

Small Group Guide: Summer on the Mount: Lust, Adultery, and the Faithful Heart

OVERVIEW

This week's message tackled one of the most avoided yet most urgent topics in the church: sexual sin. Drawing from Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5, the sermon challenged us to move beyond surface-level rule-keeping and address the condition of our hearts. Jesus raises the standard not to condemn us, but to call us into the freedom and wholeness that God designed for us from the beginning.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- God designed sex as a powerful, purposeful, and beautiful gift meant to be enjoyed within the covenant of marriage between a husband and a wife.
- Sexual sin begins in the heart long before it becomes an action. Jesus addresses lust because lust is the root from which sexual sin grows.
- Pornography is not a fringe issue. It is a widespread epidemic affecting men, women, teenagers, and Christians at alarming rates.
- Silence about sexual sin does not protect people from it. It leaves them without the tools to fight it.
- Healing from sexual sin requires four intentional steps: repent, reach out, replace and redeem, and remain faithful.
- You are not strong enough to fight sexual sin alone, and Scripture confirms this through the stories of Samson, David, Solomon, and even Job.
- No sin, no matter how shameful or secret, can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES FOR FURTHER STUDY

- Matthew 5:27-30 -- Jesus teaches that lust in the heart is equivalent to adultery
- Genesis 1:27-28 -- God creates humanity male and female and commands them to be fruitful
- Job 31:1 -- Job makes a covenant with his eyes against lust
- 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 -- Paul warns that sexual sin affects the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit
- 1 Corinthians 10:13 -- God provides a way out of every temptation
- Ephesians 5:11 -- Paul calls believers to expose the deeds of darkness rather than participate in them
- James 5:16 -- Confessing sins to one another leads to healing
- Romans 8:37-39 -- Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Opening Question

Use this question to ease into the conversation before diving into deeper territory.

1. The sermon opened with a whitewater rafting story. The guide gave three simple rules: listen to your guide, get a grip, and stay in the boat. Have you ever been in a situation, physically or spiritually, where you ignored clear instructions and paid the price for it? What did that teach you?

Exploring the Text

2. Jesus says in Matthew 5 that looking at another person with lust is already adultery in the heart. Why do you think Jesus draws the line at the level of the heart rather than just the outward act? What does this tell us about how God evaluates our behavior?
3. The sermon pointed out that the church often has a code of silence when it comes to sex. Why do you think that is? What are the consequences of that silence for individuals, families, and the church as a whole?
4. The quote from the book **"Sex, Jesus, and the Conversations the Church Forgot"** described sex as a tangle of souls, a bonding agent that leaves a permanent imprint on our hearts and spirits. How does understanding sex in this way change how you think about sexual sin and its consequences?
5. Job said in Job 31:1 that he made a covenant with his eyes. He did not claim to be without vulnerability -- he simply chose to do something about it. What does it look like in your own life to make that kind of intentional covenant? What would need to change?

Going Deeper

6. The sermon noted that many people in the Bible's hall of faith -- Samson, David, and Solomon -- were brought down by sexual sin despite their extraordinary devotion and strength. What does this tell us about the nature of this particular temptation? How should it shape our posture toward accountability and humility?
7. The pastor said, "Once you keep it in secret, it has all the power. But once you bring it to the light, it can actually start being dealt with." What makes it so difficult to bring sexual sin into the light? What fears or assumptions keep people from reaching out for help?
8. The sermon challenged single and dating people to stop asking "how far can I go?" and instead ask "what gift can I give to this person?" How does reframing the question change the way you approach relationships and physical boundaries?
9. The pastor described pornography as making sex more like fast food than fine dining -- cheap, quick, and ultimately unsatisfying. In what other areas of life have you seen a similar pattern, where easy and accessible substitutes have dulled your appetite for something better and more meaningful?

Personal Reflection

10. Of the four steps offered in the sermon -- repent, reach out, replace/redeem, and remain faithful -- which one feels most difficult for you personally, and why?
11. The closing message was that God loves you enough not to leave you where you are. Romans 8:37-39 reminds us that nothing can separate us from His love. How does the certainty of God's love give you courage to face areas of your life that feel too shameful to bring into the open?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or more of the following steps to put into practice this week.

For Everyone

- Identify one area of your life where you have been standing your ground in the rapids rather than grabbing the rope. Take one concrete step this week to reach out for help.
- Read through Romans 8:37-39 each morning this week as a reminder that God's love is not conditional on your performance or your past.

For Those in a Relationship

- Have an honest conversation with your dating partner or spouse about how you are honoring one another and growing each other closer to God. Be specific and be kind.
- If you are married, read a passage from Song of Solomon together this week and discuss what it means to pursue one another with intentionality and delight.

For Parents and Grandparents

- Review the parental controls and content filters on any device accessible to the children or teenagers in your home. Do not assume those protections are already in place.
- Begin planning how you will have an honest, Bible-based conversation about sex with your child or grandchild. If you need help, ask your pastor or a trusted mentor for guidance.

For Those Struggling with Sexual Sin

- Identify one person in your life, a pastor, a trusted friend, a counselor, or a small group leader, to whom you can confess your struggle this week. Do not wait for the perfect moment.
- Consider picking up one of the books mentioned in the sermon: "Every Man's Battle," "Every Woman's Battle," "Every Young Man's Battle," or "Every Young Woman's Battle" as a starting point for understanding and addressing this area of your life.
- Look into whether your church or community offers a recovery or accountability group specifically for sexual integrity. If one does not exist, consider asking your church leadership about starting one.

CLOSING PRAYER GUIDE

Close your group time by praying together. You may use these prompts to guide your prayer.

- Thank God for designing sex as a gift and for caring enough about our lives to give us clear instructions for how to live well.
- Confess, individually or collectively, the ways in which cultural messages about sex have shaped your thinking more than Scripture has.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to bring to light anything that has been hidden in darkness and to give each group member the courage to reach out for help.
- Pray specifically for marriages in your group and in your church that are under strain because of sexual sin, that God would bring healing and restoration.
- Declare together the truth of Romans 8:37-39 -- that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- "Sex, Jesus, and the Conversations the Church Forgot" by Mo Isom
- "Every Man's Battle" by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker
- "Every Woman's Battle" by Shannon Ethridge
- "Every Young Man's Battle" by Stephen Arterburn and Fred Stoeker
- "Every Young Woman's Battle" by Shannon Ethridge