

# Authentic Christians

Lesson 10 – Matthew 5:27-32

## 1. Quick Review

- Jesus is correcting the misinterpretations of the religious leaders and the outright perversions of the Law perpetrated by the Pharisees.
- Murder and adultery are generated by a sinful heart twisted by sin – those guilty of anger and those guilty of lust are just as culpable for murder and adultery as those who commit the act.
- Adultery is redefined in two ways:
  - It begins in the sinful heart ... to want something (desire/craving) that falls outside the boundaries of God's will or provision is equal to the physical commission of the sin.
  - It brings into play other sins, notably coveting and stealing – lust for another's possession is coveting and the enjoyment of another person's marital rights is stealing.
- By use of graphic language, Jesus conveys the serious consequences to uncontrolled lust (hell) and the radical response that may be needed to deal with it (gouging and amputating).

## 2. Implications & Applications

- We **ALL** are guilty of inordinate and improper passion!
  - One of Jesus' intents was to show the need for an "alien" righteousness that cannot be produced by human effort alone (cp. 5:20).
  - Jesus hopes to condemn all by pointing to "pre-adultery" which all of us share ...
  - Paul says he never realized how covetous his heart (predisposition) really was until he was told by the Law "Thou shalt not covet". (See Rom. 7)
  - James 1:13-15 makes lust the dynamo/epicenter of all kinds of universal sinful actions!
  - The only hope for those repeatedly marked by unbridled desire is redemption (i.e. justification).

*Here's the test of our children's profession of faith ... do they consistently give themselves to unbridled desire, or do they consistently attempt to make personal, un-compelled efforts to control their sinful desires?*

- To explain away this kind of lust as something natural or insignificant is to deny the need for the Incarnation, to deny the need for the crucifixion, to deny the need for evangelism, to deny the need for sanctification, to deny the hope of glorification!
- Asceticism can **NEVER** totally eradicate sin found in a depraved heart.

*Iran, one of the world's most oppressive governments, tries to control the "sins" of its citizens through oppressive restrictions on dress, reading material, relationships, food, etc.; periodically, though, news leaks out about those who are killed because of violations.*

*Are there advantages/disadvantages to withdrawing from all evil influences?*

*How do we explain Paul's command in 1 Thes. 5:22 when compared to Philp. 2:14-16?*

*How does this truth shape the discipleship of our children? Should our parenting include the sheltering of our children from all evil influences? If we can't avoid all evil influences, how should we then live?*

- Jesus reveals a dynamic relationship between the external/physical and the spiritual – the plucking out of the eye and the cutting off of the hand prevent one from entering hell.
- There are certain aspects of self-discipline, though, that must be part of our daily walk with the Lord (See Rom. 8:12-14, Rom. 13:14, 1 Cor. 9:24-27, 2 Cor. 13:5-7 & 1 Tim. 4:7-8).

*"It was by yielding to the lusts of the flesh that Adam brought death upon himself and all his posterity. And **if I live after the flesh, that is, am governed and guided by my old nature, acting habitually according to its inclinations**—for it is a persistent and continuous course of conduct which is here mentioned—**then, no matter what be my profession, I shall perish in my sin.** It is the gratifying and serving of the flesh, instead of the will of God, which eternally ruins souls ... To "live after the flesh" is to be completely controlled by indwelling sin, to be thoroughly under the dominion of our inbred corruptions. Hence, mortification consists in a course of conduct which is just the reverse. It imports: comply not with the demands of your old nature, but rather subdue them. Serve not, cherish not your lusts, but starve them: "make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). **The natural desires and appetites of the physical body require to be disciplined, so that they are our servants and not our masters; it is our responsibility to moderate, regulate and subordinate them unto the higher parts of our being.** But the cravings of the body of sin are to be promptly refused and sternly denied. The spiritual life is retarded just in proportion as we yield subservience to our evil passions." (A. W. Pink, Practical Christianity, pg. 140)*

*"The way to go hard after God is with all the discipline and self-denial of an athlete. I doubt that there has ever been a Christian who reached heights of knowledge and joy and obedience without plan and discipline and self-denial. God does not promise his riches to aimless people." (Piper, "Going Hard after the Holy God", Sermon preached 1/8/84)*

*"Striving also calls for denial (1 Cor. 9:25), the setting aside of provisional ends (1 Cor. 9:27). This is not asceticism but athletic discipline (2 Tim. 4:5). It is not contempt for the world but a right ordering of priorities." (The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, pg. 20)*

*"... we must deliberately restrain the flesh and deal with every suggestion and insinua-*

*tion of evil. In other words, we must 'watch and pray'. We must all be concerned to do as the apostle Paul says, 'I keep under my body'. If Paul needed to do it, how much more so the rest of us."* (Lloyd-Jones, Studies in the Sermon on the Mount, pg. 220)

- People serious about the lust of their own heart MAY need to take radical action to deal with it
  - Adultery does not occur in a vacuum – it is accompanied by other sinful pursuits.
  - Guarding our heart may involve personal restrictions that are not shared by any other person ... they assist the protection of our minds and the security of our motives.

*What kind of "radical" steps might a man or a woman take to guard their own heart from the threat or temptation of adultery?*

*Prov. 6 – what practical lessons can we teach our teenage children so they will avoid the temptation of adultery?*

- There's hope for the adulterer in Christ – forgiveness & sanctification! (1 Cor. 6:9-11)