

## ***Session 08 Overcoming the Spirit of Immorality (Mt. 5:27-30)***

### **I. THE SPIRIT OF IMMORALITY**

- A. Jesus called His disciples to resist the spirit of immorality (Mt. 5:27-30). He was not raising the standard of the Old Testament law but, explaining its original intention. In the seventh command, God was speaking of more than avoiding physical adultery, but also the spirit of immorality. The Pharisees taught that committing adultery only involved avoiding the physical act.
- <sup>27</sup>You have heard that it was said to those of old, “You shall not commit adultery.” <sup>28</sup>But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup>If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out...it is more profitable that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. <sup>30</sup>If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off...for it is more profitable...than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Mt. 5:27-30)*
- B. Jesus was not giving a comprehensive teaching on freedom from sexual addictions, but focused on two of the ***most important and most neglected principles***. First, the spirit of immorality does not start in one’s actions, but in the eyes and then moves to heart (Mt. 5:28). Second, that we must make radical, even costly and painful decisions to remove whatever stirs up lust (Mt. 5:29).
- C. Jesus taught how the spirit of immorality operates and grows and how dangerous it is. We must not take it lightly because it is like a spiritual cancer that continues to grow if not resisted.
- D. Immorality includes all sexual activity (physical, verbal, technological) outside of a covenant of marriage between one man and woman. Jesus knows that immorality grants Satan legal doors of access to oppress and damage our heart and our relationship with God, our family, and others.
- E. Jesus as a good shepherd was graciously seeking to help His people by this teaching. He was not railing against sin, but was giving insight to help us detect and then overcome immorality. He wants us to understand the destructive and deceptive nature of the spirit of immorality. He wants us to benefit from this insight so He emphasized, ***“It is more profitable for you.”*** (Mt. 5:29, 30). He knew that those who live in purity will see or encounter God in a deeper way (Mt. 5:8).
- F. Because God is love, blessing flows from His every act and command. Every connection that we have with Jesus causes His blessing to enrich our lives. Because God is love, obedience to His commands brings us closer to Him and liberates our hearts.
- G. The Lord set all sexual expression within the covenant of marriage. He knows that the only place where sexual activity enriches one’s life is in a covenant commitment to their spouse’s life story, pain, weaknesses, joys, goals, family, parents, children, dreams, sickness, prosperity or poverty, etc. To engage in sexuality without this life-long covenant defiles one’s spirit, dulls and injures their heart, causes lust to increase, devalues their story, and despises the Lord (2 Sam. 12:10).

## II. THE TWO PRINCIPLES THAT JESUS EMPHASIZED (MT. 5:28-30)

- A. ***Principle #1:*** Whoever looks at a woman to lust has already committed adultery in the heart. Jesus explained how the spirit of immorality operates. It is rooted in “looking with lust” at a person directly or through media (internet porn). This fuels the heart with sexual fantasies. Adultery progresses from *eye adultery* to *heart adultery* then to *physical adultery*.  
<sup>28</sup>***Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery...in his heart. (Mt. 5:28)***
- B. Jesus emphasized the role of the eyes as a primary way to hinder the spirit of immorality. It is much easier to close the “eye gate” than to try to put out the raging fires of immoral passions. Job understood the power of making a covenant with his eyes as a way to walk in purity.  
<sup>1</sup>***I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman? <sup>9</sup>If my heart has been enticed by a woman, or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door... (Job 31:1, 9)***
- C. David affirmed that the eye gate was the battle front to walk perfectly or mature before God.  
<sup>2</sup>***I will walk within my house with a perfect heart. <sup>3</sup>I will set nothing wicked before my eyes... (Ps. 101:2-3)***
- D. ***Principle #2:*** Jesus emphasized how important it is to deal with immorality in a radical way. A casual approach to lust is not sufficient. We must make radical, even costly and painful proactive decisions to remove whatever stirs up lust in our members (Mt. 5:29-30). This means that some of what we cherish (people, places or things) may need to be removed from our lives.  
<sup>29</sup>***If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.***  
<sup>30</sup>***If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. (Mt. 5:29-30)***
- E. One example of dealing radically with lust is to obey Paul’s exhortation for men to refuse what is often called “innocent touching” of women, when they know that it stirs lustful desires in them.  
<sup>1</sup>***It is good for a man not to touch a woman. (1 Cor. 7:1)***
- F. Many in the Church have a low view of hell. Those with a biblical view of hell know that God will send the immoral person to hell. This gives us a greater urgency to speak out boldly on it.  
<sup>9</sup>***Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, <sup>10</sup>nor thieves...nor drunkards...will inherit the kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)***  
<sup>5</sup>***This you know, that no fornicator...has any inheritance in the kingdom...<sup>6</sup>Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes... (Eph. 5:5-6)***  
<sup>8</sup>***The sexually immoral...shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire. (Rev. 21:8)***  
<sup>14</sup>***Enter...into the city [New Jerusalem]. <sup>15</sup>But outside are...sexually immoral... (Rev. 22:14-15)***

### III. THE DANGER OF LUST #1: IT GROWS

- A. The spirit of immorality is unbiased and operates to the degree that anyone opens the door to it. We were all born with sinful weakness. Satan wants our **weakness** to escalate to **wickedness**, but he needs our cooperation. He wants to poison our spirit and then imprison it. Augustine wrote, *“Lust yielded to becomes a habit, and a habit not resisted becomes necessity (addiction).”*
- B. **Premise:** Immorality is dangerous because it grows and becomes uncontrollable. People imagine that they can “dabble with a little immorality,” then control it later. They do not understand the power of a cold heart, darkened mind, and defiled conscience with demonic activity in their life. It increases in corruption (shame, oppression, and perversion now and leading to judgment later).  
<sup>7</sup>*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*  
<sup>8</sup>*For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption... (Gal. 6:7-8)*
- C. Immorality sins against the body by opening the door for sexual addiction to be established. Immorality defiles the body and dulls the spirit as it provides Satan legal access to enter the human domain through these open windows for demonic activity.  
<sup>18</sup>*Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. (1 Cor. 6:18)*
- D. In Romans 1, Paul described how people sin against their body by engaging in immorality. He explained how a “penalty” works in those who continually refuse the Spirit’s warnings to resist immorality. The penalty is that God progressively “gives them up” to greater darkness—going from **uncleanness** (v. 24) to **vile passions** (v. 26) and finally to a **debased mind** (v. 28). When someone is “given up” to dark desires, God lifts the natural restraints that He graciously built into our human design. Thus, they are compelled to yield to greater depths of lust.  
<sup>24</sup>*God gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves...*<sup>26</sup>*God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature.*<sup>27</sup>*Likewise the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error...*<sup>28</sup>*God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting... (Rom. 1:24-28)*
1. First, they are “**given up**” to uncleanness leaving them compelled by lust to dishonor their bodies by engaging in even more by immoral activities (v. 24).
  2. Next, they are “**given up**” to vile passions which are even stronger sexual desires that go far beyond what they are accustomed to (v. 26). Burning in lust for new types of sexual experiences is an expression of God’s judgment or “penalty” in their body (v. 27).
  3. Finally, they are “**given over**” to a debased mind so that all restraints are lifted from their thinking so that they are driven by demonic influences to do very shameful things (v. 28).

#### **IV. THE DANGER OF LUST #2: GOD JUDGES IT**

- A. Jesus reveals how He feels about those who continue in immorality without repenting of it. He warned the churches in Pergamos and Thyatira to not tolerate immorality.
- <sup>12</sup>To...Pergamos write...<sup>14</sup>“You have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught ...Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit sexual immorality...<sup>16</sup>Repent, or I will come to you quickly and will fight against them with the sword of My mouth. (Rev. 2:12-16)*
- <sup>18</sup>To...Thyatira write...<sup>20</sup>“You allow...Jezebel...to teach and seduce My servants to commit sexual immorality...<sup>22</sup>I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent...<sup>23</sup>I will kill her children with death... (Rev. 2:18-23)*
- B. Believers are sometimes made sick and die prematurely under God’s judgment on immorality. God’s discipline includes Satan being permitted to make the unrepentant sick (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 11:30-32). Paul commanded the elders to deliver a believer over to Satan (lift God’s protection, allowing Satan to make him sick) to wake him up spiritually so that he would not fall away.
- <sup>1</sup>There is sexual immorality among you...a man has his father's wife...<sup>4</sup>In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered...<sup>5</sup>deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh [sickness], that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. (1 Cor. 5:1-5)*
- C. If we judge ourselves by repenting, then we will not be disciplined by the Lord. We can reverse God’s judgment or discipline by repenting of areas of persistent compromise in our life. The Lord is the avenger of immorality in the lives of unrepentant believers (1 Thes. 4:4-8).
- <sup>30</sup>For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. <sup>31</sup>If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged [by the Lord]. <sup>32</sup>When we are judged, we are chastened [disciplined] by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. (1 Cor. 11:30-32)*

#### **V. WE MUST DILIGENTLY LIVE IN THE OPPOSITE SPIRIT OF IMMORALITY**

- A. We act in the opposite spirit of immorality by diligently seeking to grow in our relationship with Jesus and by meditating on His Word being implanted in us which is able to heal our hearts. I recommend reading Proverbs 5-7 regularly to be reminded of the terrible cost of immorality.
- <sup>21</sup>Lay aside all filthiness...and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save [heal] your souls. (Jas. 1:21)*
- B. Many issues contribute to being able to walk free from the spirit of immorality. They include: looking inward by communing with the Spirit through the Word; looking upward to heaven and its rewards (Col. 3:1-4, 23-24); looking backward to deal with bitterness, shame, and wrong mindsets; looking forward to God’s assignment in our life and to His end-time purposes so that we are prepared by understanding the coming glory and crisis (2 Pet. 3:14); looking around to see the pain that our immorality would cause others; looking to others in relationships with accountability (confessing our weaknesses); and looking outward by establishing boundaries to avoid circumstances that stir lust in us by what we look at, where we go, and what we do.