. To protect her and to try to rectify the wrong, he married her. Damaging rumors had begun to circulate, however, and, rather than harm Abelard's career still further, Heloise entered a convent. Her uncle, angry at all that had happened, hired men to break into Abelard's quarters and castrate him; Abelard then joined the monastery of St.-Denis (*New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 3).

But...

geographical escapism, physical mutilation, or any form of forced celibacy violate God's purpose (see Heb. 13:4) and are just as unscriptural as sexual immorality.

The Lord wants His people to be in the world but not of it (John 17:15–18). And because our bodies belong to Christ and are temples of the Holy Spirit, they are not to be abused in *any* way. God created sex and gives it as a blessing to those who enjoy it within the bounds of marriage.

Anyone who promotes abstinence from marriage on the basis that all sexual expression is evil is “paying attention

to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons” (see 1 Tim. 4:1–3).

Speaking of the marriage relationship, Paul commands, “Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.... Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again lest Satan tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:3, 5).

Sexual expression not only is a thrilling privilege but an obligation of marriage.

In the middle of a biblical warning against adultery, husbands are instructed, “Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; be exhilarated always with her love” (Prov. 5:18–19).

The Song of Solomon is devoted to the beauty and wonder of marital love. God has

designed and blessed sexual expression within marriage, and to malign or denigrate that proper expression by such practices as castration or forced celibacy is as much of a perversion as fornication, adultery, or homosexuality.

THE SOLUTION TO SEXUAL IMPURITY CANNOT BE EXTERNAL BECAUSE THE CAUSE IS NOT EXTERNAL.

Job proclaimed, “If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or I have lurked at my neighbor’s doorway, may my wife grind for another, and let others kneel down over her. For that would be a lustful crime; moreover, it would be an iniquity punishable by judges” (Job 31:9–11). That ancient saint knew that physical infidelity is first of all a matter of the heart, and that lusting is just as sinful in God’s eyes as the act of adultery.

The Mosaic law portrays adultery as one of the most despicable and heinous of sins, punishable by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22).

In strongly opposing adultery, Jewish tradition appeared to be entirely scriptural. When the scribes and Pharisees told Jesus that Moses commanded them to stone the woman caught in the act of adultery, they were correct (John 8:4–5). Had not Jesus forgiven her of her sin she would have deserved stoning.

Throughout the New Testament, prohibitions against sexual immorality are every bit as clear as those of the Old. ***“Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor***

adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals” will inherit the Kingdom of God [\(1 Cor. 6:9; cf. Gal. 5:19–21; Rev. 2:22\)](#).

***“Fornicators and adulterers
God will judge”***
[\(Heb. 13:4\)](#).

Regardless of how much a couple may care for each other and be deeply in love, sexual relations outside of marriage are forbidden. In every case, without exception, it is a heinous sin against God.

In its most technical sense, committing **adultery** (from *moichaō*) refers to sexual intercourse between a man and woman when one or both of them is married. In both the Old and New Testaments the word relates to sexual intercourse with anyone other than one’s marriage partner. **That Jesus here implies that the principle of sexual purity can be seen in a wider sense than adultery (though adultery is His point here) seems clear from the fact that both **everyone** and **a woman** are comprehensive terms that could also apply to the unmarried.**

THE DESIRE

but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.
[\(5:28\)](#)

The pronoun **I** (*egō*) is emphatic, indicating that Jesus puts His own word above the authority of revered rabbinic tradition.

Looks (*blepō*) is a present participle & refers to the continuous process of looking.

In this usage, the idea is not that of an incidental or involuntary glance but of intentional and repeated gazing.

Pros to (**to**) used with the infinitive (*epithumēsai*, **lust for**) indicates a goal or an action that follows in time the action of the looking. Jesus is therefore speaking of intentional looking with the purpose of lusting.

He is speaking of the man who looks so that he may satisfy his evil desire. He is speaking of the man who goes to an X-rated movie, who selects a television program known for its sexual orientation, who goes to a beach known for its scanty swimsuits, or who does any such thing with the expectation and desire of being sexually and sinfully titillated.

Looking at a woman lustfully does not cause a man to commit adultery in his thoughts. He already **has committed adultery in his heart**.

It is not lustful looking that causes the sin in the heart, but the sin in the heart that causes lustful looking.

THE LUSTFUL LOOKING IS BUT THE
EXPRESSION OF A HEART THAT IS
ALREADY IMMORAL AND ADULTEROUS.
THE HEART IS THE SOIL WHERE THE
SEEDS OF SIN ARE IMBEDDED AND
BEGIN TO GROW.

Jesus is not speaking of unexpected and unavoidable exposure to sexual temptation.

**WHEN A MAN HAPPENS TO SEE A WOMAN
PROVOCATIVELY DRESSED, SATAN WILL
SURELY TRY TO TEMPT THAT MAN
WITH LUSTFUL THOUGHTS.**

But there is no sin if the temptation is resisted and the gaze is turned elsewhere.

**IT IS CONTINUING TO LOOK IN ORDER TO
SATISFY LUSTFUL DESIRES THAT JESUS
CONDEMNS, BECAUSE IT EVIDENCES A VILE,
IMMORAL HEART.**

David was not at fault for seeing Bathsheba bathing. He could not have helped noticing her, because she was in plain view as he walked on the palace roof. His sin was in dwelling on the sight and in willingly succumbing to the temptation.

He could have looked away and put the experience out of his mind.

THE FACT THAT HE HAD HER BROUGHT TO HIS CHAMBERS AND COMMITTED ADULTERY WITH HER EXPRESSED THE IMMORAL DESIRE THAT ALREADY EXISTED IN HIS HEART (see 2 Sam. 11:1–4).

A popular proverb goes,

*“Sow a thought and reap an act.
Sow an act and reap a habit.
Sow a habit and reap a character.
Sow a character and reap a destiny.”*

That process perfectly illustrates Jesus' main thrust in this passage: No matter where it ends, sin always begins when an evil thought is sown in the mind and heart.

Although Jesus here uses a man as the example, His condemnation of lustful thoughts as well as actions applies equally to women.

WOMEN ARE EQUALLY SUSCEPTIBLE TO LUSTFUL LOOKING, AND EVEN TO INCITING MEN TO LUST.

As [Arthur Pink](#) observes,

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. In this matter it is not only too often the case that men sin but women tempt them to do so. How great then must be the guilt of the great majority of modern misses who deliberately seek to arouse the sexual passions of young men. And how much greater still is the guilt of most of their mothers for allowing them to become lascivious temptresses.

(*An Exposition of the Sermon on the Mount* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974], p. 83)

Job said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin.... If my step has turned from the way, or my heart followed my eyes, or if any spot has stuck to my hands, let me sow and another eat, and let my crops be uprooted” (Job 31:1, 7–8).

JOB KNEW THAT SIN BEGINS IN THE HEART AND THAT HE WAS JUST AS DESERVING OF GOD’S PUNISHMENT FOR LOOKING AT A WOMAN LUSTFULLY AS FOR COMMITTING ADULTERY WITH HER. HE THEREFORE DETERMINED IN ADVANCE TO GUARD

HIMSELF BY MAKING A PACT WITH HIS EYES NOT TO GAZE AT A WOMAN WHO MIGHT TEMPT HIM.

Just as the adulterous heart plans to expose itself to lust-satisfying situations, the godly heart plans to avoid them whenever possible and to flee from them when unavoidable.

Just as the adulterous heart panders to itself in advance, so the godly heart protects itself in advance, praying with the psalmist,

“Turn away my eyes from looking at vanity, and revive me in Thy ways. Establish Thy word to Thy servant, as that which produces reverence for Thee”
(Ps. 119:37–38).

Paul exhorted Timothy to

“flee from youthful lusts” and to cultivate a “pure heart”
(2 Tim. 2:22).

Like Job, therefore, we must make a covenant with our eyes—and

with every other part of our
bodies, minds, & spirits—
to shun lust and pursue purity.

NIV Life Application Commentary:

Adultery ... Marital Oneness (5:27–30)

IN THE SECOND antithesis, Jesus quotes directly the seventh commandment of the Decalogue, concerning adultery (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:17), and alludes to the tenth, concerning covetousness (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21).

Adultery in the Old Testament involved sexual intercourse with mutual consent between a man, married or unmarried, and the wife of another man.

**THE TERM AND THE PENALTY (DEATH) APPLIED
EQUALLY TO BOTH THE MAN AND THE WOMAN
(LEV. 20:10; CF. DEUT. 22:22).**

A betrothed woman was counted in this context as a wife (Deut. 22:23–24).

Adultery was considered one of the most serious offenses because it broke the relationship that was a reflection of God and his people.

Adultery was often used to describe the way in which the people of Israel went after gods other than Yahweh

(cf. Ezek. 16:32; Hos. 4:13b).

Joseph recognized that adultery not only would have been an offense to Potiphar but was especially a **“sin against God”** (Gen. 39:9).

King David, after his adulterous affair with Bathsheba, confessed his sin to God by saying, **“Against you, you only, have I sinned”** (Ps. 51:4).

THE OLD TESTAMENT STRONGLY DENOUNCES ALL EXTRAMARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, CONDEMNING THE MALE OFFENDER EVEN MORE STRONGLY THAN THE FEMALE (CF. Hos. 4:14).

Jesus' pronouncement reaffirms the Old Testament commitment to the unity of the marriage bond and takes it to its deepest intended meaning: “But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (Matt. 5:28).

It is not enough only to maintain physical purity. The purity of marriage includes exclusive devotion to one another with every aspect of their lives, and this commitment excludes wanting another person or giving oneself in any way to another person.

Looking lustfully at another woman breaks the bond of oneness that a man has with his wife.

The basis of this principle
lies in the relationship
between God and
His people.

**EZEKIEL GRAPHICALLY CONDEMNS
THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL FOR
SPIRITUAL ADULTERY NOT JUST WHEN
THEY ACTUALLY WORSHIP PAGAN
IDOLS, BUT WHEN ISRAEL'S HEART
AND EYES DESIRED OTHER GODS. GOD
LAMENTS, “How I have been grieved by their
adulterous hearts, which have turned away
from me, and by their eyes, which have lusted
after their idols” (Ezek. 6:9).**

Oneness with a wife means that her husband gives
himself to her, and her alone. When a man even looks
with desire at another woman, he has rejected his wife
and given himself to another.

*Lust originates in the heart ([15:19](#)),
...the core of a person's identity and will.*

**ADULTERY, THEREFORE, IS NOT ONLY
PHYSICAL SEXUAL INTERCOURSE BUT ALSO
MENTALLY ENGAGING IN SUCH AN ACT OF
UNFAITHFULNESS.**

St. Andrews Commentary:

JESUS' VIEW OF ADULTERY

Matthew 5:27–30

Jesus noted a contrast between the tradition of the rabbis and His own understanding of the law about murder, and we see His same elliptical approach here in the command against adultery.

The prohibition against adultery includes within it every aspect that is part of the broader complex of this particular sin. Again, Jesus starts out by contrasting the views of tradition with His own: *“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery’ ”* (v. 27).

Before we look specifically at what Jesus says, we should note the authority by which He says it. Elsewhere our Lord declares, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth”

(Matt. 28:18), and, ***“I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak”*** (John 12:49). Therefore, the pronouncement that Jesus makes here in Matthew 5 is nothing less than the pronouncement of God Himself.

A Promiscuous Age

We are living in an age in which God’s opinion is considered merely that—a solitary opinion easily cancelled out by a majority report that contradicts His opinion.

*Our culture has undergone a moral revolution,
which originated with the sexual revolution of the
1960s.*

Many factors were involved in that particular cultural revolution. Gael Greene, in her book *Sex and the College Girl*, stated that she had discovered a radical shift in the mores or the behavioral pattern of the coeds. Her findings indicated a change in conscience among college girls. In the 1950s, Green noted, if a single girl was known to be active sexually, it destroyed her reputation, but when the sexual revolution of the 1960s came along, everything reversed so that a woman feared that her reputation would be destroyed as a result of not being sexually active. Virginity had become the great shame of the unmarried young woman.

When I taught 1 Corinthians to college students, I reminded them of the rationale their parents had given them about sexual ethics: they were to be chaste in order to avoid venereal disease or unwanted pregnancy or cultural shame. But in a short time all that changed. Modern medicine can effectively treat sexually transmitted diseases, and there are a variety of birth control methods to prevent unwanted pregnancy, and, if those fail, abortion is readily available. Additionally, the fear of cultural shame is no longer a factor. So, I asked them, what is left to keep them from engaging in premarital sex? The only thing is that it is an offense against the holiness of God, and that God, who has the eternal authority to command our obedience, prohibits this behavior. That

discussion was like a lightning bolt hitting the classroom. My student counseling load multiplied significantly afterward.

Like no other time in the history of Western culture, people today are bombarded with erotic stimuli. Where can we go and not be exposed to sexually suggestive, erotic literature and images? Certainly not to Hollywood movies, television, modern novels, or the Internet. The church today must deal with the pervasive problem of addiction to pornography. The problem is prevalent not just in the secular culture but also in the church. Paul taught that biological urges are strong and intense. The natural passions with which we have been created can be so intense that it feels like we are set aflame. If the sexual urge was burning in the first century, how much more have the incendiary influences of our culture intensified it?

AS A PASTOR, I HAVE TO SKATE CAREFULLY BETWEEN TWO THINGS. ON THE ONE HAND, IT

IS MY DUTY TO MAKE CLEAR TO EVERYONE IN MY FLOCK WHAT GOD COMMANDS WITH RESPECT TO PREMARITAL AND EXTRAMARITAL SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS. AT THE SAME TIME, I HAVE TO BE ACUTELY CONSCIOUS OF PEOPLE'S FRAILTY AND THE DIFFICULTY OF THE BATTLE FOR CHASTITY—A BATTLE, IT SEEMS, THAT MORE CHRISTIANS ARE LOSING THAN WINNING. WE MUST HOLD TO THE BIBLICAL STANDARD WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ADMINISTERING THE MERCY OF GOD TO FALLEN PEOPLE.

One student, a senior who was engaged to be married, came to talk to me. She told me she was overwhelmed with guilt because she had been sexually involved with her fiancé before their marriage. She had spoken to the college chaplain about it, but he told her that her guilt sprang from trying to live by an outdated, puritanical ethic. She would be free from guilt, he said, if she would accept that her sexual activity was simply an expression of mature adulthood. Despite what the chaplain told her, she still felt guilty, which is why she had come to me. I told her, **“It is possible, as the chaplain indicated, to have a false sense of guilt. However, the reason that you feel guilty is that you are guilty.”**

The solution for guilt is not to deny it or rationalize it. The only solution for real guilt is real forgiveness, and the necessary condition for real forgiveness is real repentance. This young woman needed to repent and seek the forgiveness of God.

Radical Commitment

“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart” (v. 28). Jesus is not saying that it is just as evil to lust as it is to actually commit adultery, but He is saying that even if you have refrained from actual adultery, you haven’t necessarily fulfilled the full dimension of God’s law.

Matthew 5:27

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(27) **By them of old time.**—Omitted in the best MSS. If retained, translate as before, *to them of old time*. It was probably inserted for the sake of conformity with [Matthew 5:21](#). Here the words are simply those of the divine commandment, but it is given as it was taught in the Rabbinic schools, simply in the narrowness of the letter, without any perception that here too the commandment was “exceeding broad.” It is with that teaching, as before, that our Lord contrasts His own.

Benson Commentary

[Matthew 5:27-28](#). *Ye have heard*, &c. — Jesus now proceeds in his sermon to the seventh commandment, the true interpretation of which he gives us. *Thou shalt not commit adultery* — This, as well as the sixth commandment, the scribes and Pharisees interpreted barely of the outward act. *But I say unto you*, &c. — The command extends not only to unchaste actions and words, but even to looks, and the very thoughts of the heart: for *whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her* — Whosoever cherishes or indulges unchaste imaginations, desires, and intentions, *hath committed adultery with her*, &c. — Hath been guilty of a violation of this commandment, which was intended to forbid the corrupt inclinations of the heart, and all irregular desires, as well as the pollution of the body.

Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary

5:27-32 Victory over the desires of the heart, must be attended with painful exertions. But it must be done.

*Everything is bestowed to save us
from our sins, not in them.*

All our senses and powers must be kept from those things which lead to transgression.

**THOSE WHO LEAD OTHERS INTO
TEMPTATION TO SIN, BY DRESS OR IN
OTHER WAYS, OR LEAVE THEM IN IT, OR
EXPOSE THEM TO IT, MAKE THEMSELVES
GUILTY OF THEIR SIN, AND WILL BE
ACCOUNTABLE FOR IT.**

If painful operations are submitted to, that our lives may be saved, what ought our minds to shrink from, when the salvation of our souls is concerned?

*There is tender mercy under all the Divine requirements,
and the grace and consolations of the Spirit will
enable us to attend to them.*

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery - See the notes at [Matthew 5:21](#). Our Saviour in these verses explains the seventh commandment. It is probable that the Pharisees had explained this commandment, as they had the sixth, as extending only to the external act; and that **they regarded**

evil thoughts and a wanton imagination as of little consequence, or as not forbidden by the law.

Our Saviour assures them that the commandment did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the eye.

He declares that they who indulge a wanton desire, that they who look on a woman to increase their lust, have already, in the sight of God, violated the commandment, and committed adultery in the heart. Such was the guilt of David, whose deep and awful crime fully shows the danger of indulging in evil desires, and in the roving of a wanton eye.

See [2 Samuel 11](#); [Psalm 51](#).

See also [2 Peter 2:14](#).

So exceeding strict and broad is the law of God! And so heinous in his sight are thoughts and feelings which may be forever concealed from the world!

[Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary](#)

27. Ye have heard that it was said—The words "by," or "to them of old time," in this verse are insufficiently supported, and probably were not in the original text.

Thou shall not commit adultery—Interpreting this seventh, as they did the sixth commandment, the traditional perverters of the law restricted the breach of it to acts of criminal intercourse between, or with, married persons exclusively. **Our Lord now dissipates such delusions.**

[Matthew Poole's Commentary](#)

See Poole on "[Matthew 5:28](#)".

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

Ye have heard that it was said,... These forms of speech, as well as what follows,

by them of old time, have been explained, in ver. 21. The law here mentioned,

thou shalt not commit adultery, is recorded in [Exodus 20:14](#) and the meaning of our Lord is, not that the then present Jews had heard that such a law had been delivered "to the ancients", their fathers, at Mount Sinai; for that they could read in their Bibles: but they had received it by tradition, that the sense of it, which had been given to their ancestors, by the ancient doctors of the church, was, that this law is to be taken strictly, as it lies, and only regards the sin of uncleanness in married persons; or, what was strictly adultery, and that actual; so that it had no respect to fornication, or unchaste thoughts, words, or actions, but that single act only.

Geneva Study Bible

{7} Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

(7) He is taken for an adulterer before God, whoever he is, that covets a woman: and therefore we must keep our eyes chaste, and all the members we have, yea and we must avoid all opportunities that might move us to evil, no matter what it costs us.

Meyer's NT Commentary

[Matthew 5:27](#) f. From [Matthew 5:28-30](#) it appears that the tradition of the Pharisees limited the prohibition in [Exodus 20:14](#) to adultery proper, and left out of consideration adulterous desires.

βλέπων] *he who holes upon a woman*, opposed to the actual μοιχεύειν.

γυναῖκα] *woman* in general, so that it may be a married (Erasmus, Grotius, Tholuck, de Wette, Bleek) or an unmarried one; for the βλέπων is conceived of as a married man, as is clear from the signification of οὐ μοιχεύσεις, which means *adultery*.

πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι αὐτήν] not *ita ut*, etc., not even *in accordance with* (Weiss), but, agreeably to the constant usage of πρὸς with the infinitive, to denote the *telic* reference ([Matthew 6:1](#), [Matthew 26:12](#), and elsewhere): *in order to desire her*.

The βλέπειν, which terminates in lustful desire, which is kindled and felt to be strengthened by gazing on, is designated. Ὁ γὰρ σπουδάζων ὁρᾶν τὰς εὐμόρφους ὄψεις, αὐτὸς μάλιστα τὴν κάμινον ἀνάπτει τοῦ πάθους, Chrysostom. Comp. Augustine: "qui *hoc fine et hoc animo* attenderit, ut eam concupiscat, quod jam non est titillari delectatione carnis, sed plene consentire libidini." He who looks upon a woman with *such* a feeling has already (jam *eo ipso*, Bengel), in virtue of the adulterous desire with which he does so, committed *adultery* with her in his **heart, which is the seat of feeling and desire.** Thus he is, as regards his moral constitution, although without the external act, already an *adulterer*. Similar proverbs from the Rabbinical writers in Lightfoot and Schoettgen; from the Greek and Roman writers, in Pricaeus. On μοιχεύειν with the accusative, comp. Plato, *Rep.* p. 360 B.

ἐπιθυμεῖν] *with the accusative*, is rare and late. Comp. [Exodus 20:17](#); [Deuteronomy 5:20](#); [Jdt 16:22](#); see Winer, p. 192 [E. T. 255]. Even if αὐτήν were spurious, it could not be explained with Fritzsche: "ut adsit *mutua cupiditas*."

Expositor's Greek Testament

[Matthew 5:27-30](#). *Second illustration*, taken from the seventh commandment. A grand

moral law, in brief lapidary style **guarding the married relation and the sanctity of home.**

Of course **the Hebrew legislator condemned lust after another man's wife; it is expressly prohibited in the tenth commandment.**

But in practical working as a public law the statute laid main stress on the outward act, and it was the tendency of the scribes to give exclusive prominence to this. Therefore,

CHRIST BRINGS TO THE FRONT WHAT BOTH MOSES AND THE SCRIBES LEFT IN THE BACKGROUND, THE INWARD DESIRE OF WHICH ADULTERY IS THE FRUIT

Bengel's Gnomon

[Matthew 5:27](#). Ἐρρέθη, *it has been said*) Murder and adultery are equally sins against our neighbour, and so is revenge, and therefore the words, τοῖς ἀρχαίοις, *to them of old time*, are not expressed but understood in [Matthew 5:27](#); [Matthew 5:31](#); [Matthew 5:38](#); [Matthew 5:43](#), from [Matthew 5:21](#). They are, however, expressed in [Matthew 5:33](#), where our Lord treats of oaths, and, therefore, of our duty to God.

Pulpit Commentary

Verses 27-30. - **The seventh commandment.** The verses occur in this form only here, but vers. 29 and 30 are found in [Matthew 18:8, 9](#) (parallel passage, [Mark 9:43-47](#)), as illustrations of another subject (**vide infra**). Verse 27. - *By them of old time.* Omit, with the Revised Version (cf. ver. 21, note). Thou shalt not ([Exodus 20:14](#); [Deuteronomy 5:18](#)). [Matthew 5:27](#)

Matthew 5:28

Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers

(28) ***To lust after her.*—**

The intent is more strongly marked
in the Greek than in the English.

***It is not the passing glance, not even
the momentary impulse of desire, but
the continued gaze by which the***

impulse is deliberately cherished till it becomes a passion.

This noble and beautiful teaching, it has often been remarked, and by way of disparagement, is found elsewhere. Such disparagement is out of place. By the mercy of God the Light that "lighteth every man" has led men to recognise the truth thus asserted, and parallels to it may be found in the writings of Conlucius, Seneca, Epictetus, and even of the Jewish Rabbis themselves. The words of Juvenal closely express the general sentiment:—

" Scelus intra se tacitus qui cogitat ullum,

Facti crimen habet."

["Who in his breast a guilty thought doth cherish,

He bears the guilt of action."]

Our Lord's words speak primarily of "adultery," but are, of course, applicable to every form of sensual impurity.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

28. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her—with **the intent to do so, as the same expression is used in Mt 6:1**; or, with the full consent of his will, to feed thereby his unholy desires.

hath committed adultery with her already in his heart—**We are not to suppose, from the word here used—"adultery"—that our Lord means to restrict the breach of this commandment to married persons, or to criminal intercourse with such.**

The expressions, "whosoever looketh," and "looketh upon a woman," seem clearly to extend the range of this commandment to all forms of impurity, and the counsels which follow—as they most certainly were intended for all, whether married or unmarried—seem to confirm this.

As in dealing with the sixth commandment our Lord first expounds it, and then in the four following verses applies His exposition (Mt 5:21-25), so here He first expounds the seventh commandment, and then in the four following verses applies His exposition (Mt 5:28-32).

Matthew Poole's Commentary

The scope of our Saviour in these verses is the very same as in the verses immediately preceding, viz. to correct the jejune interpretation which the Pharisees had put upon the Divine law, and to show that he, instead of coming to destroy the law, came to fulfil it, as other ways, so by giving a more strict and true interpretation of it; and whereas they interpreted it only as to overt acts, which disturb human society and break civil order, he showeth that it reacheth to the inward thoughts, and unlawful desires of the heart, and any means that have a tendency to such prohibited acts. It was said by God to those fathers of the Jews,

Thou shalt not commit adultery, [Exodus 20:14](#). This law (saith our Saviour) your doctors expound, You shall not carnally lie with a woman that is not your wife; but there is a great deal more in it than so, for he that but secretly in his heart desireth such a thing, or taketh pleasure in such thoughts, and casts his eyes upon a woman in order to such a thing, is in the sight of God an adulterer. Hence we read of *eyes full of adultery*, to avoid which Job *made a covenant with his eyes*, [Job 31:1](#), and would not suffer his heart to walk after his eyes, [Job 31:7](#). We must so interpret the commandments of God, as not to extend them only to forbid or command those acts which are plainly mentioned in them, but the inward pleasing of our hearts with such things as are forbidden, the desires of our hearts after them, or whatsoever is a probable means to give us that sinful pleasure of our thoughts, or further inflame such unlawful desires in our souls.

Gill's Exposition of the Entire Bible

But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman,... Many and severe are the prohibitions of the Jews, concerning looking upon a woman, which they aggravate as a

very great sin: they say (k), it is not lawful to look upon a beautiful woman, though unmarried; nor upon another man's wife, though deformed; nor upon a woman's coloured garments: they forbid (l) looking on a woman's little finger, and say (m), that he that tells money to a woman, out of his hand into her's, that he may look upon her, though he is possessed of the law and good works, even as Moses, he shall not escape the damnation of hell: they affirm (n), that he that looks upon a woman's heel, his children shall not be virtuous; and that a man may not go after a woman in the way, no, not after his wife: should he meet her on a bridge, he must take her to the side of him; and whoever goes through a river after a woman, shall have no part in the world to (o) come: nay, they forbid (p) a man looking on the beauty of his own wife. Now these things were said by them, chiefly to cover themselves, and because they would be thought to be very chaste; when they were, as Christ calls them, an "adulterous generation" in a literal sense: they usually did what our Lord observes, "strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel". We read in the Talmud (q), of , a "foolish saint" and it is asked, who is he? and it is answered, one that sees a woman drowning in a river, and says it is not lawful for me , "to look" upon her, and deliver her. It was not any looking upon a woman, that is forbid by Christ as criminal; but so to look, as "to lust after her"; for such an one

hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But these men, who forbade external looking upon a woman, generally speaking, had no notion of heart sins; and which was the prevailing opinion of the Pharisees, in Christ's time.

"A good thought, they (r) allow, is reckoned as if done; as it is said, [Malachi 3:16](#). Upon which it is asked, what is the meaning of that, and "that thought" upon "his name?" Says R. Ase, if a man thinks to do a good work, and is hindered, and does it not, the Scripture reckons it to him, as if he did it; but an evil thought, the holy blessed God does not account of it as if done, as is said, [Psalm 66:18](#)."

Upon which words, a noted commentator (s) of their's has this remark:

"Though I regard iniquity in my heart to do it, even in thought, yea, against God himself, as if I had expressed it with my lips, he does not hear it; that is, , "he does not reckon it to me for sin"; because the holy blessed God does not account an evil thought for an action, to them that are in the faith of God, or of the true religion."

For it seems, this is only true of the Israelites; it is just the reverse with the Gentiles, in whom God does not reckon of a good thought, as if it was done, but does of an evil one, as if it was in act (t). It must be owned, that this is not the sense of them all; for some of them have gone so far as to say (u), that

"the thoughts of sin are greater, or harder, than sin itself:"

by which they mean, that it is more difficult to subdue sinful lusts, than to refrain from the act of sin itself; and particularly, some of them say things which agree with, and come very near to what our Lord here says; as when they affirm (w), that

"everyone that looks upon a woman with intention, it is all one as if he lay with her."

And that , "he that committeth adultery with his eyes, is called an adulterer" (x). Yea, they also observe (y), that a woman may commit adultery in her heart, as well as a man; but the Pharisees of Christ's time were of another mind.

(k) T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 1, 2.((l) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. Sabbat. fol. 64. 2.((m) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2.((n) T. Bab. Nedarim, fol. 20. 1. T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Derech Eretz. c. 1. fol. 17. 3.((o) T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1. Eruvin, fol. 18. 2.((p) Zohar in Lev. fol. 34. 4. (q) T. Bab Sota, fol. 21. 2.((r) T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.((s) R. David Kimchi, in Psal. lxvi. 18. (t) T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 16. 2.((u) T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 29. 1.((w) T. Hieros. Challa, fol. 58. 3. Massechet Calah, fol. 16. 4. Vid. Maimon. Issure Bia, c. 21. sect. 2. & Moses Kotsensis Mitzvot Tora precept. neg. 126. (x) Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 265. 1.((y) Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 196. 1.

Geneva Study Bible

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Expositor's Greek Testament

[Matthew 5:28](#).—ὁ βλέπων: the looker is supposed to be a husband who by his look wrongs his own wife.—γυναικα: married or unmarried.—πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι. he look is supposed to be not casual but persistent, the desire not involuntary or momentary, but cherished with longing. Augustine, a severe judge in such matters, defines the offence thus: "Qui hoc fine et hoc animo attenderit ut eam concupiscat; quod jam non est titillari delectatione carnis sed plene consentire libidini" (De ser. Domini). Chrysostom, the merciless scourge of the vices of Antioch, says: ὁ ἑαυτῷ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν συλλέγων, ὁ μηδενὸς ἀναγκάζοντος τὸ θηρίον ἐπεισάγων ἡρεμοῦντι τῷ λογισμῷ. Hom. xvii. The Rabbis also condemned unchaste looks, but in how coarse a style compared with Jesus let this quotation given by Fritzsche show: "Intuens vel in minimum digitum feminae est ac si intueretur in locum pudendum". In better taste are these sayings quoted by Wünsche (Beiträge): "The eye and the heart are the two brokers of sin"; "Passions lodge only in him who sees".—αὐτὴν (bracketed as doubtful by W. H[24]): the accusative after ἐπιθ. is rare and late.—We cannot but think of the personal relations to woman of One who understood so well the subtle sources of sexual sin. Shall we say that He was tempted in all points as we are, but desire was expelled by the mighty power of a pure love to which every woman was as a daughter, a sister, or a betrothed: a sacred object of tender respect?

[24] Westcott and Hort.

Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges

(β) Adultery, 27–32.

28. *to lust after her* i. e. "with a view to lust after her."

in his heart] Contrast with the pure *in heart*, [Matthew 5:8](#).

Bengel's Gnomes

[Matthew 5:28](#). Ὁ βλέπων, *that looketh*) Refer to this expression the right eye mentioned in the next verse.—πρὸς, *to*) This particle determines the character of the looking.—ἤδη, *already*) by that very act.

Pulpit Commentary

Verse 28. - **But I say** (ver. 22, note). The bare command forbidding an external action is insufficient. It must extend to the thought. Contrast Josephus ('Ant.,' 12:09. 1), "The purposing to do a thing, without actually doing it, is not worthy of punishment." Generally, however, the sinfulness of wrong thoughts must have been acknowledged (cf. [Psalm 51:10](#), and the tenth commandment; cf. late examples in Schott-gen). Hammond ('Pr. Cat.,' in Ford) says, "In the Law, the fastening of the eyes on an idol, considering the beauty of it, saith Maimonides, is forbidden ([Leviticus 19:4](#)), and not only the worship of it" (**vide** Maimonides, 'Hilk. Ab. Zar.,' 2:2, by whom, however, the thought is, perhaps, rather condemned for what it leads to than per **se**; and similarly with [Job 31:1](#); [Proverbs 6:25](#)). **Whosoever**; Revised Version, **every one who** (ver. 22, note). **Looketh... to lust after** (πρὸς τὸ ἐπιθυμῆσαι). As πρὸς τό with the infinitive (e.g. [Matthew 6:1](#)), primarily denotes purpose; this may be equivalent to "looketh in order that he may lust, looketh to stimulate his lust" (cf. Meyer, Trench); but, as Weiss points out, this surely belongs to the refinement, not to the beginning of sin. Hence Nosgen **suggests** "looketh... lustfully" (cf. [James 4:5](#)). Probably this is one of those cases where, as Ellicott says on [1 Corinthians 9:18](#), πρὸς τό with the infinitive has "a shade of meaning that seems to lie between **purpose** and **result**, and even sometimes to approximate to the latter." At all events, it does not express, as εἰς τό would have expressed, the **immediate** purpose of the look (**vide** Ellicott, **loc. cit.**); cf. [Matthew 6:1](#). **Her** (αὐτήν, B, D, etc.); accusative with ἐπιθυμεῖν, here only in the New Testament. Perhaps the pronoun should be omitted, with x. [Matthew 5:28](#)

CONTRASTING the Lust of the Flesh & Lust of the Eyes:

The lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes are both forms of worldly desires, but they differ in their focus. The lust of the flesh refers to excessive desires or cravings that arise from our physical nature, including sexual urges and gluttony. The lust of the eyes, on the other hand, is the desire for outward appearances, material possessions, or status, as seen in the envy or coveting of others.

Elaboration:

- **Lust of the Flesh:**

This refers to the sinful desires that arise from our physical nature. It can include excessive indulgence in food, sexual immorality, or substance misuse. In a broader sense, it can also encompass any selfish or impulsive desires that draw us away from God.

- **Lust of the Eyes:**

This term highlights the desire for material possessions, outward appearances, or status. It's the envy or coveting of things we see in others. This can include wanting a car, a dress, or a position.

- **Difference:**

The key difference lies in the object of desire. The lust of the flesh focuses on physical gratification, while the lust of the eyes focuses on external appearances and possessions.

- **Example:**

A person who excessively eats or engages in sexual immorality is succumbing to the lust of the flesh. Someone who covets a new car or a higher position is succumbing to the lust of the eyes.

- **Biblical Context:**

Both are part of the "world" that is contrasted with the kingdom of God in [1 John 2:16](#). These desires are seen as being "not from the Father" but from the world.

In essence, the lust of the flesh is about the body's desires, while the lust of the eyes is about the external world's appeal. Both are temptations that can lead us away from God and his will.

What is the lust of the eyes?

The phrase “lust of the eyes” is found in [1 John 2:15-17](#): “Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.” What is this “lust of the eyes”?

Simply put, the lust of the eyes is the sinful desire to possess what we see or to have those things which have visual appeal. This coveting of money, possessions, or other physical things is not from God, but from the world around us. John emphasizes that these physical things do not last; they will pass away. In contrast, the child of God is guaranteed eternity.

The Ten Commandments addressed the lust of the eyes in its prohibition against [coveting](#). [Exodus 20:17](#) commands, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” Coveting can include a desire to have people, possessions, or status.

Satan uses the lust of the eyes as one avenue of temptation. Part of the reason Eve listened to the serpent in the Garden was that she *looked* at the forbidden fruit and saw that it was “pleasing to the eye” ([Genesis 3:6](#)). Satan used a visual image to help entrap her. Satan tried a similar tactic on Jesus. One of his temptations in the wilderness was an attempt to make Jesus covet earthly power. Satan used a visual: he “showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor” ([Matthew 4:8](#)). He then promised to give them to Jesus—for a price. Of course, Jesus did not succumb to the lust of the eyes, and Satan was defeated (verses 10 and 11).

We must follow Jesus’ example and, in the power of the Holy Spirit, resist the lust of the eyes. The world is full of “eye candy,” glamor, and gaudiness. Materialism beckons with its promise of happiness and fulfillment. A media-saturated society bombards us with advertising campaigns that might as well say, “Covet this!”

All that glitters is not gold, and the child of God knows that fame, fortune, and finery quickly fade ([Proverbs 23:5](#)). Our focus is not the newest product or latest fashion. Our goal is not to keep up with the Joneses or to surround ourselves with the trappings of glittering

magnificence. Instead, our goal is “to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings” ([Philippians 3:10](#)). Our eyes are set on Jesus ([Hebrews 12:2](#)). Our view is to eternity.

Cecil Alexander, the Irish hymnist, said it this way:

*“Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world’s golden store;
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, ‘Christian, love Me more.’”*

[Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary](#)

1st John 2:15-17 The things of the world may be desired and possessed for the uses and purposes which God intended, and they are to be used by his grace, and to his glory; but believers must not seek or value them for those purposes to which sin abuses them. The world draws the heart from God; and the more the love of the world prevails, the more the love of God decays.

The things of the world are classed according to the three ruling inclinations of depraved nature. 1. The lust of the flesh, of the body: wrong desires of the heart, the appetite of indulging all things that excite and inflame sensual pleasures. 2. The lust of the eyes: the eyes are delighted with riches and rich possessions; this is the lust of covetousness. 3. The pride of life: a vain man craves the grandeur and pomp of a vain-glorious life; this includes thirst after honour and applause.

The things of the world quickly fade and die away; desire itself will ere long fail and cease, but holy affection is not like the lust that passes away. The love of God shall never fail.

Many vain efforts have been made to evade the force of this passage by limitations, distinctions, or exceptions. Many have tried to show how far we may be carnally-minded, and love the world; but the plain meaning of these verses cannot easily be mistaken. Unless this victory over the world is begun in the heart, a man has no root in himself, but will fall away, or at most remain an unfruitful professor.

Yet these vanities are so alluring to the corruption in our hearts, that without constant watching and prayer, we cannot escape the world, or obtain victory over the god and prince of it.

Barnes' Notes on the Bible

For all that is in the world - That is, all that really constitutes the world, or that enters into the aims and purposes of those who live for this life. All that that community lives for may be comprised under the following things.

The lust of the flesh - The word "lust" is used here in the general sense of desire, or that which is the object of desire - not in the narrow sense in which it is now commonly used to denote libidinous passion. See the notes at [James 1:14](#). The phrase, "the lust of the flesh," here denotes that which pampers the appetites, or all that is connected with the indulgence of the mere animal propensities. A large part of the world lives for little more than this. This is the lowest form of worldly indulgence; those which are immediately specified being of a higher order, though still merely worldly.

And the lust of the eyes - That which is designed merely to gratify the sight. This would include, of course, costly clothes, jewels, gorgeous furniture, splendid palaces, pleasure-grounds, etc. The object is to refer to the frivolous vanities of this world, the thing on which the eye delights to rest where there is no higher object of life. It does not, of course, mean that the eye is never to be gratified, or that we can find as much pleasure in an ugly as in a handsome object, or that it is sinful to find pleasure in beholding objects of real beauty - for the world, as formed by its Creator, is full of such things, and he could not but have intended that pleasure should enter the soul through the eye, or that the beauties which he has shed so lavishly over his works should contribute to the happiness of his creatures; but the apostle refers to this when it is the great and leading object of life - when it is sought without any connection with religion or reference to the world to come.

And the pride of life - The word here used means, properly, ostentation or boasting, and then arrogance or pride. - Robinson. It refers to whatever there is that tends to promote pride, or that is an index of pride, such as the ostentatious display of dress, equipage, furniture, etc.

Is not of the Father - Does not proceed from God, or meet with his approbation. It is not of the nature of true religion to seek these things, nor can their pursuit be reconciled with the existence of real piety in the heart. The sincere Christian has nobler ends; and he who has not any higher ends, and whose conduct and feelings can all be accounted for by a desire for these things, cannot be a true Christian.

But is of the world - Is originated solely by the objects and purposes of this life, where religion and the life to come are excluded.