

**Refuge City Church — April 7, 2024**  
**Gospel of Matthew: “Issues of Life: Lust” (Matthew 5:27-30)**

***Introduction***

- As Jesus carries on in His sermon, He now spends time comparing the law in relation to what he is now declaring.
  - Six sections dealing with issues of life that everyone will struggle with.
  - Anger, lust, divorce, oaths, retaliation, and how to deal with those you may consider “your enemy”.
  - Each of these issues pertaining to *relationship*.
- Jesus begins each statement with, “You have heard that it was said...”
  - He’ll quote the law, and then add “But I say to you...”; not negating the law.
  - **REMINDER: v. 17**, “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

**“Lust = Adultery”**

**[verses 27-28]**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

- Jesus now turns His attention to the 7th commandment...adultery.
- He handles this in the same manner as he did anger... the preeminent focal point is the heart.
  - **Hear me:** the intention of the heart, and the action it produces are both sins in the eyes of the Lord; it is imperative we deal with the former!
  - Lustful intent: the meaning here is the intended focus of one’s gaze [whether in person, online, or in the mind].
    - If your *intent* is for self-gratification, that is sin!
    - God places the *intent* on the same level as the physical act of sex with another individual outside the context of marriage.
- Is it a crime to have illegal drugs in your possession? Yes.
  - Whether you were going to consume them yourself, sell them, or even have the *intent* to sell is enough to be held liable; by direct or circumstantial evidence.
    - “Generally, that evidence does not require proof that the illegal drugs were for sale. It is enough to show that you intended to distribute or deliver them, even when it was not in exchange for anything of value.” [Shouse California Law Group]
- What did we say about anger: The act is an external manifestation of an internal condition.
  - So the act of adultery is an external manifestation of the internal condition of lust.
  - **Exodus 20:17**, “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”
    - *Covet* = selfish, lustful desire

- Many will argue that just *thinking about it* doesn't harm anyone.
  - That may be true in the physical sense, yet according to God, purity of heart is still a preeminent focus!
  - Similar to anger, unresolved lust will creep its way to the surface.
- **QUOTE:** "It is not lustful looking that causes the sin in the heart, but the sin in the heart that causes lustful looking. The lustful looking is but the expression of a heart that is already immoral and adulterous." [John MacArthur]

### **[verses 29-30]**

"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. 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."

- I would like to assume that when most read this portion of scripture, they do not take it literally... although some have gone to similar lengths to keep themselves from sexual immorality.
- Obviously, Jesus was teaching the necessity of immediate and extreme action to remove temptation.
  - Too many will rationalize or justify their thoughts and actions, ask God to forgive them, and promise to never do it again.
  - While outwardly 'religious' and sounds proper, what steps are you going through to prohibit falling into the sin?
  - **David and Bathsheba [2 Samuel 11]**
    - David looked and pondered. He inquired. He allowed the temptation to overtake his heart, which led to sinful action.
    - God was displeased with David's sin and took away his son that he bore with Bathsheba.
    - **Psalm 51:1, 10**, "Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."
      - In his prayer of repentance, David understood what needed to be fixed... his heart!
  - **Joseph and Potiphar's wife [Genesis 39]; sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers.**
    - The wife of Joseph's master/boss lusted after Joseph and repeatedly asked him to sleep with her.
    - Joseph kept God at the center of his heart. He not only spoke against the sin openly, he took action and ran from the situation!
      - **Psalm 119:37-38**, "Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to selfish gain! Turn my eyes from looking at worthless things; and give me life in your ways."
    - Did it cost him something? Yes! For over two years, Joseph was in prison. Yet, despite the loss of job and freedom in this way, God still used Joseph in a mighty way in his imprisonment.

- God will bless you when you hunger and thirst for His righteousness, not your own self-gratification.

### ***Conclusion***

- God desires to give you a new heart. One that is pure before Him.
- So then do what is absolutely necessary to keep your heart clean... whether it be unresolved anger, lustful intent, or both.
- Remove the things from your life that could lead to sinful intent.
- But it is imperative that you fill the void with the righteousness of God.
- **Romans 6:15-18**, “What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.”