

# Extra Teaching Points

## Chapter 6

### Matt. 5:27-32

#### [Matt. 5:27-28](#)

Usually when we think of the sin of adultery, we consider it a sin of sexual impurity. It is, but that might not be what Jesus is pointing to here.

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#### Extra Thoughts On Sexual Sin:

There is something almost mystical about sexual misconduct that puts it in a different class than most other forms of misconduct.

- [1Cor. 6:18](#) Paul says other sins are outside the body, but sexual sin is a sin against your own body.
- Paul probably isn't talking about sexually transmitted disease. He's probably talking about a spiritual defilement of the body that doesn't occur with other sins.
  - Sin is sin, but there is an effect that sexual sin has on the soul and conscience that is different than most other sins.
- There is a bonding element to sex that God intended ([1Cor. 6:16](#)).
  - If a couple has not had sex, and then break-up, they get over the hurt way faster than a couple who were sexually active with each other.
- One reason sex outside of marriage is always wrong is because sex is a life-joining activity.
  - The two become one flesh ([Matt. 19:5](#); [Mark 10:8](#); [Eph. 5:31](#)).
  - Outside of marriage, sex is a life-joining activity without a life-joining intention.
- Another reason sex outside of marriage is sin is because sex is a reproductive activity, and there is no other place where reproduction is appropriate besides marriage.
  - Where there is no marriage, there is no guarantee that a child will be raised in a proper setting--with a father and mother who are permanently committed to each other and the life of the child.

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#### Jesus is most likely teaching that adultery and lust are both an act of injustice.

- Just as a man who murders another has deprived that victim of his right to life, the man who commits adultery with another man's wife has deprived and cheated that man of his rights.
  - [1Cor. 7:4-5](#) Paul says the wife has *exclusive rights* to her husband's body and the husband has *exclusive rights* to the wife's body.
  - To deprive someone of his or her sexual right is a terrible injustice.
    - It is a theft far worse than just stealing property.
- If we look at adultery through the lens of what is just or unjust, it makes more sense.
  - **Jesus is saying that either mentally or physically using the body of someone you're not married to for your sexual gratification is unjust.**
    - If the person is married or unmarried, their spouse or future spouse is the only one who has a right to sexual gratification from that person's body.
    - **When you take sexual gratification from someone whom you have no right to take it from, you are cheating someone.**

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## Extra Thoughts about Lust:

It is important to note here that Jesus did not say that looking at a woman **AND** lusting was the same as adultery. He said looking at a woman **TO** lust after her is the same as adultery.

- Jesus is not condemning **noticing** someone who is sexually attractive... He is condemning a “*would if I could*” attitude.
- **To be attracted and even tempted is natural (not a sin), but what you choose to do with those thoughts says a lot about your love of justice.**

[James 1:15](#) says when lust “conceives”, it gives birth to sin.

- If you are bombarded with sexual temptations through no fault of your own, that is not necessarily sin. But when you choose to say, “*Yes, I will think about this, enjoy this and not resist this*” then it is sin.
  - **You may never physically act on any of those thoughts; but if you have mentally embraced it, you have acted on it in your heart.**
  - **Choosing to use a mental thought to achieve a sexual gratification is committing adultery in the heart.**
- [Job 31:1](#) Job describes his commitment not to entertain such thoughts, but refusing to **gaze** at women.
  - Looking at women for a long period of time, holding them in view, and drinking-in their image is at best stupid and, more often than not, just opening the door for lust.

**If your sex drive is what gives you the most pleasure, and sexual fantasies are something you are addicted to and attached to, it’s not going to be easy to get rid of those.**

- Sexual corruption in the soul is one of the hardest kinds of corruption to get rid of.
  - Once that wall has been broken down by illicit sex and/or pornography, it is extremely difficult to fully recover purity, if it is even possible at all.
  - Total purity is extremely difficult if not fully elusive.
- Even though recovering purity may be extremely difficult and elusive, a war must be fought to try and achieve it.
  - You can never stop fighting and struggling to get the sin away from you as much as you can.
- Those things that feed your sexual fantasies (like pornography) or enable them (like too much solitude) are things you must put far away from you.
  - We cannot avoid all temptation, but there are some temptations we can avoid... and those we must!

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## **Matt. 5:29**

Jesus isn’t prescribing self-mutilation as a means of overcoming sin.

- Jesus is using hyperbole again to emphasize what is really important.
  - Hands and eyes are extremely valuable, yet not as valuable as eternal life.
  - Hands and eyes don’t sin anyway; it’s your mind that sins and uses them to act out the sin.
- **If you cut off your hand but didn’t change your mind, you’d still have a sin problem!**
  - **There are other things besides hands and eyes that cause us to sin. How do we deal with them?**
- Relationships, ambitions, jobs, and possessions... all of these are things you might have to cut off to avoid being dragged into hell.
  - **Jesus is saying, whatever you have to cut off and get rid of is a good trade!**

## [Matt. 5:31](#)

### **Divorce and oaths (which Jesus addresses next) are about Faithfulness.**

- Jesus has just taught that you can avoid adultery and still be guilty of the same injustice; now He starts teaching about faithfulness.
  - An argument can be made that Justice is also still in view here.

In Jesus' day (as well as our own) there were many ways in which unfaithfulness was being justified. ([Matt. 5:33-37](#))

- While the Law of Moses **ALLOWED** men to divorce **IF** they found fault with their wives, it got spun to **PRESCRIBE DIVORCE** when a man found fault with his wife.
  - Under the Law of Moses it was possible, under certain circumstances, to get out of your marriage vows.
    - But exactly what made it OK to forsake your marriage was never really spelled out.
    - The only OT passage that legislates on divorce is [Deut. 24:1-4](#).
      - It required a written certificate of divorce to protect the divorced wife.
- When the men divorced their wives **without adequate provocation** they were being unfaithful to their marriage vows.
  - **They were also being unjust because they had no right to renounce their vows.**

## [Matt. 5:32](#)

**Q: How can a man cause someone else (his divorced wife) to commit adultery?** ([Matt. 5:32](#))

- The scenario Jesus gives is of a couple where **neither spouse has been sexually immoral**, but the husband divorces his wife anyway.
  - Though there is a legal certificate of divorce, that doesn't mean God sees them as free from the responsibility to act faithfully and justly.
    - **Faithfulness demands they keep their vows to God and to each other.**
    - **Justice demands they protect their spouse's rights, and not demand things they have no right to.**
  - In Jesus' scenario, neither spouse has the right to break their vows.
- **Jesus says if she remarries, she is committing adultery along with the man who marries her, *presumably because her divorcing husband is not remarried yet*, and the marriage vows are still in force before God for both of them, even though there is a certificate of divorce.**
  - It takes more than just a certificate to make divorce an act of Justice.
    - If the marriage were not dissolved for a just reason (sexual immorality), then justice and faithfulness would require the spouses to honor their marriage vows.
- In Jewish society women had few legal rights.
  - If a woman had no husband, father, or children who could support her, she would often have to resort to begging, prostitution, or remarriage.
  - In other words, if the husband put her away, she may be forced to remarry, which would force her (and the one marrying her) into adultery.
    - **It would be adultery because she had an obligation to fulfill her marriage vows, which her husband prevented her from being able to fulfill.**
    - It could be that Jesus did not say the divorcing husband had committed the adultery if he remarried because polygamy was legal.

Jesus was saying: *“The Law may allow you to divorce your wives in some cases, but for the most part you guys are violating the principles of faithfulness in your original vows to your wife... and it makes your wife compromise her virtue. You divorce a virtuous wife who never committed sexual immorality against you, and now you put her in a position where she almost has to become an adulteress. You force her to commit adultery if she has to remarry to survive.”*

- Of course she shouldn't commit adultery against her vows if she is wrongly divorced, but the weight of it falls on the divorcing husband who put her in that situation.

This teaching on divorce and remarriage has to be cross-referenced with [Matt. 19: 3-9](#) because there are few other details that come out in that passage. It sounds very similar to [Matt. 5:31-32](#) but it ends differently.

- In [Matt. 5:31-32](#) Jesus addresses the wife who remarries.
- In [Matt. 19:3-9](#) Jesus addresses the divorcing husband who remarries.
- **What Jesus is emphasizing in both passages is the need to be faithful.**

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## Extra Thoughts On Divorce and Remarriage:

**Q: There are countless scenarios possible when it comes to divorce and remarriage... Jesus gives us only one. Why?**

- He must be trying to teach us a principle rather than a rule.
  - He was capable of giving an exhaustive list of scenarios and the appropriate rule for each, but He didn't.
  - **If He had given us that exhaustive list, all we would need to know is the page number for the rule.**
  - **By giving us one scenario to teach us a principle, it seems He wants us to know Him... not just the rules.**

**Some Christians teach that God never recognizes divorce; no matter what.**

- Jesus said His scenario is true EXCEPT in cases of sexual immorality.
  - Which means His scenario is not true in cases that involve sexual immorality.
- **If the wife had committed sexual immorality and the husband had divorced her... that would change everything.**
  - For one thing, he doesn't *cause* her to commit adultery because she has already committed adultery by being sexually immoral.
    - He has only acknowledged the marriage to be broken.
  - **If she is divorced for sexual immorality, her second marriage is not the adultery.**
    - The adultery was the sexual immorality that violated her marriage vows and ended her first marriage.

[Deut. 24:1-4](#) allowed that a woman could be put away and divorced for some indecency, whatever that might be; that indecency could be adultery.

- She was still free to remarry.
- There was no stigma attached to her marrying another man under the Law.

Jesus is not modifying the Law in [Deut. 24:1-4](#).

- Jesus never changed this or any other law.
- He showed how they used the law incorrectly and violated higher principles, but He never did-away with the law ([Matt. 5:17-19](#)).

**Some Christians understand Jesus' teaching to exclude any other reason for divorce than sexual immorality.**

- But Paul gives another reason in [1Cor. 7:15](#).
  - If an unbeliever wants to leave a believer, the believer is not bound in such circumstances.
  - Could there be other things that make divorce appropriate in God's eyes?

**It is often asked, "what about physical abuse?"**

- Some would say that a spouse should stay and try to win their spouse over through Christlike character.
- Others would say that the abusing spouse is making it clear they are not willing to live with them as the Lord intended, and is forcing the battered spouse to leave or, in some cases, abandon the marriage.

There will be lots of opinions since there is no specific instruction from the Lord that covers every scenario absolutely. However, the only opinion that matters is the Lord's.

- Each believer will have to resolve themselves to do what they think the Lord would have them to do in whatever scenario they find themselves.
- **At the heart of Jesus' teaching on marriage is the commitment to be just and faithful like God is.**

## **Chapter 6 Follow Up Assignment**

Q: Are you currently involved in an adulterous relationship?

- Are you either mentally or physically using the body of someone you're not married to for your sexual gratification?

Q: Is there anything you need to "cut off" and get rid of so you can be faithful and just?

Q: What do your answers tell you about your love for Justice and Faithfulness?

*\*The answers to these questions could be very explosive if they are shared irresponsibly. If you are concerned about how your answers might affect someone else, contact a church leader for help and advice.*