

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Study #7 (Updated 8-11-17)

Read Matt. 5:27-32 (NIV)

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. **It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.***

*³¹ It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I tell you that **anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**"*

Q: Why is lust just as wrong as adultery?

- If we look at adultery and lust through the lens of what is just or unjust, it makes more sense.
- Adultery and lust are both an act of injustice.
 - Paul says husbands and wives have **exclusive rights** to each other's bodies (**1Cor. 7:4-5**).
 - Just like someone who murders another has deprived that victim of his right to life, the one who commits adultery has deprived and cheated someone of their rights.
 - Jesus is saying that using the body of someone you're not married to, for your sexual gratification, either mentally or physically, is unjust.
- 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 is the same as adultery.
- **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 lust will "conceive" and give birth to sin.
 - You may never physically act on any of those thoughts, but if you have mentally embraced them, then you have acted on them in your heart.

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 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.
- Even though recovering purity may be extremely difficult, a war must be fought to try and achieve it.
 - Those things that feed your sexual fantasies (like pornography), or enable them (like being alone too much), are things you must put far away from you.
 - We cannot avoid all temptation, but there are some temptations we can, and must, avoid.

Q: Does Jesus seriously want you to cut off parts of your body to stop sinning?

- 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.
 - Besides, hands and eyes don't sin; 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!**

Q: There are other things besides hands and eyes that cause us to sin.

How should we deal with them?

- Relationships, ambitions, jobs, and possessions... if any of these are pulling you away from God, you need to cut them off!
- **Jesus is saying, whatever you have to cut off and get rid of is a good trade!**

Q: Why is divorce wrong?

- It is an act of unfaithfulness.
 - Remember, faithfulness is a big part of Love. ([Matt. 22:37-40](#); [Matt. 23:23](#)).
- Jesus has just taught that you can avoid adultery, and still be guilty of the same injustice; now He's teaching about faithfulness.

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

- Under the Law of Moses ([Deut. 24:1-4](#)), it was possible, under certain circumstances, to get out of your marriage vows; but what it was, exactly, that made it OK to forsake your marriage, was never really spelled out. However, God required a written certificate of divorce to protect the divorced wife.
 - While the Law of Moses **ALLOWED** men to divorce if they found fault with their wives, men spun the law into a **PRESCRIPTION FOR DIVORCE** anytime a man wanted out of his marriage.
- When the men divorced their wives **without a good reason**, they were being unfaithful to their marriage vows. **They were also being unjust, because they had no right to renounce their vows.**

Q: Why is a man, who marries a divorced woman, committing adultery?

- In Jesus' scenario, *neither spouse has been sexually immoral*, and *neither spouse has the right to break their vows*, but the husband divorces his wife anyway.
- Jesus says, if she remarries, she is committing adultery, along with the man who marries her, **probably because her divorcing husband is not remarried yet, and therefore, the marriage vows are still in force before God for both of them**, even though there is a certificate of divorce.
 - **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.
- Jesus also taught on Divorce and remarriage in [Matt. 19:3-9](#), but there, He addresses the divorcing husband who remarries.
 - **What Jesus is emphasizing in both passages, is the need to be faithful.**

Q: There are countless scenarios possible when it comes to divorce and remarriage...

Why does Jesus give us only one?

- He was capable of giving an exhaustive list of scenarios, and the appropriate rule for each, but He didn't. **He must be trying to teach us a principle, rather than a rule.**
 - 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.

What About You?

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?