

**“Jesus’ Take on Lust”  
(Matthew 5:27-30)  
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**Introduction:**

Mastering our minds is the key to overcoming temptation and living with purity in our hearts. Apart from this it will be nearly impossible to have any measure of success over sin and temptation.

Here are some of the principles the Scriptures teach about the importance of mastering the mind.

**The mind and behavior or the mind and lifestyle are inextricably linked.**

**Romans 8:5-8**

*<sup>5</sup>Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. <sup>6</sup>The mind controlled by the sinful nature is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace. <sup>7</sup>The sinful mind is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. <sup>8</sup>Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God.*

The implication of this truth is that we cannot merely work on behavior. We have to work on the inner workings of the mind. And then the end of this verse teaches us that apart from having a overhaul in our minds, we cannot even live a life that pleases God.

**The goal of the Devil is to attack the mind.**

**2 Corinthians 4:4**

*The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

So what is the primary strategy of the Devil for attacking Christians and non-Christians? It's disbelief. And he does that with lies. He bends the truth in such a way as to look like truth, but in essence its anything but the truth. We see this in his first appearance in the Garden with Eve. The bible later teaches that he is the father of lies and that lying is his native language. So you and I must be aware of the strategy of the devil.

Then we can see why Paul encourages believers in Ephesians 6 to put on the belt of truth. But truth is not found in just the belt, but in every piece of armor and weaponry the Christian carries. Listen to the verses again.

**Ephesians 6**

*<sup>14</sup>Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, <sup>15</sup>and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. <sup>16</sup>In addition to all this, take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. <sup>17</sup>Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.*

Knowledge of and faith in the truth is our defense and offense in our spiritual battle.

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**It's at the mind where we are led astray from Christ and begin our journey of backsliding.**

**2 Corinthians 11:3**

*But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.*

**Oldness and newness of life begins with the mind.**

**Ephesians 4**

<sup>22</sup>*You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; <sup>23</sup>to be made new in the attitude of your minds; <sup>24</sup>and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

**Transformation cannot occur apart from a transformation of the mind.**

**Romans 12:2**

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

So our struggle as God's people is that we often get tempted to get pulled into a lifestyle that is something other than what God desires for us. We struggle to truly live a life that is transformed. And Paul writes that apart from the renewing of our minds, we will not be able to experience this transformation.

How does this renewal happen? On a few levels. One is a transformation that occurs when we become Christians. When we repent of our sins, accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit enters us and renews us. Paul calls it a new creation. And so we are given a new mind with new attitudes, new appetites, and new ambitions. But Paul also writes that our sinful nature is still there right beside us and so as Christians, we need to continually be renewed. How does that happen?

1) with truth. My not believing the lies of the evil one and instead believing the truth of God's word, we will be transformed. We must continue to saturate ourselves in the Word of God.

2) mortification of sin. We must do battle unto the death against temptation and sin. And we'll talk about that aspect in a bit.

**So this brings us to the today's subject of lust.**

**TNIV Matthew 5:27-30**

<sup>27</sup>*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'<sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>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. <sup>30</sup>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.*

Jesus continues his teaching in the Sermon on the Mount with his phrase, "you have heard it said, but I tell you...." So he says "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

So Jesus, in saying these words, correctly defines sin. And in correctly defining sin, he's correctly defining holiness.

Sin is not merely in the action, it's also in the attitude. We sin when we've already imagined and thought out a scenario of lust and adultery. Even though we never act upon it, just the entertainment of the idea of "what would it be like to...sleep with so and so", we've sinned.

We live in a society where sensuality and indecency and an 'anything goes' attitude is pervasive. God forbid you tell your coworker you're still a virgin. Sexual innuendo is so common place we hardly notice it. Day by day we are bombarded w/ images and lyrics and conversation, and headlines, and movies, dramas, and tv shows that now accept adultery as just a part of life, as if it is bound to happen.

Do you remember the movie, The English Patient? ? It came out about ten years ago starring Ralph Fiennes. I remember this movie so vividly because the response between Linda and I after watching it was so different. To Linda, with eyes tearing up, a tragic, but beautiful story of love and commitment. To me, the magnification of adultery. I hated the premise of the movie. That's the culture we've been living in for decades. As long as your love is pure, adultery is okay.

And it's a setting like this that Jesus says, "adultery kills marriage, even if it's only in your thoughts." So be pure in action and in mind.

How do we fight this intense temptation that gets us while we're working, sleeping, eating, playing, relaxing. A lustful thought can pop up while we're reading scripture or praying. How do we fight this?

Well here's what you don't do.

- you don't play the "let's see how strong my will power is" game.
- you don't gray the lines of sin and temptation
- you don't rationalize sin

Here's what you should do. Lesson 4 of Discipleship 1.

- REPENT (First, though not in D1)
- Run
- Rely
- Resist
- Replace
- Remove (kill)

*<sup>29</sup> 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. <sup>30</sup> 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.*

Colossians 3:5

*Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.*

(see whole chapter)

Friends, sin, especially the sin of lust is insidious, it's addictive, it's degrading, it's debilitating. And with an enemy so potent, extreme measures have to be taken.

You might be a dating person living in sexual sin with your partner. He or she might be the thing Jesus is asking you to cut off.

The thoughts you're entertaining with a coworker that are less than honoring to that person, let alone to God, might be something you need to cut off.

You might need to cut off the type of movies you watch or change your habits on the internet.

Violent, extreme measures must be taken for this temptation and sin.

--Self Control

**1 Thessalonians 4:4-6**

*<sup>4</sup>that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, <sup>5</sup>not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; <sup>6</sup>and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The Lord will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before.*

**Conclusion:**

Friends, Jesus says that holiness is absolutely not optional. The author of Hebrews says that without holiness no one will see the Lord. Let's throw ourselves upon the mercy of God, grieve over our sins and ask for deliverance until it comes. Paul in Romans 7 writes about his own personal struggles with sin and his sin nature. And after writing this incredible insight into each person's internal struggle, he cries out,

4 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Victory over sin can only be found in Jesus Christ. Let's turn to him now for help.