



**Sermon on the Mount
Wk.14 "Guarding Against Lust"
By Pastor Jody May 11/24/2024**

Matthew 5:27-30 ESV

Lust

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. ²⁹If 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. ³⁰And 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.

[READ THE TEXT]

Pastor - "People of God, this is the Word of God."

People - "Thanks be to God."

[PRAY]

[INTRO]

In a study published by the Wilkinson and FinkBeiner Law Group, where they pulled together over 115 studies over the last 20 years, were able to give some pretty astounding Divorce Statistics leading into 2024.¹

1. Researchers estimate that 41 percent of all first marriages end in divorce.
2. 60 percent of second marriages end in divorce.
3. 73 percent of all third marriages end in divorce.
4. Every 42 seconds, there is one divorce in America, That equates to 86 divorces per hour, 2,046 divorces per day, 14,364 divorces per week, and 746,971 divorces per year
5. Every 16 seconds, there is a marriage in the U.S. That equates to 230 marriages per hour, 38,762 marriages per week and 2,015,603 per year.
6. The [average first marriage](#) that ends in divorce lasts about 8 years.

¹<https://www.wf-lawyers.com/divorce-statistics-and-facts/#:~:text=Lack%20of%20commitment%20is%20the,Argue%20too%20much%2056%25>



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7. Over a 40-year period, 67 percent of first marriages terminate.
8. The average age for couples going through their first divorce is 30 years old.
9. 60 percent of all divorces involve individuals aged 25 to 39.
10. 60 percent of cohabiting couples will eventually marry. However, living together prior to marriage can increase the chance of getting divorced by as much as 40 percent.
11. Having a baby before marriage can increase the risk of divorce by 24 percent.
12. Political affiliation and its impact on divorce: Conservatives are the least likely to be divorced: Conservative 28 percent, Liberal 37 percent, Moderate 33 percent.
13. The divorce rate for couples with children is as much as 40 percent lower than for those without children.
14. If a close friend gets divorced, you are 147% more likely to become divorced and 33% more likely if a friend of a friend is divorced.
15. A new study entitled "Divorce and Death" shows that broken marriages can kill at the same rate as smoking cigarettes. Indications that the risk of dying is a full 23 percent higher among divorcées than married people.

First point I am trying to drive home, Marriage is a beautiful thing, marriage is ordained by God, marriage is God's will for the majority of people, marriage is better for your health, the fruit of marriage children, promotes longevity, but in the end across the board marriage as an institution has the odds stacked against it. And at the top of the reasons why people get divorced stands this statistic.

16. As to why people are divorcing 55% of the time it is due to infidelity/adultery.

Scripture speaks to the seriousness of this act when it is given by God in the Old Covenant (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22) by making it punishable by death. Even in Jesus' day in John 7:53-8:11 the Jew's tried to use that practice to condemn a young woman to stoning that had been caught in the act. There hope was to try to catch Jesus in a moral dilemma. Now while we don't assign capital punishment anymore to this act, that doesn't negate the tragic



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consequences that this has on people. In an article by Tim Challies a while back he wrote on the horrible consequences of when this occurs.²

- Adultery is a turning away from a promise. – It is the forsaking of promises made in front of God so in essence it is a turning away from God Himself.
- Adultery leads the adulterer from security to chaos. – Turning to a new partner doesn't mean leaving behind all loyalties, like family, children, and friends, you will always be divided between two opposing sides.
- Adultery is secretive and dishonest. – By nature, it does not proclaim a union like a marriage/wedding does therefore signaling to everyone that it was a relationship that started in darkness.
- Adultery destroys the adulterer. – It has been shown that adultery undermines and erodes the character of the adulterer.
- Adultery damages society. – Each act of adultery is a swing against the moral fortitude walls of society and weakens the foundations of a strong community which at its' core is the nuclear family.
- Adultery hurts children. – Adultery harms an innocent party, the children, are the recipients of conflict they did not cause, chaos they do not know how to navigate, and disunity they cannot mend.

No wonder the author of Proverbs gives us such a stark and dire warning when it comes to adultery.

Proverbs 30:27-32 ESV

²⁷ Can a man carry fire next to his chest
and his clothes not be burned?

²⁸ Or can one walk on hot coals
and his feet not be scorched?

²⁹ So is he who goes in to his neighbor's
wife;

none who touches her will go
unpunished.

³⁰ People do not despise a thief if he
steals

to satisfy his appetite when he is
hungry,

³¹ but if he is caught, he will pay sevenfold;
he will give all the goods of his house.

³² He who commits adultery **lacks sense**;
he who does it **destroys himself**.

² <https://www.challies.com/articles/six-reasons-why-adultery-is-very-serious/>, Sep. 10, 2016.
(Web 2024).



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BUT here's the kicker in all of this, as bad as the act is, and as important it is to stay away from it, Jesus in today's passage ups the ante. He states that even to look at a person with lustful intent one has ALREADY committed adultery in their hearts. It is not enough to not just pursue a physical piety but one must pursue a holy and righteous heart before God. "Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God." – Mat. 5:8. Just like Pastor Mike introduced last week this becomes a matter of the heart, a matter of intent, and a matter that we all must contend with. So, here's the main point I want to lay out for you today that is the summation of our passages.

MP:

**Protection from Lust begins with
Protection of one's heart.**

In order to do this, we are going to outline this today with three actions steps to help you remember; 1st Guard your Heart; because that's where this sin starts, 2nd Protest your Eyes; because this is how you pick up the infection of lust, and 3rd Watch your Hands; because your actions will tell you whether you are adhering to God's will for your life or your own.³

1. Guard your Heart. (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**.

Well, here is this saying again just like last week, "**You have heard it that it was said**," that phrase or a close derivative of it will be given 6 times here in chapter 5. It is Jesus' way of saying; *The Pharisees and the scribes have taught you that....* It was their teaching on the law He was fixing, and who better to do that the one that came to fulfill the law (5:17-20). Jesus goes on to pit His teaching against theirs as one that has authority to go against the present-day oral traditions of multiple teachers. He was showing that their observance of the law only comes from the stance of how one performs an

³ Akin, Daniel L. Akin, [Exalting Jesus in The Sermon on the Mount](#)/Christ-Centered Exposition (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing, 2019), 48.



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action in the physical world. Jesus' new teaching was based in where the law abiding comes from, that is the heart. He's going after that part of us that you can't see for, He knows this truth!

Matthew 15:18-20a ESV

¹⁸ But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. ¹⁹ For out of the **heart** come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, **sexual immorality**, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰ These are what defile a person.

Jesus is clarifying for us how sin happens, where it comes from, we call that in theology **Hamartiology or the study of sin**. **Hamartano** means to *miss the mark*, that is to miss the standard of God (Holiness, perfectness, righteousness). Jesus is teaching us that sin is not just about doing a thing, doing or not doing an action does not attain God's standard, but it is about where does the desire come from? David had a good insight on this in his confession in the Psalms after he had committed adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11 & 12).

Psalm 51:5-9 ESV

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.

We are born sinners, with a lame heart. Another good word for iniquity is guilt and another good word for sin is offense making this verse to mean we are born with guilt against God and have the stance as an active offender when conceived. Or as the late RC Sproul explained it to us.

*"Were not sinners because we sin but rather,
we sin because we are sinners." – RC Sproul*

This is called Original Sin, the sin that begun with Adam, in the garden after the fall. It is important to understand the root of our sin, the heart, because otherwise we will always be chasing the symptoms of sin.

Proverbs 4:23 ESV

Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.



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Keep is to actively guard against all intruders and you are to do that with all due diligence. The way we Guard our hearts is with active planning, with understanding the weapons of the enemy, to know where the weak links are in our fences.

I have talked to a few people that have indulged in affairs, and I don't think I have ever talked to anyone yet that had a straight-out sexual lust problem. What led them to even consider adultery was that in their heart resentment had been built up against their spouse. Here's what I mean, deciding to lust after someone, to covet thy neighbor's spouse, usually comes from a heart that doesn't think too much about their current spouse due to a lack of connection. Guarding your heart means stopping negative thoughts and self-talk in their tracks.

Ephesians 4:31 ESV

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

What I see across the board in people who commit adultery is that they have damming perceptions about their spouse. If we want to defeat the monster of lust, coveting people outside of marriage, then it starts with guarding the heart, understanding the devil drives wedges through interpersonal turmoil.

[CHALLENGE]

Family, for those of us married in here answer yourself honestly right now, do you view your spouse in a positive light? Do you talk to yourself about your spouse saying things like, *"I can't believe they..., Here we go again every time... How many times do I have to ask..."* Then here's your number one goal today:

Start building up positive relationship goals and stop trying to correct your spouse.

Men, do something she likes and talk to her about why she likes it, and **don't make fun of it**. Ladies, find something good to say about something he does instead of telling him it's not what you need. Guard your hearts by killing



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malice or that malice will kill you by building a desire to find fulfillment somewhere else.

Let me say on more thing before moving on, for all of us in this room. If as a Christian we are supposed to be loving God, then if we want to guard our hearts from idolatry and sin then it will require us to seek God just as diligently as we seek relationships.

Psalm 1:1-2 ESV

1 Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; **2** but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.

The author of Psalm says **blessed** is the person that seeks God in His Word. The result of studying about God is happiness. Guarding one's heart from the world and the devil starts with building one's heart in the Word, coming to God with wonder and desire not hesitancy nor angst. I am calling you to believe God's Word in its' benefit for you! To stop lust in our hearts for other people and worldly things starts first with guarding your own heart with all diligence, take a stand against this world and don't give the enemy a foothold.

2. Protect your Eyes. (29)

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.

Well, I can tell from looking at you all that no one in here isa biblical literalist/dispensationalist because you all have two eyes, and I know you all face temptations just like I do. So, you either reject God's Word here or you are hoping this means something else.

Well, first of all let's realize something here that John Stott helped me realize, the **imagination belongs just as much to God as the real life does!** Lust begins with fantasy, but there is no way to kill that part of you, for imagination is still key to life. Stories that stir the heart and change course in history



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begin in the imagination. Art that inspires mood and self-introspection begins in the imaging of the mind's eye. Music is birthed out of the creation process whereby feelings are tied to math and the fruit produced is what people consume to elevate their hearts. AND all those things bring glory to God when they are performed with love for maker. So, the answer to this dilemma is not to smother, drown, or starve our imaginative thought for it is key to the command to have dominion in our world, **it is an engine for creation**. Therefore, this verse to me makes me very aware that we are going to have to **battle with something that we can't necessarily get rid of**. While at the same time, take very seriously Jesus' warning as to what fuels the imagination, your vision.

It is better to do away with that which causes inspiration, your sight Jesus says, WHY, because if you can't control your mind, that path will lead you to Hell. Even if a person was never to act out their fantasies on another person, we are still condemned by the actions in our mind for it shows that we love self above God and others. There will be many so-called Christians I believe, that will stand before Christ believing as the Pharisees did, that they never committed adultery therefore they are ok, while their porn subscriptions will state otherwise that they never knew Christ nor His love.

The simple translation of this passage is:

DON'T LOOK, and when confronted with temptation, FLEE!

Genesis 39:10-12 ESV

¹⁰ And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her. ¹¹ But one day, when he went into the house to do his work and none of the men of the house was there in the house, ¹² she caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me." But he left his garment in her hand and fled and got out of the house.

The Bible's answer for temptation, when it comes to lust is get out of Dodge!



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It cost Joseph his position and his freedom to do the right thing, sometimes fleeing lust will cost you position in this world. Remember your souls are more important than position, and temptation is allowed to teach you that lesson. And if you see that your future life path, goals, and aspirations put you heading towards danger you have to change course altogether.

Proverbs 4: 14-16 ESV

- ¹⁴ Do not enter the path of the wicked,
and do not walk in the way of the evil.
- ¹⁵ Avoid it; do not go on it;
turn away from it and pass on.
- ¹⁶ For they cannot sleep unless they have done wrong;
they are robbed of sleep unless they have made someone stumble.

The world seeks out the desires of lust to satiate craving, they can't sleep until they do the wrong thing. People of God don't find rest until you have found the right thing! It may mean downsizing your life to escape a world that requires you to live with eye candy everyday, or a coworker that like the Egyptian wife always makes passes, then you must put your hope in God and His care for you, and trust He will provide you with what you need. Please never resent a spouse if they are telling you they need to get away from temptation.

2 Timothy 2:22 ESV

So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

We don't just run away from danger we run to the things of God, that's what is key here! Again, use the heart that God has given you and put it to use doing what God wants. Choose to love God, choose to love the people of God, and you will notice your heart doesn't have time for lust, that your eye will only begin to see need for the Kingdom, your imagination will be spent on dreaming about how to bring in God's Kingdom. Your energy will be wasted on Righteous pursuits. Just like guarding your hearts, to protect your vision it takes effort, we don't just run from danger we run to responsibility.



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Protection from Lust of the eyes begins with running from the prospect of consuming with them, be diligent in that today family.

Again, that works with all lusting and all covetousness. You have a problem with shopping? Go take that idle time and fill it with good effort, get rid of those tabs on your computer, take off the Amazon shopping lists, and go spend some cash on the kingdom and see how your heart flourishes and your mind is cleansed. Watch how your need for worldly things dissolve treat the problem of vision seriously for Jesus warned us with Hell.

3. Watch your Hands. (30)

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.

This last part of this passage sounds much like the first, if the right hand *causes you to sin*, **skandalon**, from where we get the word scandal, something that causes you to spiritually stumble. And it doesn't matter if it's your right eye or your right hand, the strong parts of your body, the right side, you get rid of it!

The difference here is that the hand acts in accordance to the eye. *"The eyes can certainly entice the heart, but the heart, enticed by the eyes, directs the hands. The hand reacts in response to the attitude and direction of the heart."* – Daniel Aikin (52). The path to a pure heart (5:8) first comes from guarding our hearts, then protecting our eyes, and it moves on into taking action with our hands. Do you use the might of them to fight against sin, or are *the idle hands*? Again, in the words of John Owen as he warns us from his famous sermon on the Mortification of Sin, "Be killing sin, or it will be killing you." Of which Jesus would add, *it WILL be killing you and leading you to Hell.*

We watch our hands because their work tell you what's going on inside sometimes before you are self-aware.

What teachings are you picking up?



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Are you reading things that increasingly challenge you to have a deeper understanding of Christ, to understand His battle for our hearts, do you think to build your knowledge outside of here on a Sunday? Are you listening to podcasts that challenge your ecclesiology, so you get better at thinking about the church? Are you studying history and government at all so you can help the next generation know how to be better involved politically? Dad's in the room pick a book for everyone in your family this Christmas and challenge your people to take pursuing God seriously, and then make discussion of the books as a part of your discipleship time.

What things are you letting go of?

If sin is a heart problem, as in a condition you were born with, we all should be constantly laying down things that keep us from making much of Him. As JB so coined a phrase, "I must decrease and He must increase." Men where are we sacrificing so that our families may grow in holiness? Ladies, what are you sacrificing so your families are growing in love? Kids where are you sacrificing so that you are honoring your mother and father. Our hands should be busy with study and busy with sacrifice, watch your hands they will tell you what's going on in your heart. Are there habits that are influencing you to be more worldly? Perhaps this year is the year to get rid of social media, for the world controls that and perhaps that is why you are having a hard time connecting to those in your family.

What thing are you grasping?

Are you taking opportunities to make new friends and new acquaintances? Are you taking opportunities to engage in evangelism by inviting into your life and home those outside the church? Making new relationships for the glory of God whether for self-improvement or for Gospel expansions will train your hands to be fruitful in all their work.

MP:

**Protection from Lust begins with
Protection of one's heart.**

Protection of the heart is not a stand still sport, it is active engagement with a moving enemy. We guard our hearts by killing that Malice within us, by



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building new relationship habits with those we love. We protect our eyes by fleeing that which tempts us and running to that which edifies us. And we watch our hands to see if they are doing the work of holy and righteous living, are they expanding the Kingdom by picking up edifying material, are they killing sin by letting go of self-idolatry, are they grasping new opportunities to share Christ. This may sound like a lot, but these are merely the things that all Christ followers should be pursuing, to protect our souls from Hell, and to love our Savior with everything we have.

[PRAYER]

[CALL TO OBEY]

Psalm 19:14 ESV

Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Family I call you keep your heart with all vigilance, let us live out our purchased redemption with all sincerity and warmth for our Lord.

[COMMUNION]

Matthew 26:26-29 ESV

²⁶ Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."²⁷ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you,²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.²⁹ I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

Today when you eat of the bread remember the life of Jesus, and you may be tempted to believe he never went through your temptations but let me remind you Jesus denied His flesh so He could love His bride the church, that no one would ever come between Him and His perfect sanctifying love so that



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He may present us Holy and righteous to His Father, as a bride with no blemish. Praise be to Him for His wonderful love.

Today when you drink the juice remember the cost of our sin displayed by His blood. When we were uninterested in fighting our sin He fought for us, when we were wrapped up in our desires he mastered His to put His father's desires first and now His sacrifice leads us to repentance, Praise be to Him for His wonderful Love.

[CONFESSION OF FAITH]

* The Congregation will stand

Elder – "Christians, what do we believe?"

LBCF 15.2

2. Believers Are Renewed Through Repentance

There is no person who does good and does not sin. 2 Even the best may fall into great sins and offenses through the power and deceitfulness of the corruption living in them and the prevalency of temptation. In the covenant of grace, God has mercifully provided to these believers who fall into this sin renewal through repentance to salvation. 3

2. Ecclesiastes 7:20

3. Luke 22:31-32

[OFFERING+LAST SONG]

[BENEDICTION]

Go in the name of the Father, that has given us a new heart, enabling us to generate good works that are in accordance with our repentance.

Go in the name of the Son, that conquered His temptations, ensuring His bride the church would always be preserved and sanctified.



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Go in the name of and power of the HS, that helps us to deny our lust, empowers us to pursue that which is holy, and enables our proclamation to a dead and dying world.

Small Group Questions:⁴

1. What damages can committing adultery in the heart create?
2. Has the Gospel set you free in the past from a pattern of adultery/lust? What is your story?
3. Have you ever noticed a difference in what you look at and how you act when you are close to the Lord in reading and prayer?
4. How can believers help one another fight the sin of lust?
5. Sinclair Ferguson once said to think about what you gain by abandoning lust. How is Jesus a better reward than what is gained from adultery and lust?

⁴ Akin, Daniel L. Akin, [*Exalting Jesus in The Sermon on the Mount*](#)/Christ-Centered Exposition (Brentwood, TN: B&H Publishing, 2019), 54.



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