**The Inside Out**, **Kingdom of God: The Sermon on the Mount Matt. 5-7**

***Upside Down***

**Matthew 5:27-30**

**1 Peter 1:14-16: Theme Verse for Today: We must Pursue Purity**

**14**As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, **15**but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, **16**since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

**Remember Jesus’ Emphasis:**

* Jesus’ teaching about fulfilling the law shows that he seeks setting a standard that looks at the law from ***an internal, not an external, perspective***.
* The issue is not a set of rules, but rather a response from within. A response that is not self- produced but is a reflection of a faith that trusts and follows in God’s way.

**Lust** – The issue is not just adultery but *lust*.

**This Big Issue:**

* Here again, like before with anger, the Pharisees and scribes were guilty of *reducing the meaning* and *the demands of the law*, and this is another example of them doing so.
* The Pharisees and scribes had reduced the commandment which prohibits adultery to *the mere physical act of adultery*; and again, they imagined that, as long as they were not actually guilty of the act itself, the commandment had nothing to say to them and they were perfectly innocent as far as it was concerned.
* Once again, they had taken the letter of the law and reduced it to one particular matter, and thereby had nullified it. They had *forgotten the whole spirit of the law*.

**The Real Problem:**

* They had never read the ten commandments correctly. The issue is that *you cannot take each commandment in isolation*.
* **For Example:** the tenth commandment says that we must not *covet our neighbor’s wife*, and that, should be taken in conjunction with this command not to *commit adultery*.
* It is this combination of the laws that explains what *Lust* is. If one was only thinking of the law in terms of action only, they would completely miss this dangerous sin which leads to further sin.
* The law had always stressed the importance of the heart, and these people, with their mechanical notions of worshipping God and their purely mechanical conception of obedience had entirely missed it.

**Matt. 5:28**: **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.

* Jesus is warning and condemning *lustful thoughts*, that often *lead to wicked desires*, and that can *advance to sinful actions* - which becomes ***sexual immorality***. Scripture has a lot to say about sexual immorality: Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 5:1, 5:11, 6:9, 6:18, 10:8; Gal. 5:19; Eph. 5:3; Col. 3:5; 1 Thess. 4:3; Heb. 13:4; Rev. 21:8 ect…

**James 1: 14-15, 21-22: James Paints a Similar Picture**

**14**But each person is tempted when he is *lured* and *enticed by his own desire*. **15**Then desire *when* it has *conceived gives birth to sin*, and sin when it is *fully grown brings forth death*.

**James Tells Us What to Do:**

**21**Therefore put away all filthiness and rampant wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

**22**But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

**Matthew 15:19: Lust is a Heart Issue**

**19**For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

**Important Truths:**

* First off lust isn’t just a guy problem – it’s a human problem.
* If we do not talk honestly and confront it, lust has the *destructive potential* to destroy our relationships, families, the closeness of our walk with Christ, and our lives.
* A very *large percentage of people fight with lust in this country*, furthermore *we are constantly bombarded with temptation at every turn*. As Christians, many have a desire to fight this, but so often we fail no matter what we try. Time and time again.
* This sin is beyond just our struggle as adults. It is time to recognize that we must heed the call to *help the up incoming generation* who is bombarded in society with lustful images of sexual sin back to **the freedom and joy of holiness and purity**.
* This battle, for those who struggle with this sin, is won through honesty, humility, and dependence on God. It begins with winning *daily skirmishes*, and then *larger battles*.

**Please Recognize these Two Things:**

* Recognize that sexuality is a gift from God. Our innate sexuality just needs to be something we save for later (for young ones and single people), when it is healthy and pure in God’s eyes (which means in God’s design).
* Also, recognize that shaming people into purity does not work. We need to look towards Christ for the strength and ability to truly fight lust. 🡪 **Helpful Passages for Encouragement**: Matt. 28:18, 20; Mk. 9:23; 10:27; Ez. 36:26-27; 2 Cor. 5:17; 1 John 4:4; Rom. 8:1

**Practical Things We Can Do:**

1. Be honest and **confess** that this is a real struggle. 🡪 1 John 1:9; James 5:16
2. Seek genuine **repentance**. 🡪 Acts 3:19
3. Begin to take serious exercising **self-control.** 🡪 Gal. 5:23 (fruit of the spirit); 1 Thess. 4:3-4
4. **Flee temptation** before it has the opportunity to become a desire or take action. 🡪 Gen. 39:12 (Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife); 1 Cor. 6:18 (Paul tells us to flee…).
5. Place up practical **hedges** (setting practical and Godly boundaries).
6. Seek out **accountability** and mentoring.
7. Parents **DO NOT ASSUME** your **students** are not seriously struggling with temptations, peer-pressure at school (to view things or do things), and sexual sins as well. We MUST seek honest conversations with our students.

**Helpful Resources/Books:**

1. Not even a Hint: Guarding your Heart against Lust – Joshua Harris
2. Sex and the Supremacy of Christ – John Piper and Justin Taylor
3. Hedges: Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It – Jerry B. Jenkins