

DO NOT STUMBLE INTO LUST

By Terry Jones, January 13, 2008
Christ's Church at Tiffin, Ohio

Matthew 5:27-30

CENTRAL SERMON THEME – Reject the deceit that traps us to desire someone sexually other than a spouse.

INTRO. - My intentions today are to help our men resist the temptation to lust. I am on a crusade to develop men of God. Psalm 119:9 - *How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Your word.*

Richard Exley writes, "Lust is to the gift of sex what cancer is to a normal cell. Therefore, we deny it, not in order to become sexless saints, but in order to be fully alive to God, which includes the full and uninhibited expression of our sexual being within the God-given context of marriage."

Richard Exley, quoted in *Homemade*, Vol. 13, No. 9, September, 1989. Lust is cancer in the spiritual heart that destroys love for our families and God. The Bible says lust is abnormal and sinful.

Porn is now \$10 to 14 billion business annually in the USA and \$56 billion worldwide. There are 330 million porn websites on the Internet. Concerned people are working to stop the massive flow of porn into our lives. If you travel you may check out the website CleanHotels.com. CleanHotels is a network of lodging facilities that do not offer in-room pornographic pay-per-view movies. You can join a protest against Abercrombie & Fitch for peddling soft porn to the teenagers in their stores. Take a look at the website, OneMillionMoms.com. The biggest movement against prostitution and porn is the cleaning up of a portion of the Red Light district in Amsterdam, Holland. Mayor Job Cohen is trying to stop the sex abuses occurring in their city. They are trying to curtail it.

The Internet has opened the flood gates of porn with the click of a computer. While we applaud all the efforts to stop the invasion of porn, we adults carry the responsibility to personally clean up our hearts. Jesus directly addressed the problem. He presents four precautions to prevent us from stumbling into harmful and destructive lusts.

I. KNOW GOD'S VIEW OF SEXUALITY

- A. Jesus quotes the seventh of the Ten Commands from Exodus 20:14 and Deut. 5:18 forbidding adultery.

1. Matt. 5:27 - 'You have heard' means to know and understand.
 2. The sincere Jews knew and understood the Ten Commands as their personal and community moral standards.
 3. Jesus quotes this law to confirm it as a law for us.
- B. God's view of sexuality is linked to creation.
1. God created us as sexual beings; male and female.
 2. Gen. 2:22, God created the first woman from the body of Adam.
 - a. Moses writes in v. 24 - For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.
 - b. God established that only a husband (male human being) and his wife (female human being) can be one flesh.
 - c. Heb. 13: 4 supports the creation view - Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.
 3. God created our sexuality to be good.
- C. God established sexuality to be practiced within His marriage system.
1. God says that any other expression of sex is called fornication.
 2. Wherever God's messengers proclaimed the good news of Jesus Christ people forsook other sexual morals to follow God's standard.
 3. People forsook polygamy, repented of homosexuality, and gave up related sins to follow Christ.
 4. The Corinth Church is an illustration of how Christ changed their lives. 1 Cor. 6:9-11; Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- D. When Jesus spoke about lust in the heart He was not establishing a new law.
1. He is interpreting the last command in Exod 20:17/Deut. 5:21; You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
 2. Lust is coveting what one does not rightfully own.

3. Using the command forbidding adultery Jesus directly identifies the cause of this sin.
- E. The next precaution to avoid stumbling into lust is to know and obey God's law against adultery.
1. The intent of this principle is to include whatever leads to adultery.
 2. The second precaution to prevent us from stumbling into the trap of lust is to stop lusting in the heart.

II. STOP LUSTING IN THE HEART

- A. Jesus said, "But I say to you..."
1. Jesus quoted the OT as His authority and then He said "But I say to you..."
 2. Jesus is establishing a higher standard for citizens of His kingdom.
 3. After this sermon the people said He spoke with authority.
 - a. Jesus possesses the authority to guide His followers.
 - b. Jesus is our Savior and Lord.
 4. Whatever Jesus said was right and good for us to obey.
- B. Lust is thinking, imagining and dreaming of a sexual experience with a person other than a spouse.
1. Jesus knew that the sight of a woman can cause sexual arousal.
 2. Jesus said the man who looks at a woman to be sexually aroused and imagines having sex with her is committing lust.
 3. According to Jesus this person has already committed adultery with her in his heart.
 4. Since Jesus links lust with adultery it is a serious violation of God's holiness and grace.
- C. Jesus wants to stop emotional affairs before they become physical affairs.
1. Prov. 5:3ff warns us; For the lips of an adulteress drip honey and smoother than oil is her speech; but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword, her steps take hold of death.
 2. Illus. - A Christian married man worked closely with an attractive married woman in a corporate office. She possessed a pleasing personality, an attractive smile and was very intelligent. After completing a few projects together they became good friends. She

started complimenting him, "You are not like other men. You are so caring and kind." He said to her, "You are a pretty woman." She would visit his office just to talk and visit. After a period of time they decided to eat lunch together by themselves. Nothing should happen because he had a beautiful loving wife at home and she was married to a wonderful husband. One day while she was in his office without anyone present they kissed. This man knew they were in trouble. The woman suggested they go to a hotel. He refused the offer. That night this man confessed to his wife he was having an emotional affair with a co-worker. His wife was broken hearted but she forgave him with the condition he request a transfer to another city. His company agreed to the plan. The man met with this woman to inform her of his decision. He confessed his infatuation with her but he would not forsake his wife and family to marry her. She agreed and asked for his forgiveness. Both apologized for what they had started. They stopped before tragedy struck. Many have not been so fortunate.

3. James 1:14-16 explains how temptation works.
 - a. Temptation is an appeal to our desires.
 - b. The idea is conceived in the heart.
 - c. The idea becomes a plan looking for an opportunity.
 - d. The opportunity is available and gives birth to sin.
 - e. Sin brings forth death.
 - f. "Do not be deceived."
4. Jesus puts up a Stop sign - STOP!

D. The third precaution to prevent us from stumbling into the trap of lust is to cut off the causes of lust.

III. CUT OFF THE CAUSES OF LUST

- A. If your right eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away.
 1. It is better to enter Heaven with one part missing than to enter Hell with all the parts intact.
 - a. The eye is the interstate to the heart that wants to lust.
 - b. Jesus does not mean to literally remove the eye but He is using hyperbole to make his point.
 - c. The Christian mind cuts off what the eye sees that would cause lust.

2. To stumble is to be deceived or trapped into thinking something is good when it is destructive.
- B. If your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away.
1. Jesus is using hyperbole but is not suggesting cutting off the right hand.
 2. Cutting off a hand will not make anyone stop lusting.
 3. The mind determines what the hand will bring to the eyes.
 4. We have died to sin.
- C. We Christians have cut off the desires of our flesh.
1. Romans 6:1ff - Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.
 2. Gal. 5:24 - Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.
- D. Application - Christians, cut off pornography from your life.
1. Porn invaded our nation through a loose interpretation of the first amendment of our Constitution that all kinds of speech and expression are protected by our Constitution.
 2. What harm is it?
 - a. Harms public health and safety; porn is used to seduce children, increases sex crimes against children, and has caused two million online sex addicts.
 - b. Harms marriage and the family; devalues women, destroys true intimacy between married couples, and leads to wives feeling inferior to the porn stars.
 - c. Harms people of faith; porn can become an idol and replace the love of God.
 - d. Increases sexual promiscuity and unwanted pregnancies.
 - e. Harms education; children are harmed when exposed to porn which interferes with the learning process.
 - f. Harms the economy; sex businesses move in and cause businesses to move out.

g. Cripples Christian faith; I tried to help a man who had struggles with his faith. He stepped forward one Sunday to restore himself to Christ. I decided to visit in his home. When I arrived he was on the phone with someone. I sat on his couch waiting for the phone call to end. I picked up a news magazine to read while I waited. Under it was a stack of pornographic magazines. I knew he was in trouble. His wife left him because his porn led him to an affair. There are no mature Christians who use porn for lust drives out the Holy Spirit.

E. Illus. - A man highly respected in the church played the guitar in the Worship Team and worked with the college age youth. He called me one night at my home with a sad report. Police had arrested him for sexually abusing his own daughter. I was stunned. Later that week he talked to me about his problem. He confessed watching porn for years caused him to abuse his daughter. Good men can be overcome.

F. Jesus pleads with us from His love and mercy - Cut off the causes of lust.

G. After cutting off the causes, we are now ready to seek God's forgiveness.

IV. SEEK GOD'S FORGIVENESS

A. "To tear out the eye and cut off the hand" imply a forgiveness and restoration to Christ.

1. It may be possible that more men are lost because of sexual sins than any other sin.
2. God has forgiven more sexual sins than any other sin.
3. Rom. 5:20 addresses all sins - The Law came in so that the transgression would increase; but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more, so that, as sin reigned in death, so grace would reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

B. What are we Christians to do about our sexual sins?

1. Have you stopped? Yes.
2. Did you ask for forgiveness? Yes
3. Are you a Christian now? Yes

4. God is our Judge and Savior, therefore self-condemnation helps no one.
5. Romans 8:1 - There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

CONCLUSION - The preacher of the largest church in Lexington, Kentucky, learned his good friend and Chairman of the Elders had committed adultery against his wife. This news broke his heart. He would openly cry over what this man had done. After the incident he preached a sermon one Sunday about the Christian and sex. The congregation knew he was a broken hearted minister. At times he was overcome with emotion as he preached. He wept as he told the church, "I want you to know a prayer I am praying. I have asked God if my brains are ever removed from north of my shoulders and moved to south of my waist God would take me to Heaven." I heard this powerful sermon at a men's clinic.

My prayer on this issue is not as dramatic as his prayer is. I started praying several years ago to become a one-woman man. "One-woman man" is the literal meaning of the statement "husband of one wife" in 1 Timothy chapter 3. This part of my daily prayers began to expand. I asked God to make me a one-woman man physically, in my thoughts, in my imagination, in my plans and desires, and in my memories. I want this prayer to be my normal everyday mindset. I am making progress. This prayer has led me to stop watching Desperate Housewives and Deal or No Deal with my wife. I am asking all of you men and young men to pray this prayer also.