



First Baptist Church Selmer

SERMON ON THE MOUNT • JESUS & LUST • MATTHEW 5:27-30; PROVERBS 5:15-20 •
9/28/2025

MAIN POINT

Adultery is not confined to a physical act, but an affection of the heart. Jesus commands us to confront this sin at the root by His grace and power.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

At what age is most appropriate to have "the talk" with your children? How influential were your parents and the church in communicating God's design for sex and marriage?

Martin Luther said of sexual temptation, "We can't do anything about the birds flying over our head, but we can prevent them building a nest in our hair." What do you understand Luther's metaphor to mean? How does this relate to our world today in regards to sexual temptations?

How do you define lust? How have people's opinions of lust changed throughout the years, both individually and as a society?

"Sadly, distortions of God's plan for sex and intimacy impact both men and women. While men tend to be the prevalent advertising targets of pornography and are most often identified with this problem, women struggle as well." - *The Gospel for Disordered Lives* by Jones, Kellen, and Green.

No matter where one's path started towards lust, pornography, or any sexual sin, Jesus teaches in Matthew 15:19, "*From the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities...*" It may be our sin that must be confessed and eradicated, but to do so, we must trace back to the central problem, our hearts.

The Greek word translated *"lust"* refers to a strong desire or an intense longing. The word was used only a few times in the New Testament to describe a positive longing. Most of the time, the word denoted a negative desire. The word lust can also be translated as "cravings of the flesh" or "desire for something forbidden." In today's passage, Jesus drew the connection between lustful thoughts and the Seventh commandment, *"Do not commit adultery."* God's intent for the command against adultery went far beyond the literal breaking of the marriage bond. It included the heart attitude that underlies all sexual misbehavior.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ 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.

How did Jesus interpret the commandment not to commit adultery? How did this differ from the teaching of the Pharisees?

How did Jesus' clarification raise expectations for His followers?

What do these verses teach us is the root of sexual sin?

In this text, Jesus intensified the Seventh Commandment by looking at the heart of the command and exhorting His listeners not to lust. The act of lusting that Jesus is talking about is not the inadvertent, accidental glance. Rather, it is the purposeful, repeated, engaged looking. By using the past tense and saying that the person has already committed adultery, Jesus focuses on the heart of the person that is bent by sin. The heart of a person who commits physical adultery is the same as a person who looks lustfully, as Jesus describes.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 5:29-30

29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand

causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell." (ESV)

How did Jesus emphasize the seriousness of lust in verses 29-30?

Jesus emphasized the point by telling them to put out the right eye or cut off the right hand if it leads to sin. Using classic Jewish teaching techniques, Jesus demonstrated that nothing is too precious to eliminate from our lives if it causes us to lust. It is important to note, as does Daniel Akin in the *Christ-Center Exposition Commentary*, that "The key to spiritual victory over lust is not a mutilated eye. The key to spiritual victory is a circumcised heart" (Deut 10:16; 30:6). After all, sin arises from a corrupt heart rather than flesh and bone.

Jesus here uses hyperbole (intentional exaggeration for the sake of making a point) and allegory (in which the eye represents a lustful perspective and the hand represents an immoral deed) in order to convey a vital requirement of discipleship. Disciples should "make it hard to sin" by putting a stop to thoughts and behaviors that contribute to immorality. As the famous 17th-century theologian John Owen states, "Be killing sin or (sin will) be killing you." You choose!

Do you fight lust in your life to the degree that Jesus insists? How?

D.A. Carson states, "We are to deal drastically with sin. We must not pamper it, flirt with it, enjoy nibbling a little of it around the edges. We are to hate it, crush it, dig it out... sin leads to hell. And that is the ultimate reason why sin must be taken seriously."

What does Jesus' harsh stance regarding lust teach you about His work on the cross?

What are the dividing lines between "pure" and "impure" in today's world?

Sex within marriage was designed to be the most pure, uninhibited, and unashamed kind of intimacy imaginable. God intended it to be an act in which a person is both known and fully knows another person without shame or regret. But, like everything else in the world, sex has been corrupted by sin. Instead of serving as an expression of love and intimacy, sex has become a tool for personal gratification at the expense of another. In Matthew 5, Jesus taught that true purity isn't just a matter of abstaining from sinful sex; it's a condition of the heart that must be corrected. Jesus called us to engage in the fight for purity at any cost.

Think about your life. Like verse 29, which specific area of your life is leading you into sin?

Why is it necessary for you to 'cut off' your pathways of access to sin? What do you need to do to cut that part out of your life?

The overcoming process of a habitual sin is one of war, not simply a battle. It is important that we first identify our sin and then make necessary changes to avoid temptation to sin again. It is oftentimes much easier to state "I want to change" versus taking the steps to change. It is common for people to see that God cares for us, but pay little attention to the fact that God is good and more than enough. Psalm 34:8 tells us, *"Taste and see that the Lord is good."* In moments of weakness, we must seek our fulfillment in God and His eternal blessings, not the fleeting, temporal pleasures of this world.

As we see in the life of Apostle Paul, some individuals are divinely gifted to focus their hearts and desires solely on the Lord through singleness. God's goodness is more than enough, but for many, God provides an opportunity to help us deal with our fleshly desires to know and be known (1 Corinthians 7:9).

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PROVERBS 5:15-20.

*15 "Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.*

*16 Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?*

*17 Let them be for yourself alone,
and not for strangers with you.*

*18 Let your fountain be blessed,
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,*

19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe.

*Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight;
be intoxicated always in her love.*

*20 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman
and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?" (ESV)*

What is the main message of this passage?

Why was the analogy of drawing water from your own well powerful in that society? What would be a comparable metaphor for sexual purity today?

The main idea in verses 15-20 is clear, but the way it is expressed comes from a culture that is foreign to most of us. We usually take for granted a ready and healthy source of water, but water was far more precious to the people who first read the Book of Proverbs. People in Bible times often provided water for their families by digging wells or devising cisterns to catch and hold rainwater. Ideally, each house had its own cistern (2 Kings 18:31). Therefore, the metaphor of drinking water from one's own cistern or well was especially appropriate for a husband remaining both physically and emotionally committed to his own spouse.

What worldly distractions can undermine finding fulfillment in our spouses?

For those of us who are single, what lessons can we take away from this proverb and Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5:27-30?

**What boundaries has God set for His children in regards to sexual purity?
How do the boundaries God has set for sexual purity protect you?**

We all know too well the sexual temptations this world throws our way. The only hope we have of remaining faithful to God, throughout singleness or marriage, is by living within the boundaries God has laid out. All of His boundaries are designed to benefit us. They protect us from damaging attitudes and actions we inevitably regret, and preserve for us life's best.

APPLICATION

As Christians, we are called to imitate Christ in our lifestyles and attitudes. We are also to live lives that others can imitate. Fortunately, from Scripture, we are given many practical ways in which we can grow in spiritual maturity and strive to meet God's expectations for us—even in the area of sexual purity.

What are some ways you can remove lustful sins and avoid them in the future?

How is Christ our only hope concerning lust and sexual purity?

How can we as a group encourage one another to live lives of purity and self-control?

PRAYER

Close your time in prayer by asking God to help you be vigilant and aware of the temptations and lusts of the world. Pray that God would keep your group far from lust and that you would rely on the power of the Spirit to fight against lust. Pray for the people in our church and in our community who are struggling with sexual sins—that they would find freedom in Christ.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 5:27-30

Jesus drew the command concerning adultery directly from the Ten Commandments (Ex. 20:14). Again, however, we are led to assume that the Pharisaical interpretation of adultery was the actual physical act. Jesus expanded our understanding of adultery to include a lustful attitude toward a spouse who is not one's own.

Jesus moves on from the Sixth to the Seventh Commandment (Ex. 20:14). "Adultery" usually referred to sexual relations by a married person with a partner other than his or her spouse, but verse 28 makes clear that Jesus is not limiting His commandments to married people but speaking of sexual sin in general. The grammar of verse 28a leads to two possible translations. Jesus could be speaking of one who "looks at a woman with the intention of committing adultery" or to one who "looks at a woman for the purpose of getting her to lust after him." Either way, He refers to one who continues to look rather than just casting a passing glance.

Instead, Jesus is condemning lustful thoughts and actions—those involving an actual desire to have sexual relations with someone other than one's spouse. Yet despite the danger of overapplying this verse, an even greater danger is that of underapplying it. Adultery among Christians today is a scandal, yet it rarely occurs without pretense. Christians must recognize thoughts and actions that make the possibility of giving in to temptation more likely, requiring dramatic action to avoid them.

As in verses 23-26, Jesus illustrates this decisive action with two metaphorical illustrations (vv. 29-30). Eyes and hands are primary offenders in sexual sin, but verses 29-30 may be applied more broadly as well. Literal self-mutilation is not Christ's objective. It is quite possible to be blind or crippled and still lust. Rather, as is characteristic of Jesus' figurative and hyperbolic style, He commands us to take drastic measures to avoid temptations to sexual sin—to remove from ourselves, anyone, or anything that could lead us into scandal (*"causes you to sin"*). The *"right"* eye and hand refer to those viewed in antiquity as more

valuable. Again, eternal judgment appears as the punishment for those who fail to heed Jesus' words. Jesus urged His students to pay the lesser costs that may be required to halt an adulterous heart early on, rather than allow the sin to develop fully and incur the final judgment of God. Because Jesus repeated this pattern twice, we may take from it another underlying principle: It costs less to address the root of a sin early on than to carry the weight of the consequences of the sin fully developed as well as the weight of judgment before God. The earlier a sin is dealt with, the better.

| PROVERBS 5:15-20

Verse 15 means that a man should have sexual relations only with his wife. The best interpretation is that "*fountains*" and "*rivers of waters*" refer to the husband's sexual affections, as the "*cistern*" refers to the affections of his wife. The man should not take his love and desire to anyone else by going out into the street. The analogy implies that husband and wife fill and refresh each other, the one like a flowing stream and the other like a peaceful well. Sexual anarchy results when people cross over the bounds of fidelity. Verse 17 means that a man should never be willing to share a woman with another man. This naturally excludes visiting prostitutes and immoral women, since they belong to many men.

The blessing in v. 18 might appear to be a promise of many children, but again the passage emphasizes the sexual pleasure of marriage and not having offspring (v. 19). The command to "*take pleasure in your first wife*" implies negatively that a man should never have sexual relations with another woman (outside of marriage) and positively that marriage should include sexual joy and fulfillment.

Verse 19 brings out both the tender affection and the exuberant pleasure of love. She is a loving doe, and he will be drunken with satisfaction in the pleasure she gives. Verse 20 is linked chiastically to v. 19. The man should not stagger from the affection of another woman, nor should he embrace her "*bosom*."