

April 5, 2009

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS: LUST
GEN 39.1-23; MATT 5.27-30; 1COR 6.12-20

1. THE CHARACTER OF LUST

A. SEXUAL DESIRE: THE VIRTUOUS HOST

Lust = desire. Context determines the meaning whether it is sinful or righteous.

Sexual desire is a good thing created in us by God from the beginning. It is not evil in itself. In fact, it is a necessary aspect of man as God's image fulfilling his original vocation of taking dominion of the earth. Cf. Gen 1.28.

Sex is not just another merely "physical function" of the body (i.e., as opposed to "spiritual"). This creates a one-flesh union in which the whole person is (or should be) involved.

Sexual desire as good and commanded to be directed toward spouse; cf. e.g., Prov 5; YHWH's relationship with Israel; Jesus and the Church; Song of Solomon.

Must be left in its proper context: covenant of marriage between a man and a woman.

God's design for us—sexual purity, chastity—is God's best for us and is intended for our ultimately pleasure.

Note: there is pleasure in sin *for a season* (cf. Heb 11.25). Ultimately destructive.

Parents: don't lie to your children about the results of sexual immorality. Don't simply give them rules but also rationale.

Lust is also *not* appreciation of the beauty of another person. Some people are attractive. (cf. e.g., Gen 39.6)

B. LUST: IDOLIZED SEXUAL DESIRE

Man takes one of the greatest expressions of love, believing that God puts too many constraints on him, and insists that life can be found in this apart from the boundaries of God's Word. This is the essence of idolatry: trying to find life in the creation of God.

Lust is sexual desire that is out-of-control. Lust is sexual desire that refuses to pay heed to the sexual God's boundaries.

Gen 39: first does away with the myth that lust is solely or at least primarily the problem of a man. Men do have problems with Lust. But Lust is revealed differently in women. The problems are complimentary: Men want women, and women want to be wanted.

Women show this in the way that they dress (cf. e.g., Prov 7 and the dress of harlot folly).

Men: your primary focus needs to be on your wife. Women (especially) be careful of how you accentuate your features.

Lust is a liar. Note Potiphar's wife and how she lied about Joseph. The worshiper is reflecting the idol. Cf. Eph 4.22: "deceitful lusts." These desires lie to you because they promise what they cannot deliver.

Lust cannot be satisfied. If not brought under control it will lead to greater and greater sexual deviancy. Lust enfeebles us sexually.

Those who worship this idol bear its image. People will lie to spouses, friends, and family about their "affairs".

Lust is self-consumed, not worrying about how its actions destroy others.

"What I do in private is no one else's business." Answers: your private escapades may produce children who must be cared for and who will be the shapers of the culture.

It also may result in the murder of the child in the womb. That shapes the way a culture treats life.

Not having children is also a problem. It is the death of the culture.

Also, what we do in private shapes who we are in public and what we will tolerate in a society and its leaders.

Lust also desires an aspect of oneness without the commitment of oneness. Sexual union is designed to be one aspect of a fuller union between two people in covenant with one another.

Lust is isolated and isolating. Lust cuts you off from other people. Others are only objects of my gratification. E.g., pornography; one does not need to worry about being involved with a “real” person.

The problem with Lust does not lie outside of us. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

This doesn’t mean that these other things aren’t sinful and don’t need changing. But they only reflect what is in our hearts. They reflect our cravings as a society. They reflect our Lust.

Surrounding yourself with these things all of the time can fan the flames. You should not enflame these desires whether in the images you view, the songs you listen to, or books you read.

2. THE CURE FOR LUST

Lauren Winner: “Chastity is not always easy or fun... Which is to say that being chaste is sometimes strange, and difficult, and curious. But it is also a discipline, and like any spiritual discipline, it gets easier and better with time.”

A. FLIGHT

Run! 1Cor 6.18; 2Tm 2.22. Don’t play around with sin. Stay away from potentially compromising situations as much as possible, and, if you find yourself in a compromising situation, get out of there!

Keep your distance emotionally with people of the opposite sex with whom you are not married.

Stay away from flirtatious people.

B. FIGHT

Jesus speaks of the aggressive action we need to take toward our sin.

Did Jesus mean this literally or figuratively? Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that the interpretative question is wrong and wicked in itself. The point is to obey Jesus’ command not to lust.

Sometimes this might need to be taken literally in some sense. TV, internet, and such the like might need to be “cut off” if you cannot control your remote finger or your surfing.

Also, *pursue what is righteous.* Busy yourself with the right things so that you don’t have time to dwell upon issues of Lust.

Accountability with others. Just make sure that you are not in an “excuse-making” relationship; i.e., confessing the same faults every week, making you feel better about them, but never taking any action against them.

Get married. Cf. 1Cor 7. It is better to marry than to burn with passion. It will not solve all of your problems, but it is a weapon against Lust.

If you are married, you have the responsibility of making yourself available to one another. Help your spouse fight lust.

C. FRIGHT

Be afraid, as Joseph was, of sinning against God. Love God so much that you are more concerned about sinning against him than you are about self-gratification.

Be afraid that as a Christian when you are sexually immoral you are joining “a prostitute” to the body of Christ.

Be afraid of God’s judgment as Jesus warns in Matt 5. Jesus says that it better to lose your eye or hand than to be cast into hell because you have given yourself over to Lust. God does send people to hell for living lives of sexual immorality. This is one of the reasons the wrath of God falls upon the children of disobedience.

Be afraid. Fear God’s judgment and put reins on your sexual desire.