

Matthew 5:27-30 Gospel Centred Purity (ARKS)

It's not the bits of the Bible I don't understand that give me a problem, it's the bits of the Bible I do understand...

Why is adultery a big deal? Because it is a violation of the God-given picture of the covenant of love that exists between God and his people. Adultery starts with lust in the heart and hence Jesus' call to take radical urgent action.

Jesus says your very soul is at risk. 1 Peter 2:11

The evidence for true saving faith is that you, by faith, are fighting sin. It's not so much whether you sin but whether you are in the fight against sin or have made peace with sin and surrendered.

How do we fight the sin of lust?

Avoid 2 Timothy 2:22 Flee... pursue. Romans 13:14. Give the flesh no opportunity....

Whatever your weakness, avoid it. Do what you need to do.

However, this by itself is not enough. It is sanctification by works / 'legalism with a smile'.

Resist James 4:7 Resist the devil... "You can't stop birds flying around your head, but you can stop them nesting in your hair." (Martin Luther, 1483-1546)

Kill Romans 8:13 "Be killing sin or it will be killing you." (John Owen, 1616-1683)

Put sin to death by the Spirit using His Sword, the Word of God. Ephesians 6:17

Kill the lie that sin makes with a superior promise. To do this we need to know God. Colossians 3:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5. Those who do what they want, do not, in fact, KNOW God.

How do we wield the sword of the Spirit to kill sin, stripping off the sugar-coated veneer to reveal the poison that seeks to ruin our soul?

Take the promises of God and receive, by faith, the superior promise of God: e.g. Philippians 4:8f, Psalm 84:11, Matthew 5:8, Romans 8:6.

See! (the Saviour)

Feast your eyes on the glory of God in Christ. Behold Him, see Him! 2 Corinthians 3:18. As we fix our eyes on Christ so we are transformed by the Spirit into His likeness. We need to see Jesus as superior which means rehearsing the truths of the gospel repeatedly. Congregation, Connect, Core, 'Closet'.

Get in the fight! Be at war with lust and all sin and then receive the blessings contained in the blood bought promises of Jesus.

Points to Ponder

1 Why is it important to realise that the sermon on the mount was written for 'Believers', for those who belong to Christ, born again by the Spirit and who are seeking to follow Him? Why is it that dealing with lust is so urgent and vital? How does it make you feel to think that your very soul could be at stake?

2 Why is it not enough to avoid places where we might encounter temptation? Why is that described as 'legalism with a smile'? What does it mean to pursue sanctification by faith and not by works? Why is resisting the devil not enough either?

3 Talk through with worked examples how to practise Romans 8:13. What does it mean to take hold of those promises by faith? What's the significance of Galatians 3:3,5? [The Spirit comes when we hear the Word by faith.]

4 In what ways can we behold the glory of Jesus to the end that it transforms us as per 2 Corinthians 3:18? What are the ordinary means and ways that God has given for us to do that?

5 Pray for the power of God to put to death the misdeeds of the flesh, *by the Spirit* (and not by works!).