

The 7th Commandment and Lust:

Last week we looked at how the 10 Commandments are a summary of God's Law. Rebecca Colucci sent me a teaching from Today's Word related to lust and the 7th Commandment which is sobering. Indeed, the Law is spiritual, and the law makes sin exceedingly sinful (*Romans 7:13*)

Sexual Violence

February 10

*“but I say unto you, that every one who looks on a woman **to lust** for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” [Matthew 5:28](#)*

To Lust – Ours is a world of violence. We believe that the powerful win. We think that protection means military might. We find safety in guns. We think force solves problems. Today, the great conflicts of the world are reported in blood-red. Jesus has a lot to say about this inner depravity. Some of the words He uses reveal an evil darkness so deeply embedded in us that we don't even recognize its connection to our will to power. But He does.

The Greek verb *epithumeo* combines the preposition “in” with the noun “mind.” So, “to lust after” is an action that occurs in the mind. But that's not all this verb implies. When we look at the root *thumos*, we find connections to rushing wind, volcanic emotion, anger, wrath and explosive indignation. That's not what we expected. After all, lusting after a woman seems to be thoughts about pleasure, not anger. To imagine sex with a woman doesn't look like a violent act. Why does Jesus associate the desire for intercourse with volcanic aggression?

God intended sexual union to mutually join a man and a woman with divine bonding for life. God intended that the protective fence of marriage be a covenant relationship of eternal fidelity. God intended the two to commit themselves to each other. In particular, God intended that the *man* break all prior priority relationships and *cleave* to his wife so that his faithfulness to her is of the same quality as his faithfulness to God (see [Genesis 2:24](#) and [Proverbs 31:11](#)). But things don't usually work out that way. Ever since the Fall, men often choose to relate to woman through power, not commitment. Lust replaces love because lust keeps me in *control* whereas love requires me to serve and submit. Jesus points out that lust is ultimately the desire to *control* another, to exercise my will at the expense of another. Therefore, lust is an act of violence. It seeks my desire regardless of the consequences. I want sex with this woman, and, given the right opportunity and enough power, I will have it.

David's sexual encounter with Bathsheba is the paradigm example of sexual violence. David didn't use a gun to get what he wanted. He used his position and power as king. He saw what he wanted and he took what he wanted. The subsequent tale of violence toward all the parties involved is simply the physical manifestation of *epithumeo* – an act in the mind. David introduced violence into his family and violence infected the lives of his children Amnon, Tamar, Absalom and Adonijah. David's story should frighten every man. God's chosen one, blessed and honored, sidestepped his duty and allowed himself to look with willing desire. If it can happen to the king, none of us are immune.

Does Jesus tell us that lust is wrong because it violates the Ten Commandments? No, He doesn't. He tells us that lust is wrong because it rests on the need for power. Lust is wrong because it pushes aside the sovereignty of God and asserts the sovereignty of me. She may never know, but that doesn't matter. *I know* that I was willing to take what I wanted rather than accept what I am given. *I know* that in that moment I wanted to be *God* and have her my way.

Some additional thoughts on lust, power and control:

1 Thess 4:3-8 tells us that sexual immorality is taking advantage of our brother- it's all about "me". Lust is taking, love is giving.

One term for sexual intercourse that is often used for sex outside of a life-long marriage commitment is a man "humbling" a woman (*Deut 21:14, 22:24, 29, Gen 34:2*)- the term hints of control, power, selfishness and violence.

Inside marriage, the withholding of sex can also be used as a power tool- it is a selfish evil to be used in such a way (*1 Cor 7:2-5*)

Immodest dress and flirtation are a way that sex can be used as a power tool as well, bringing attention to our bodies instead of to the Lord (*1 Pet 3:3-5, 1 Tim 2:9-10, Prov 2:16, 5:3, 6:24-25, 7:11, 21*)

Yesterday Randy and I were witnessing at IUPUI. We talked to students from Niger, China, Thailand, India. But our best conversation lasted almost 2 hours with 2 young women studying to be doctors- Tasha and Trina. Randy took them through the Evangelism Explosion worksheet and both of them ended by saying they are good people and Tasha says she tries to keep the 10 Commandments. Tasha goes sometimes to an Apostolic church, Trina to New Life Worship Center (she's fairly new there). Neither were giving answers to the questions that indicated that they were trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation. So I gave them the Good Person test and went through the 9th, 8th, 7th, 6th and 5th Commandments. When we got to the 7th Commandment and lust, the 2 girls were laughing and reveling in their lustfulness. Tasha said she "LOOOOOVES men" and goes clubbing and Trina at some point said that her boyfriend is living with her. We stored that in the memory bank and continued on through the other commandments. We reviewed their sin, "By your own admission, you're a lying, thieving, adulterous murderer at heart. If God judged you according to the Commandments, would you be innocent or guilty?" "Guilty and in deep trouble" "Would you deserve heaven or hell?" "Hell" "does that concern you?" They said 'yes' but their countenance really didn't show much concern- they loved their sin. We talked a bit about hell, but Trina and Tasha, though startled a bit, were having too much fun with sin to be overly concerned in their young age. Randy and I were at an impasse. There was a moment when each of us was wondering whether to continue the conversation.

I said to the girls, "ladies, you're young, smart- you'll be doctors some day, attractive- you've got the world by the tail. They laughed as one pretended to have a tail in her hand, swinging it. "BUT Jesus said, "What will it profit a man, what will it profit a woman if she gains the whole world but loses her soul?"

I felt a tug in my heart to go back to sexual immorality. "Would you like to know what the Bible says about sex outside of marriage?" Both girls instantly leaned forward and were very eager to hear. We had them read straight out of the Bible (my pocket sword), *Eph 5:3-5*, and then *1 Thess 4:3-8*. Trina confessed that her boyfriend just a few months ago has been seeking after God and that they both agreed they were living in sin- so they stopped- for a bit, then Trina seduced him back into sin. He had gone to the altar at New Life Worship Center. Randy said to her, "Jesus said that if anyone causes one of these little ones to sin, it would be better for a millstone to be tied around their necks and thrown into the sea. You're not only grieving God and sinning against yourself- you're causing your boyfriend to stumble, you're pulling him away from Jesus Christ." We showed them from *Eph 5:3-5* and *1 Thess 4:3-8* that sex outside of marriage is idolatry- they're not worshipping God, but their own selfish pleasures. We talked about the difference between lust (taking) and love (giving, and commitment). We talked about how God says they're taking advantage of men by their lusts (*1 Thess 4:3-8*) and that God says He will judge them for that. In all of this conversation, they saw the love in our eyes and in our words- we were pleading with them to be reconciled to God.

We then took them to *Eph 2:1-8*. We asked them who the “prince of the ruler of the world, who is at work in the sons of disobedience”- who was that? “the devil”. So who is your master? “The devil isn’t our master” they pleaded. “Then is Jesus your Master- are you born again as the passage says?” “no” “Then who are you serving according to God?” They came around to admitting- according to God, they were serving the devil- they got scared. Trina said, “I don’t think I have the ability to stop sinning.” So we had them read *Romans 6:1-14* and encouraged them that the moment they repented and placed their faith in Jesus Christ, God would cleanse them of all sin and give them the power to be free from the slavery of sin as He came into their hearts.