Living The Good Life: Lust

Pastor Kevin Donoho March 1, 2024

Opening Discussion

 What thoughts, feelings, or impressions do you have about the sermon this week?

Thought #1: What does it mean to lust?

Matthew 5:28

"But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

Pastor Kevin pointed out that the word used for lust in this passage is "epithumia" which is considered a neutral word. Neither good nor bad. It can be expressed in healthy or unhealthy ways. He reminded us that desires and cravings are not inherently bad, but we have to be aware when they become distorted.

According to the passage, what distinguishes healthy desires from unhealthy ones? How do these distinctions align with the teachings of Jesus?

Review the following passages:

Ephesians 2:1-3

"Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God's anger, just like everyone else."

Galatians 5:16-17

"So I say, let the Holy Spirit guide your lives. Then you won't be doing what your sinful nature craves. The sinful nature wants to do evil, which is just the opposite of what the Spirit wants. And the Spirit gives us desires

that are the opposite of what the sinful nature desires."

In what ways do these passages contribute to our understanding of human nature and its inclination toward desires and cravings? How does the concept of lust, as discussed in the text, influence our relationships and interactions with others?

Consider the quote "The first look is natural; the second is intentional." Discuss the difference between attraction and lust as depicted by this. How does intentionality play a role in distinguishing between the two?

Reflecting on your own experiences, how have you observed lust impacting relationships, either personally or in broader cultural contexts? From a Christian perspective, how can individuals cultivate a mindset that values others as persons rather than objects, especially in a culture that often promotes objectification?

Thought #2: What is Jesus trying to communicate?

How does Jesus challenge societal norms and expectations regarding adultery and sexual behavior? In what ways does Jesus' message aim to elevate the value and treatment of women, especially in a cultural context where they were often marginalized and subjected to harsh consequences for adultery?

Why does Jesus emphasize the importance of addressing the desires of the heart rather than focusing solely on outward behavior modification? How does the concept of reordering our desires align with Jesus' teachings about transformation and discipleship?

When you consider that Jesus leads and guides individuals with their sexual desires, how does this impact the way Christians approach intimacy and relationships? In what ways can the teachings of Jesus regarding desire and selflessness contribute to healthier and more fulfilling marriages within Christian communities?

Thought #3: Is lust always about physical objectification of another person?

Consider the idea of lust extending beyond physical desires, as mentioned in the sermon, and encompassing emotional aspects as well. How does this challenge or align with your view of lust?

Reflecting on the statement that attraction can originate from emotional connections, how do you think emotional intimacy can blur the lines between healthy and unhealthy desires? In what ways do cultural norms and media influence or shape our emotional desires and cravings, potentially leading us toward unhealthy behaviors or attitudes?

Considering that both men and women are susceptible to emotional attachments and desires, how can we proactively guard against allowing emotions to lead them us into unhealthy situations?

How can communities within the church provide support and accountability to help people navigate the complexities of emotional desires?

Thought #4: What do we do with our strong desires and cravings?

"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you." -Augustine

Why is it essential to acknowledge our own role in seeking change and transformation, particularly in overcoming sinful tendencies? Reflecting on the idea that sin gains power over us the more we engage in it, how can individuals redirect their energy and time toward God in order to break free from sinful habits?

Pastor Kevin reminded us that sin will attempt to define us. However, we are loved! How does this mindset challenge common perceptions of self-worth or identity in the context of lust? How do the feelings of shame or guilt that often accompany struggles with lust serve to keep us trapped or stuck in a sin pattern?

Can you share a personal experience where you felt God's reminder of your identity and worth amid struggles or failures? Discuss how the prayer for God to purify our desires and cravings aligns with a desire for spiritual growth and a deeper relationship with God.

Questions for Pastor Todd Keller or Julie Burch regarding your REMIX group?

• Email: Todd <u>tkeller@collegechurch.com</u>
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***Remember to record your attendance for the week. Thank you.

How can we pray for each other this week?		
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