

The Christian Man

Session 8: Lust: The Right Way To Deal With This Powerful Drive

Edited Transcript

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Well, good morning, men. Please turn in your Bibles to 1 Corinthians, chapter seven. So, we do not have a shout out this morning because the server was ... was it Friday? Anyway, it was down yesterday at the office. In fact, we just got the PowerPoint itself delivered this morning properly.

I would, however, like to go ahead and give honor and a shout out and a warm and a rousing Man in the Mirror welcome to all of the men and women who are serving in our armed forces, both abroad and here at home, this morning. So would you join me in giving a shout out to those who are in the armed forces? One, two three. Hoorah! Thank you for your service.

I don't know about you, I always ... When I'm out about, see somebody in an airport or somebody that's in uniform, I always say thank you for your service, and it's interesting how much they appreciate it, as well.

Okay. So, we are in this series, The Christian Man. This is the eighth message in the series, and we did not, because of the server being down, you didn't get a reminder email, if you're on that list, yesterday, so here's the topic for the day: Lust.

This is one of the 10 topics that young men said that they were most interested, young men, I say men, in their 20s, 30s, or 40s, said they were most interested in. And so ... But we're not going to beat men up over this topic, we're going to instead focus on the right way to deal with this very powerful drive.

I mean, what man doesn't like to look at a beautiful woman? Anybody here doesn't like to look at a beautiful woman? So I decided to get up early and do some special research on this topic this morning. And actually, I found one of the funniest titles to an article I've ever seen in my life. "10 Steps to Stop Looking at Porn With Pictures."

So, why do we need this talk? Well, we need this talk because sex is a very powerful and primal force in our lives. And it's one of the most difficult to tame, of all human desires, and also easily corrupted, as well.

So basically, we could say, and by the way, this is nothing new. I mean, you've heard of Roman bathhouses. Sex has always been an issue for me. Sex has always been an issue for men. The pendulum swings this way and that, but it's always been an issue for me. Ask Samson, for example.

The way we're going to attack this this morning is we're going to make three assumptions. Number one: that all men are tempted to sexual sin. Number two, all men sin sexually. Why? Because the Bible says, "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," and this is just an area where this happens. And third, some men sin compulsively.

Josh McDowell, commissioned the Barnard Research Group to do a study, which is really good that somebody did this, because there's been a lot of statistics and opinions about pornography, for example in recent years. It's called "The Porn Phenomenon," and it does show that younger men today are much more prone to be involved in pornography, which is a form of lust.

One in 12 young men, in that 25 to 30 age group, are looking at pornography on a daily basis, and one in five look at it one or two times a month. That just kind of gives you the scale that we're talking about here.

And so, our purpose today is that the truth will set you free. That's the purpose today. So, the purpose is to clarify the truth about lust and then to give you the confidence so you will know how to deal with this temptation, both Biblically and practically.

GOD'S DESIGN FOR SEX DOES NOT INCLUDE BATHSHEBA

So the first step, God's design for sex does not include Bathsheba. Let's take a look at this text, 1 Corinthians, chapter seven. We'll start at verse one. "Now for the matters you wrote about," so the Corinthians have written to Paul. He's writing them back. They wanted to know about sex. Nothing new. "It is good for man not to have sexual relations with a woman," and I'm assuming that he means here, a woman that's not your wife, like co-habitation, for example.

"But since sexual immorality is occurring," it was occurring then as it is now, Jesus with the woman at the well said, "Look, why don't you go home and tell your husband?" She said, "I don't have a husband." Yeah, that's right, because the man you're living with, you're not married to, and you've had five others before him, so. Not exactly anything new here. "But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife and each woman with her own husband." So this is God's design for sex.

The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise, the wife to her husband. These are the instructions the Bible gives for sexual relations between a husband and a wife. Verse four: "The wife does not have authority over her own body, but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but yields it to his wife." This is that one flesh idea.

Verse five: "Do not deprive each other, except by mutual consent and for a time so that you may devote yourself to prayer." A sex fast, if you will. "Then come together again, why? So that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control." In other words, because this sexual design that we have is a primal force ... such a powerful, primal force, it requires self-control in order to manage it. You need to have boundaries for it.

But it's saying here, that Satan will tempt you if you don't have self-control and one way to increase your self-control is to be in regular intimate relations with your wife. Verse six: "I say this as a concession, not

a command. I wish all of you were as I am," he was single, "But each of you has your own gift from God. One has this gift. Another has that."

Verse eight: "And now, to the unmarried and widows, I say," so for those of you who are single, "It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do," he does say elsewhere ... I think it might be in the same chapter; I forgot to look it up, anyway. He says it's a good thing to go ahead and get married. But it does say, verse nine, in any event, "But if the single man cannot control himself, he should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."

Okay? I have a friend who committed suicide. He was divorced by his wife. He told me on the phone one day, he said ... and he went off the rails. Alcohol, bar hopping. Many promiscuous relations. Ended up living with a woman and he said, "I need to get married. I need to get married." He's a Christian. "I need to get married. I need to get married." I said, "Why?" He said, "Because I'm just burning with passion. This passion is burning me up."

And I said, "Well, I think it'd probably be a good thing for you get married." Unfortunately, she was the wrong woman, but. It is better to get married than to burn with passion. And so, this is how God has designed for you to channel your sexual desire. This is the plan. Get married. Get married and have sex. Regularly.

Wanting to have sexual intercourse is normal. I grew up in a home where it was made out to be something that was dirty or something that was not to be talked about. And so, I ended up with a very Victorian approach to sex in my early days. Some of you have grown that way. Some of you have grown up with a very hedonistic approach to it, which of course makes it ... sex into something about on par with plumbing.

Wanting to have intercourse with a woman not your wife, however, is what the Bible calls lust. Let's look at Matthew, chapter five, verse 27 and 28. These are the words of Jesus and in this text, basically, Jesus is saying lust is sin. He doesn't say lust is sin, but you'll see how that works in here in a moment.

Matthew 5:27. Everybody there? This is from the Sermon on the Mount. "Jesus said, 'You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery.'" What is adultery? Adultery is a man having sexual relations with a woman to whom he is not married.

Verse 28: "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart." So, Jesus is basically equating adultery as sin and Jesus is saying if you lust after a woman, you have essentially committed adultery, so lust is sin.

What is lust? Well, lust is a very broad category. You can lust for money. You can lust for power. You can lust for prestige. The question we're trying to answer today, and by the way, I'm trying not to talk about marriage and I'm trying not to talk about lust in a general way, I'm trying not to talk about sexual immorality, I'm just trying to talk about ... you know, I'm not trying to talk about sexual crimes. I'm just trying to talk about lust. It's a very difficult thing just to talk about the one thing here.

But what is sexual lust? What is sexual lust? I think this is it. Sexual desire out of control. Sexual lust is sexual desire out of control. What did the text say? "So that Satan may tempt you because of your lack of self-control."

So, lust, sexual lust, is sexual desire out of control. And what is adultery? Well, it's coveting another man's wife, we know that from the 10 Commandments. I've read in some other places this week, I thought this was a good way of thinking about it. Looking ... well, I added looking, looking at, watching, listening, or reading for the purposes of sexual arousal.

So, you are watching, if you ... I mean, you can't watch anything without seeing sex. Sex is everywhere. But if you are watching a movie or program and there's sex in it, a sexual scene in it, now, it's interesting. The argument about whether that's even pornography or not, that's just a different talk for another time, but I'm saying it is. And if you want to argue with me about it, that's fine too.

But if somebody's humping it in a movie or a TV show, which they do, that's pornography. You might call it soft porn. You may call it ... whatever you want to do. But it's pornography. As the chief justice Porter Stewart said in 1964, Supreme Court, "I know it when I see it." I know it when I see it. I'm saying it's pornography.

If you seek that out, that's lust. If you don't seek that out, it's not lust. When it shows up, if you hit rewind, that's lust, alright? Personally? I fast forward. Because everything I do is recorded. I fast forward. Or sometimes, if I'm in a movie theater, where I can't, I'll look away. I'll just look away. I'll just look away. I don't need the temptation. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Yeah, me too, of course. This is just something that we're bombarded with all the time.

So, coveting another man's wife, looking, watching, listening, reading for sexual arousal. In other words, seeking versus seeing, and then, masturbating while you're doing one of those four things. You had no idea how sticky those words are in my word. This is just not my interest or my area of teaching, but masturbating while you are seeking sexual arousal is also a part of lust.

Yes, it's coveting another man's wife and doing something about it or thinking about it. Looking, watching, listening, reading for sexual arousal, and/or masturbating while doing one of those things.

So. How does this temptation to do those things become sin? Next verse is James, chapter one, verse 13. James, chapter one, verse 13. "The truth will set you free." I think part of the problem with this subject and one of the reasons that it just keeps drifting further and further away from Biblical truth is it's not the most comfortable thing to talk about in public, and certainly not in mixed company, and so churches don't typically teach on this. You get it.

But we are. And we're just looking at what the Bible says, you see. James 1, verse 13: "When tempted," and in our case here this morning, to lust, "No one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire," by their own lust, "and enticed."

So seeking out material that will arouse you sexually would be being dragged away by your own evil desire and enticed. And then it says in verse 15, "Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin. And sin, when it is full grown, gives birth to death." Spiritual death.

So it's a big deal, obviously. There is a wealth of information on the Internet, and from credible sources ... I'm not really familiar with XXX Church, XXX Church, but they have great articles, I thought. Some I disagreed with. They were like, opinion pieces. But they have a saying around their church, which I

thought was pretty decent. If you look once, you're human. If you look twice, you're a man. If you look three times, you just disrespected your wife. So, there's some good counsel there.

There is a big difference, of course, between men and woman. The statistics on ... I just don't want to bury you in statistics, because I feel buried in them from this week's study, but 47% of men, and this is from a Christianity Today article, in the general population, 47% of men and 12% of women in general seek out porn at least once or twice a month. So about half of the men but about one in eight women.

But it says 27% of Christian men, so one in four, and 6% of Christian women actively look at porn in that same month. So you could see, this is a ... Porn, which is one way of bringing out the sin of lust, you can see is a much bigger problem for men than women.

Basically, I heard it said many years ago, "Women flee temptation. Men slowly crawl away, hoping temptation will overtake them." And I think that there's no more vivid example of this whole thing than the story of David and Bathsheba, which I believe the Holy Spirit preserved the story of David and Bathsheba at least to show us an example of what lust looks like.

So, here you have a man, and he's looking. He's watching. He's sensing attraction, that's normal, to be attracted. You know, if you go back to Genesis 1:27-28, procreation, you know, man and woman, procreation, the perpetuation of our species, so this is pretty important for men and women to be attracted to each other. And then, you have to manage it, of course. That's what we're talking about here today and how that gets out of control.

So, David is looking from his rooftop over to the rooftop of another man's home, and he sees this other man's wife bathing and he continues to look, even though that attraction now turns into sexual desire, but instead of turning away, he continues to look and has her brought to him, has sexual relations with her. She becomes pregnant.

Baby eventually dies. He orchestrates a conspiracy to basically murder not only her husband but as a result, two other men. God pronounced a severe sentence on David for this misconduct, even though he was a man after God's own heart. He has an asterisk next to his name and will always and forever have an asterisk next to his name. His son, Amnon, raped his daughter, Tamar. Absalom killed Amnon. Absalom was killed by David's general. Adonijah also conspired to take over his father's empire. And all of the many wives of David were disgraced by his son sleeping with them, in full view of the public. Severe consequences for acting on this temptation to lust.

So here's the **Big Idea** today. Looking is not lusting. **Looking is not lusting, until you're burning with the passion David had for Bathsheba.** I tried to ... I was just trying to think of, what can I give you here today that you might actually have a chance of working for you? And I think this idea of looking not lusting is probably it.

But it's always better if you concretize that with a real story, and so that's why the story of David and Bathsheba I've added on here. So, looking is not lusting. Looking is not lusting.

Every man is wired by God to appreciate beauty of all kinds, and beautiful women fall into that category. So can you look, the question is, can you look at a beautiful woman, feel attraction, and not be sinning?

Yes. As long as you don't continue to pursue that. Stalker! Or whatever. For the purposes of sexual arousal. That's when it converts to lust.

QUESTIONS ABOUT LUST

Alright, let's look at just ... yeah, we don't really have time to do the questions about, a lot of questions about lust, but let me at least just read some of them to you. These, I had 47 questions. More questions on this topic than any other topic from the men, the 24 men who helped with the storyboard. Many of whom are here today.

Is there a direct correlation between the strength of lust in my life to weakness in my relationship with Jesus? That was the single-most voted on question. Men wanted to know, basically, if my relationship with Jesus is weak, is lust bigger? And the answer is yes.

So what does lust look like? Well, it's seeking versus seeing. Lust is seeking versus seeing. What does a Biblical example look like? David. We talked about him. Can a man lust after his wife? Yeah. You can lust without sinning for your wife. Do I need to re-state that? If lust is a sin, is lust always a sin? Lust is always a sin if it's sexual desire directed at a woman to whom you're not married. Alright.

Does lust apply to feelings toward your wife? I say no. I'm just gonna bring up, I guess enough things here today to create some questions too. What is at the root of lust? Sexual desire. Is it a bad thing, and if so, why? Is lust a bad thing? Yeah.

Why? Because of sin. Why? Because Jesus said so. Why? Because he's God. Why? Because you've exhausted my knowledge. Where's the line between appreciation for the other sex and lusting? And I think that XXX Church thing. If you look once, you're human. You look twice, you're a man. If you look three times, you've just disrespected your wife.

How do men and women differ? I told you the difference there already. And on this topic of masturbation, I guess I might as well go ahead and cover that with ... what I want to do is just read you what I wrote to teenage boys in the Young Man in the Mirror. Alright?

So the question they wanted to know, is it a sin to masturbate? And one young man wrote, is masturbation wrong if I feel it can give me more strength when I go out with my girlfriend, strength to not sin with her? I thought that was a pretty interesting question.

Now, here's what I wrote. "The Bible does not specifically address masturbation." Which is interesting, because it easily could have. The Bible does say to avoid sexual immorality or impurity. When puberty begins at age 13 or so, your body begins to produce testosterone, the male hormone, that makes men aggressive. Testosterone produces a sexual drive in a man. Testosterone makes men horny. It is normal to want to masturbate. I wouldn't worry too much about this with this caution. Try not to fantasize about women and intercourse. My editors were all over me on this section. I mean, they just ... and I said, they had all these different things they wanted to say.

I said, look, this is what I want to write. I recognize that this is an opinion, because it's not in the Bible. They wrote me back, "Well, how can you not fantasize about women?" I said, "Look, I'm just telling you what I want to write." And that's what I'm telling you here this morning, too. Try not to fantasize about

women and intercourse. Young men are going to masturbate. That's all there is to it. Men are going to do it. That's all there is to it.

"Try not to fantasize. Do not look at pictures of women or stimulate yourself. Why? Because that is lust, when you do those things. Second, don't allow yourself to compulsively masturbate. Certainly, masturbating several times a week would be considered compulsive." Is there anybody who doesn't feel uncomfortable and awkward right now? I certainly do.

So, I am saying, that in my opinion, you can masturbate and not sin. That's what I'm saying. Now, again, the Bible doesn't say much about it. So you will need to make your own conclusion on that. I am saying that I think compulsive masturbation or excessive masturbation ... it's gonna be very difficult to do that without sinning, without lust. And then, yeah. So again, the Big Idea here today, looking is not lusting until you're burning with a passion that David had for Bathsheba.

BIBLICAL AND PRACTICAL IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH LUST

Finally, just some Biblical and practical ideas ... I forgot to press the start button but I think we're probably about 30 minutes now or something like that, of tape time? Well, we had Keith at the beginning, right? What's that? Huh? 33? Okay, 33. So.

Alright. Just let me run through this, then. So, presupposition on the practical side. Let's not pretend that me and Jesus and a lot of prayer is gonna be enough to conquer lust. They're important, but they're not enough. You're gonna need some other things. And these other things, preface number two is that we don't want to be, trying to help men, or ask men to construct sin-management systems that require your power instead of the power of the Holy Spirit.

With that said, 1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has overtaken you," including lust, "Except that which is common to man, but God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can handle, but will give you a way of escape so that you may be able to endure it." What is that way of escape? The more you abide in Jesus, the less that you'll be tempted to sexual lust, this sort of lust. The more you engage in physical intimacy with your wife, the less you'll be prompted to lust.

Know what your triggers are, and then just don't pull them. You know? Know what your triggers are and don't pull them. Make Job's covenant, Job 31:1, "I've made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman." I made that commitment many years ago. Haven't been able to keep it fully, but I've sure did a lot better having made the commitment than not, and then I rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to help me fulfill the commitment.

Yeah, we need a lot of willpower. You know. My will and God's power. Another practical idea is, you know, sometimes, early in the morning, I can't read my notes that I write to myself, or I write notes that are so scribbly, I can't read them. So I'm sure that one was really good that I was just looking at.

Confession is good for the soul. Galatians 6:1-2 talks about carrying each other's burdens, so ... Addiction to pornography and addiction to sex is beyond the scope of what we're talking about here, but if you have a normal man's struggle with lust and so forth, then being part of a small group and being open with them about your burdens would be helpful.

If you do have a problem with lust, you should tell your wife. You should tell your wife everything. You should tell her every single little detail of it. You will probably, based on some fairly strong anecdotal evidence out there, you will probably never really get free from the bondage of lust if in fact you are in bondage to it if you do not come clean with your wife and basically tell her everything.

When you feel attraction, here's what you should do, when you sense attraction to a beautiful woman, you should pause and remember and thank and say, "Thank you God, for this beautiful woman, who is fearfully and wonderfully made." And wonderfully made. And thank God that you've had the privilege of seeing a beautiful woman. And then move on. And not walk around the block for another look.

I can't remember if I'm the one who originally came up with it, you hear that everywhere now. I wrote that in the Man in the Mirror. I can't remember if I was quoting somebody or if I actually came up with that, but temptation is seeing a pretty woman. Sin is walking around the block for another look. You hear that everywhere now.

If you are addicted, seek professional help. And then just some habits, I mean. We don't want to have a sin management system that you're in charge of, but it is good to have some habits. Covenant Eyes, Man in the Mirror has worked with Covenant Eyes for many years. That's a great software program to screen your computer. Most people say, a great percentage of people say that they have pornography pop up on their computer. Unwanted pornography pop up on their computers on a regular basis.

I know my wife does, because she goes to all these salacious, like Daily Mail and stuff like this. So she'll send me this article she wants me to read, and I get down to the bottom and there's a girl there with a bikini on and she's got her cheeks the size of a basketball sticking out. And I think, "Oh my gosh, is this supposed to be sexy? Give me a break here."

And then just finally, I want to wrap up with ... so Ed Cole, who was in ministry to men a long time before me, he wrote a book in 1982. 1982. Wow. Called Maximized Manhood. And in that book, he was on his way to speak to a group of men in Oregon, and on the plane, he felt like the Lord gave him a very powerful message to speak to the men. This is back in the early '80s.

So he stood up and this is what he told them. "If you are here tonight and committing adultery, fornication, homosexuality, incest, or habitual masturbation, indulging in pornography, gratifying yourself in sexual fantasies, or any other kind of sexual sin, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth to repent and be restored to a right relationship with God the Father by being reconciled through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit." So I would say that to you as well, this morning. Again, **Big Idea: Looking is not lusting. Until you're burning with a desire that David had with Bathsheba**, and then you are. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you so much for your word, that we have not been left alone to sort all this sort. You've given us ample advice and wisdom and counsel, direction, even commands on how to walk out our sexual lives in this world and so we thank you for that. I pray, Lord, for each of the men who are here this morning or will hear this message online, that you would tutor to their hearts your word so that they might be able to have victory in their own battles with lust. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.