

“Pure Righteous Character”. Matthew 5:27-37

Series: “Pure Discipleship in a Corrupt World” Part 7  
The Sermon on the Mount” Scott T. Arnold. 3/14/2021

**Key Thought:** Pure discipleship follows the Spirit of God’s law and commandments to respect all life and relationships as sacred. Jesus taught that lust and evil selfish desires are at the root of sexual immorality. Corruption in the heart and in our minds leads to adultery and we need God’s help to set boundaries. Inappropriate sexual behavior and unfaithfulness breaks marriage, essential covenants and commitments and has led to divorce and brokenness. Jesus taught a higher standard for moral conduct than the Pharisees who had become too lax by excusing divorce too quickly. Jesus promoted fidelity in marriage and ethical responsibility as a matter of faithfulness to God and purity of discipleship.

I. Jesus addressed the Root Issues of Sexual Immorality (27-29)

- A. The act of adultery is reprehensible to God. (27)
- B. The root cause of adultery is a disease in the heart. (28)
  - 1. Lust stems from loss of respect and misplaced affection.
  - 2. Sinful human corruption and temptation must be overcome.
- C. Pure Discipleship sets limits and changes one’s behavior (29-30)

II. Jesus Addressed the problem of divorce (31-32)

- A. Divorce was treated too lightly by the Pharisees (31)
- B. Jesus taught that divorce must be treated seriously (32)
  - 1. Divorce is acceptable when there is immorality and unfaithfulness or violence. (Greek – “Pornea”)
  - 2. Divorce is not an acceptable practice when it is for selfish gain or avoidance of responsibility.
  - 3. Divorce creates many complications and ethical dilemmas and is a last resort.

III. Jesus taught disciples to live with integrity and honesty (33-37)

- A. Let your actions speak of your integrity (33-36)
- B. Let your words be truthful, plain, and honest. (37)

**Application Point:** The Call of God our Heavenly Father is to believe in Jesus Christ and follow His lead in respecting the sanctity of all life by living in peace and respect of others. Beyond the law of “Thou Shalt Not commit adultery” is the deeper principle of faithfulness to God, and the sacred consideration and respect of all people. With God’s help, people may overcome the corrupt thoughts and desires of sexual immorality. Pure righteous character is born of repentance, faith in God, and respectful love of one another.

**27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. 31 “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery. 33 “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ 34 But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36 And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37 All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one. (Matthew 5:27-37 NIV).**

Questions:

- 1. Adultery, as Jesus defined it, was more than the commission of sexual infidelity, it involves the desires and hearts of people. Why did Jesus emphasize this?
- 2. Why is it vitally important the disciples practice self-control and self-respect in matters of sexuality? What did Jesus mean by “cut it off” if an eye or a hand causes you to stumble?
- 3. How do we see the institution of marriage, as God has ordained it, being threatened today?
- 4. What are the core issues that lead people to sexual immorality, abuse, or misconduct?