

CONTENDING FOR PURITY IN A PORNIFIED WORLD – PART 2

I. INTRODUCTION

I say then: Walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. – Galatians 5:16

- A. This verse gives us *the* key to walking in victory over lust.
- B. Another way of saying this is “walk in *love* and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” The fruits of the spirit are similar to the characteristics of love.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. – Galatians 5:22-23

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; 5 does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; 6 does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in truth; 7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 8 Love never fails. – 1 Cor. 13:4-8

- C. The primary temptation for women is to cause lust – to intentionally elicit the lustful gaze of men. The primary temptation for men is lusting after women. As I said in Part 1 of this message, the temptation for a woman is to exploit her beauty and the temptation for a man is to consume her beauty – this is one of the main messages of the book of Proverbs.
- D. In Part 1 I talked about the environment in our world today that is shaping our sexuality. It is a culture of voyeurism in which we’re enticed to look at objectified and sexualized female bodies at every turn. This creates a culture of lust – the atmosphere is charged with a spirit of lust.
 - 1. This is problematic because Jesus said if you *look* at a woman to lust after her you have already committed adultery with her in your heart. (Matt. 5:28)
 - 2. There is nothing wrong with sexual desire – it is a gift from God. There is nothing wrong with finding someone attractive – they are made in His image.
 - 3. To look at someone with lust means to look at that person with a desire to have sex with him or her. It is internalizing your physical attraction towards another person to the point of fantasizing about having sexual intercourse with them. This is the explicit meaning of Matt. 5:28.
 - 4. The implicit message of Matt. 5:28 is that it is also adulterous to intentionally elicit the lustful gaze of others. In other words, intentionally inviting others to look at you with a desire to have sex with you.

- E. Our sex-sells consumerist culture is built on capturing this lustful gaze. The entire advertising industry is operating in a spirit of adultery. The spirit of lust has enveloped our nation.
- F. This is threatening on many levels because lust fuels a toxic sexuality, which gives way to all manner of sexual abuses. But it is what happens in the heart that is of greatest concern.

II. THE GREAT TRAGEDY

- A. Lust threatens the core substance of what it means to be human, which is to experience love. As the spirit of lust permeates our culture we are forced to substantiate our “love lives” that are serially violated by infidelity. There are two trends that have become popular in explaining the disparity between what we intrinsically know to be real love vs. our real world experience of love.
 - 1. Redefining love – This began in a prominent way in the 1960’s. In order to validate the booming movement of sexual promiscuity they packaged it as love, as in the “Summer of Love”. In actuality it was nothing more than a summer of lust.
 - a. This rationalization for lust as love is prominent today as well. During the filming of *Nefarious I* interviewed a lady named Carol Leigh (a.k.a. The Scarlet Harlot), author of *Unrepentant Whore*, and the founder of a sex-workers rights organization called Bayswan. During the course of the interview she conceded that most men who visit women in prostitution are married. So I asked her how she validates prostitution as a credible industry when so much of the actual prostituting is adulterous sex. Her answer was that, “we simply need to change our views about adultery and embrace non-monogamy as a society.”
 - b. In a similar spirit, Angelina Jolie described her relationship with Brad Pitt, "I doubt that fidelity is absolutely essential for a relationship. Neither Brad nor I have ever claimed that living together means to be chained together. We make sure that we never restrict each other."
 - c. There is a growing trend towards these “open relationships” that deny fidelity.
 - d. These efforts to redefine love as harmonious with recreational sex and infidelity is simply a bid to justify the carnal impulses of our flesh when we have given up trying to harness and channel our sexuality into a committed monogamous relationship.
 - e. Redefining love in this way actually strips it of its ethical grounding, purpose, and meaning. At its core, love is faithful. Monogamy fortifies and qualifies our expression of romantic love as authentic.

2. Denial that love exists – For many who are honest enough not to try and redefine love, they simply deny that it even exists. We interviewed scores of young adults about their view of love. It was shocking to discover how many just didn't believe in it. Our generation has become particularly jaded, cynical, and disillusioned about love, due to serial infidelity fueled by a spirit of lust.
- B. Lust gives way to a toxic sexuality, which has had a devastating impact on our world. The greatest tragedy of our day is not poverty, aids, abortion, or human trafficking. The greatest tragedy of our day is the fundamental widespread destruction of the human heart by the spirit of lust – *it is the destruction of love*. Lust is the great enemy of love.
- C. The goal of this message is to polarize the distinctions between love and lust in a way that empowers us to live courageously for love, and deepens our resolve to resist, reject, and renounce the spirit of lust. Walk in love and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.
- D. To put this in perspective, I'm going to highlight five contrasting aspects of love vs. lust.

III. #1: LUST SUBVERTS OUR CALLING VS. LOVE FULFILLS OUR CALLING

- A. **Lust subverts our calling** – One of the primary ways that the enemy seeks to abort the purposes of God in our life is by seducing us into sexual immorality.
1. 2 Samuel 13 tells the story of Amnon and Tamar. Amnon is overcome by lust and rapes his half sister Tamar. Later Absalom (Tamar's full brother) kills Amnon in an act of vengeance for raping her. Amnon was the first-born son of David and rightful heir to the throne of Israel. The moral of the story is that lust brings forth the death of calling.
 2. Conversely we're told in Revelation 2 that critical to ruling in the age to come is overcoming sexual temptation. This is the message to the church in Thyatira.
 3. The end of lust is the death of our life's calling.
- There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. (Prov. 14:12, 16:25)*
- B. **Love fulfills our calling** – The greatest fulfillment of our calling in this life is to love. Jesus boiled the entirety of God's commands down into two things – loving God and loving people. The bible tells us that it is impossible to please God without love (Heb. 11:6). In 1 Corinthians Paul says that unless all of our good works are performed in love, they are worthless.
1. The end of love is the fulfillment of our life's calling.

IV. #2 LUST EXPLOITS VS. LOVE PROTECTS

- A. **Lust exploits** – Lust is inherently exploitative. It sees vulnerability as an opportunity for exploitation (cf. Psalm 10).
1. Lust thinks only of itself. It arouses a self-centered sexual appetite that results in exploitation.
 2. People often use their position of advantage through: class, wealth, age, or position of authority to exploit the vulnerabilities of others.
 3. Our culture of lust conditions us to use, manipulate, and exploit others for our own self-centered gratification. The affect is that we become cannibalistic in our relationships – using each other, and using each other, and using each other, until ultimately we have destroyed every vestige of trust between us.
 4. The end of lust is somebody being exploited.
- B. **Love protects** – The distinction between lust and love is that lust thinks, “what can I get?” while love thinks, “what can I give?” Love sees vulnerability as an occasion for protection. Every person has vulnerabilities and to love a person is to protect the areas where they are susceptible to being taken advantage of.
1. This defines the essence of divine love – God “sets the solitary in families”, He is the “defender of widows”, and He is the “Father to the fatherless”. Notice that in all these biblical phrases we’re familiar with, God’s character is described in context to someone else’s condition of vulnerability. God demonstrates His love towards us in that He covers us in the place of our vulnerability – *He protects*.
 2. I have a friend named Helena who was in prostitution for over 20 years. Towards the end of her road in prostitution she had liver failure and became bedridden for a year. She was heroin addicted and had boils and abscesses over her entire body. Lying on her deathbed, Jesus visits her in a dream one night and reveals His love to her. For the next six months Jesus continued to encounter Helena night after night, ultimately healing her entire body and delivering her from prostitution and heroine addiction. Today Helena is a one of the brightest shining witnesses of Jesus Christ on the earth.
 3. The end of love is someone being covered and protected.

V. #3: LUST NUMBS VS. LOVE FEELS

- A. **Lust numbs** – Lust numbs the heart.

1. I met a lady in Amsterdam named Sarah who was formerly in prostitution for over 20 years. She experienced the kind of degradation, exploitation, and depravation that no human should ever experience. As I sat and talked with her she came to a point where I could tell she was fighting for words to explain the depth of her brokenness. Finally, in a broken voice and with tears pouring down her cheeks, she said, “I could not love, I could not love, I could not love.” Years and years and years of men defiling her heart in a spirit of lust completely shut her heart down.
2. Oscar Wilde was a man of his day. He indulged in unbridled sexual exploits; whether it was men, women, or young boys, nothing stopped him – he indulged in unlimited hedonistic pleasure. And then lying on his deathbed he looks over at his lover Robbie Ross and says to him "Did you ever love any one of those boys for their own sakes?" Shocked by the question, Robbie says, “no!” Oscar replied, "Neither did I. Bring me a minister! Only the cross of Christ is big enough now to cleanse this heart of mine." Having lived a life dominated by lust, his heart was unable to experience love.
3. The end of lust is a heart completely shut down, unable to love.

Love feels – Love tenderizes our heart. The experience of love is to feel empathy for others – to be considerate of their needs and interests. During Jesus’ ministry in the gospels we read many times that He was “moved with compassion” before performing a miracle. He literally felt the pain of those He ministered to.

1. The Weeping Room vision by Jennifer Miller
2. The end of love is a tender heart full of compassion.

VI. #4: LUST CONSUMES VS. LOVE PURSUES:

- A. **Lust consumes** – Lust shows no regard for the object of its desire. It is looking for disposable people – for an objectified body, someone to consume and discard. Lust has an insatiable appetite and is never satisfied.
 1. The end of lust is someone being humiliated.
- B. **Love pursues** – When you pursue someone you are ascribing honor and dignity to that person; you are saying, “You are worth my time, attention, dedication, and patience.”
 1. Personal story
 2. The end of love is someone being dignified.

VII. #5: LUST SEEKS INSTANT GRATIFICATION VS. LOVE WAITS.

- A. **Lust seeks instant gratification** – Lust is the insatiable unrestrained pursuit of the carnal impulses of the flesh. We live in a world where we are conditioned to get what we want, when we want, how we want, without any thought of consequence. This disposition of instant gratification contributes to the crisis of: abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, sexual assault, and adultery.
 - 1. The end of lust is superficial fleshly gratification that wreaks havoc on the rest of our lives.

- B. **Love waits** – There is an appropriate context for the expression of our sexuality. One that is meaningful, safe, secure, under God’s blessing, and which can be celebrated. That context is marriage. Until then love honors and cherishes in preparation of loves consummation.
 - 1. The story of Michael and Hannah
 - 2. The end of love is love’s consummation in perfect satisfaction.

- C. Other ways lust contrasts love – Lust is violent vs. Love is gentle, Lust is apathetic vs. Love is passionate, Lust is cowardly vs. Love is courageous, Lust enslaves vs. Love liberates.

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. We were created for love. But our longing for love will never be satisfied by the spirit of lust. Lust will destroy your spirit, soul, and body, as well as those around you who become victims of your self-centeredness.

- B. The answer to the crisis of lust in our culture is a deeper encounter with the love of God. Walk in love and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh for the love of God is more powerful than the lust of Satan.

- C. For Internet accountability try Covenant Eyes. Sign up at exoduscry.com/covenanteyes
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