

**Apprenticed to Jesus: Sexuality***Matthew 5:27-30*

**Introduction:** We live in a culture that is incredibly permissive sexually. Many TV shows, movies and magazines present and even promote a view of sexuality that stands in sharp contrast to a biblical perspective. How easy it is to be influenced by our culture. But as apprentices of Jesus, we must be careful to look to Jesus alone to develop our beliefs and convictions and ultimately our lifestyle in this area. Jesus knows what He's talking about. He has our best interests in mind when He gives this teaching. He is not just trying to be "meaner than Moses." Today as we look at Matthew 5:27-30, may we find encouragement and hope that as apprentices of Jesus we can experience the type of purity of heart in the kingdom of God that Jesus describes.

**Opening Discussion:** How would you describe our general culture's view of sexuality?

**Read Matthew 5:27-30**

1. What sticks out to you from this passage?
2. What does Jesus say surpassing righteousness looks like in the area of sexuality?
3. What is the logic that Jesus is presenting in verses 29-30?
4. What is the sin of lust?
5. In what way is the sin of lust destructive?

Steve quoted Dallas Willard:

. . . all the elements of a genuine act of adultery other than the overt movements of the body are present in such a case. The heart elements are there. Usually the only thing lacking for overt action is the occasion. When the heart is ready, the action will occur as occasion offers. Just as the thief is the person who would steal if circumstances were right, so the adulterer is the one who would have wrongful sex if the circumstances were right. Usually that means if he or she could be sure it would not be found out. This is what Jesus calls "adultery in the heart." In it, the person is not caring for, but using, the other. The condition is wrong even though sexual relations do not occur.

*(Divine Conspiracy, p. 161)*

6. What insight does Willard's quote give you as to why adultery of the heart is wrong?

7. How does lust in the heart keep one from experiencing God in deep ways?

Steve said:

Apprenticing yourself to Jesus in relation to your sexuality may be a great step of faith for you. You may have believed the lie that you will never change and/or that you are too far gone in order to be healed. You may have bought into the mindset, "I'll never really be obedient in this area of my life, so I'll just try to manage my sin and not mess up too badly." Let me say as plainly as possible: Jesus didn't die on the cross so that we could manage our own sins the best we can. He died on the cross to **deliver** us from sexual sins. Jesus died to bring us life and wholeness. And that certainly includes wholeness in relation to our sexuality.

8. Have you ever believed the lie that you will never change in this area of obedience?

9. Do you ever struggle to believe that Jesus can deliver you from sexual sins? Why or why not?

Steve said:

**Second, deal with sexual sins in biblical terms.** There is a certain power in naming our sins using biblical terminology. It's one thing to say to God (or a trusted friend), "I'm struggling in my thought life." It's quite another to say, "I have committed adultery in my heart." Consider confessing your sin to God (and possibly to another person) that specifically and that honestly.

10. How might it help you to "deal with sexual sins in biblical terms"?

11. Are there any radical steps that you sense God is wanting you to take to avoid sexual sin?