

LUST :

Another name for Adultery

— By Dan Corner

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus shocked the people of His day when He equated lust to ADULTERY! His actual words are: *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."* Please note the serious consequences of lust (mental adultery). According to Jesus, it's possible to end up in Hell over this! Therefore, this sin must not be taken lightly, as many people do.

An example of taking lust lightly occurred on one of my radio interviews. The following dialog transpired between a phone caller, Archie, and the host, Gil, after the host presented a hypothetical situation involving lusting over a woman while driving. This is what Archie referred to when he told Gil that he used his example of driving in the car.

Archie: "Gil, you used my example of driving in the car."

Gil: "Oh, so you been looking at (lusting after) women, too, huh?"

Archie: "Oh, yeah, all the time." Gil: [an outburst of laughter].

The chief aim of this article is to provide the facts regarding "lust" as used in Matthew 5:28. While some downplay the serious consequences of lust, others wrongly think the slightest and quickest visual contact on another's body is always adultery. The latter will be greatly relieved to learn this is not so! Similarly, remember this, temptation in itself is not a sin. Jesus was tempted, yet Jesus never sinned. Therefore, temptation is not a sin. It only becomes a sin when you yield to it.

The Greek word rendered "lust" (Matthew 5:28) is found elsewhere and translated as "longing" to help us know what the Lord equated to mental adultery. This same exact word is found in Luke 15:16 and Luke 16:21. It's also significant to note that Jesus gave us these other usages. Hence, He chose to use the same exact word in these other teachings as He chose to use in Matthew 5:28! Respectively, those verses say: *"And he would fain (longed to) have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him."*

'And desiring (longing) to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.'

The facts surrounding the sad circumstances of the Prodigal and Lazarus help us to better

understand its meaning. Regarding its usage by the Lord in Luke's gospel, it seems evident that this word carries a meaning with it that makes it much deeper than just a casual glance at a woman, as some wrongly think. To substantiate this, Strong's Concordance defines this word as "to set the heart upon, i.e. long for" (Greek Dictionary, p.31, no. 1937).

Again, a casual glance at the opposite sex is not being referred to in Matthew 5:28. However, when actual lust does occur, that is, when one "longs for" another, then adultery is actually committed! To deny this teaching is to indirectly doubt the Lordship of Jesus Christ! This also clearly refutes the statement I've often heard—"It's okay to look (meaning lust), but not to touchy' Jesus never taught that lust was okay! Nowhere is this form of adultery, though solely mental, less serious than other forms, although many treat it as such!

Remember, Jesus said it could send one to Hell! (Matthew 5:29). Could He be wrong? How awesome to ponder this fact in regard to all of the pornographic literature that can be found in this country. It recently surprised my wife and me to learn that one can indulge in pornography by way of their personal computer! Mental adultery is rampant! Truly, this is an "adulterous generation:" as Jesus said.

Recently, while waiting to see someone with whom I had an appointment, I heard his office radio tuned in to a secular station, which had a "Penthouse Pet" on as a guest. This woman had posed 60 times for Penthouse magazine, yet was hailed as some great celebrity and heroine. She showed no remorse for those sinful acts. Only on Judgment Day will it be revealed how many millions of men committed adultery with this whorish woman. What a fine servant Satan has in that woman, who shamefully is the envy of many women in our country!

Men committing mental adultery should also be a sobering thought for women who profess to be Christian and desire to please their Lord. Paul wrote that women are to dress "modestly" (1 Timothy 2:9), yet at the same time, Paul was a grace teacher in the truest sense. So this isn't "law" as some accuse, but simple obedience! To disregard the way you dress might possibly be stumbling another into adultery! (The same applies to a man and his dress, for women can lust too.) Read Matthew 18:6 and Romans 14:13 about stumbling another into sin and marvel at this! Furthermore, regarding this whole matter of mental adultery, a woman who dresses with the intent to make men lust after her is on a par with a prostitute!

In our generation, TV is the prime way people commit mental adultery. Even while watching the evening news, one is exposed to spiritually unwholesome scenes, which the devil is pleased to present. These spiritual pollutants flood into homes across our land, and then people wonder why they are having trouble with lust! I personally believe that more adultery is committed before the TV set than anywhere else!

Furthermore, it's a sad day when TV ensnares people who profess to be God's servants, as their precious free time is spent, never to be regained! Our generation will have to account for this incredible waste of time at the Judgment. Please note I mentioned "our generation" because television has only been available commercially since just after World War II. TV as a means of distraction and temptation is something that the Twelve Disciples never had. Moreover, there will be no TV's in Heaven! Remember this, before the invention of TV, Christians got along fine without ever watching it! You can too! In fact, since my wife and I

stopped watching all secular TV of any kind, including the Super Bowl, we get along much better without it! By this I mean we have much more time to labor for the Kingdom in one form or another, besides the other advantages of not being tempted to lust or adopt the world's values in the first place.

If you are having trouble with lust or know someone who is, the remedy, in part, is to cut off the source of temptation! It's that simple. If literature is the temptation, then stop going near it. If it's TV or movies, stop watching them. This is what you are to STOP doing. Paul wrote, "*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*" (Romans 13:14). Also, remember sinful desires such as lust (adultery) are warring against your soul (1 Peter 2:11). You must war back or be conquered. A fight is a fight and not a "bed of roses"!

Furthermore, to get victory over lust, you should START spending more time in the Bible meditating on and memorizing certain verses! Hiding God's Word in your heart will stop those mental temptations. The writer of Psalm 119 both prayed and hid God's Word in his heart so he would not sin against God: "*With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee*" (Psalm 119:10,11). We all need to humbly follow this example.

In summary, victory over sin is not just what you do, but also what you don't do! In other words, starve your sinful nature (by not thinking about how to gratify it) and feed your spirit with God's Word (by meditating in Scripture). Your voluntary thoughts, that is, the thoughts you choose to ponder when free to think about anything you want, are extremely important. Relevantly, Romans 8:5 says, "*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.*" The following poem states it beautifully.

"Two natures beat
within my breast.
The one is cursed,
the other is blessed.
The one I love,
the other I hate.
The one I feed
will dominate!"

Similarly, Paul wrote, "*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*" (Galatians 6:8). In the Old Testament, we also read of lust in passages like Proverbs 6:25, 26: "*Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life.*" Again, lust leads to disaster! Therefore, do not take this sin lightly.

By the way, the word rendered "lust" in Matthew 5:28 is used in a good sense in 1 Timothy 3:1 and Hebrews 6:11. This latter verse reads: "*And we desire that every one of you do spew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end.*"

Paul emphasized free will and human responsibility. (He did this without contradicting his own grace message.) He wrote, "*Keep thyself pure*" (1 Timothy 5:22). Undoubtedly, many will have to make MAJOR TV changes to obey this command! Victory over TV will benefit you and others in this life and throughout eternity, but get ready for the battle regarding it! Job was the most unique man on earth in his day—being blameless, upright, a man that feared God and shunned evil (Job 1:8). This man said of himself, "*I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?*" (31:1). This is also very important in our day in light of Matthew 5:28, 29, and the rampancy of pornographic literature, the Internet, movies, TV programs and commercials in our vile country.

Paul wrote, "*Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry*" (Colossians 3:5). Please note, it's your responsibility, coupled with the power of God (Romans 8:13), that is the victory over lust.

It might surprise some to learn that Jesus used the word from which we get our word "pornography" in Revelation 22:15, and stated that, along with some others, such are "outside" the city of New Jerusalem. (In that verse, the word is rendered "whoremongers" or the sexually immoral.) If we compare Revelation 21:8 to this same verse, we know their specific location is clearly the lake of fire!

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