



*Lust* - Matthew 5:27-30

Jesus moves on from anger to lust and gives the latter a similar treatment as what He gave the former. While people all too often want to blur the edges of what qualifies as adultery, Jesus not only draws out a clear line of demarcation, but He does so far sooner than many might be comfortable with.

Similar to what Jesus did in connecting anger to murder, He connects lust with adultery.

When I have taught confirmation in the past, I have had to deal with arguments claiming that they should not be at all concerned with adultery, since at their age they are not even able to be married. Given that perspective, what's the concern? Well, that is a perspective not at all shared by Jesus. Rather than arguing that one must be married in order to commit adultery, Jesus gets to the root cause for the acting out of our adulterous thoughts, by addressing the lustful ways in which we look at others.

God designed men and women in such a way so as to make them pleasing to each other's eye and there is nothing wrong with that. If you found yourself attracted to your future husband or wife prior to marriage, welcome to the club. That is not the issue Jesus is addressing. Rather, it is the creative fantasy life in which we begin to view others as mere objects of our sexual fantasies that needs to be dealt with, here.

For a practical example, think about King David and his encounter with Bathsheba. Had David been able to notice the beauty of Bathsheba and leave it at that, he would have avoided all kinds of trouble. But as we know, he was unable to do so. Instead, his fantasies got the best of him, and having the power of his throne to leverage, he was able to have an affair that ultimately ended in the death of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, as well as the son conceived from this indiscretion. Beauty is still a gift from God and is to be enjoyed, yet as with anger, we need to ensure that we do not dehumanize others in the process of our admiration.

### *Thoughts for Reflection*

How has our culture undermined this warning and how can the church restore a proper appreciation of humanities beauty?

27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.