

LOVE AND LUST

“But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” —MATTHEW 5:28

There is love and there is lust, both sexual in nature, but at totally opposite ends of the spectrum. To understand the illegitimacy of sexual behaviour, we need to know what God has ordained in His word concerning sexual relations.

Sex is firstly a divine creation. Genesis 1:27 says, “In the image of God he created him; male and female.” Secondly, sex is a divine command. “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it’.” (Genesis 1:28) Thirdly, sex is a divine concern. In Genesis 2:18, God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” And in verse 24, “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

This is the normal way of life ordained by God, but in today’s world we live in a culture where sensual pleasures are highly valued. Restraint is often considered to be unhealthy and discipline unnecessary. “If it feels good, do it” seems to be the consensus of our day. That could not be anymore contrary to what Jesus said. “I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Sexual desire, in itself, does not constitute lust. Lust is the intention to selfishly use someone to gratify their own sexual desires. Unrestrained sexual activity, which is driven by lust, inevitably leads to pain, both

personally and corporately. Families are the building blocks of society, but are falling apart at a faster rate than ever before, and infidelity with its far-reaching effects is a major cause.

God intended that sexual relationship be the consummation of a total relationship between a man and a woman. He ordained marriage with His blessing and love, and the physical act is merely an expression of the spiritual and soulful oneness we are meant to enjoy in marriage. Paul writes that love is patient, kind and is not self-seeking. It always protects, trusts and perseveres. Lust is the complete reverse. It is self gratifying only.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus dealt with the root cause of all sin... the condition of our hearts. None of us can cast a stone. We are all with sin, and can try a hundred times in a hundred different ways to change ourselves, but we're only spinning our wheels. The invitation of Jesus is, "Come to me.... and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Jesus first changes our hearts so that we hunger for His righteousness and He is the empowering that transforms us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, Come into my heart and fill it. Keep me from temptation and help me to live the way God intended. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: Is there sin in my life I need to confess, and ask the Lord's help with?