

THURSDAY 05 May 2022 "Adultery" (Matt. 5:27-29)

Good morning my dear "Walking with Jesus" friends,

I'm sure you've noticed the dramatic changes in almost everything when you compare generations. Changes in attire, changes in technology, changes in communication, even changes in values and what is perceived as right and wrong. I found an interesting table of at least one definition of the currently alive generations in our world. I wonder where you are in this list.

Generation Name	Births Start	Births End	Youngest Age Today*	Oldest Age Today*		
The Silent Generation			1925	1945	77	97
Baby Boomer Generation			1946	1964	58	76
Generation X (Baby Bust)			1965	1979	43	57
Xennials			1975	1985	37	47
Millennials Generation Y, Gen Next			1980	1994	28	42
iGen / Gen Z			1995	2012	10	27
Gen Alpha			2013	2025	1	9

NOTE: This chart was developed in early 2022.

Now why would I begin today with that information? Because I'm inviting you to join Matthew and me again in our reflection of the words Jesus spoke in His "Sermon on the Mount" which Matthew recorded for us. I believe it was in the weeks following Easter that the Holy Spirit was working in Matthew's heart to remember and record Jesus' words, so we'd have them 2000 years later, and as Matthew reflected, I imagine everything Jesus had said was taking on new meaning, as Matthew and the other disciples evaluated Jesus's words through the experience of Easter weekend, especially the resurrection of Jesus.

So, let's rejoin Matthew in his 5th chapter, verse 27 where Jesus said to the people: **"You have heard that it was said..."** *That phrase is why I began today as I did.* In the Jewish tradition, for centuries, the passing of God's truth from one generation to the next was a *primary responsibility of parents and grandparents*, so that as they grew old and death approached, they were confident their kids and grandkids understood and where holding tightly to all that had been passed to them from their ancestors, *especially as it related to God, God's truth, God's values, and how to live as God honoring people.*

Psalm 78:1-8 is a great picture of this important God given cultural value. Now think about your world and mine for a moment. *What priority have your parents, grandparents and great grandparents placed on instructing you in wisdom about God, God's truths, God's values and how to live as a God honoring person? And what priority have you placed on that for the generations which follow you?*

So now look closely at what Jesus said that day: **"You have heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery'. But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart!"** (Matt. 5:27,28) This comparison style of Jesus presenting His truth as building on past truths is repeated through this entire sermon. Notice please, Jesus is NOT contradicting this great historic truth about adultery which God had expressed in His 10 Commandments to Moses and the Hebrew people nearly 1500 years before. Rather Jesus is inviting us to dig deeper into our lives and *to understand that our actions are the outworking or display of what is in our hearts and minds*. Adultery was punishable by death according to the Laws of the Jews. Why? Because adultery destroys marriages and families, deeply wounds kids and leaves single parents to raise kids... *a fundamental cancer which implodes any society*, as America is learning.

Physical adultery was anathema in Jewish society, and they went to great lengths to prevent it and punish it when it occurred. How seriously did they take it? Listen to Deuteronomy 22:22 **"If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge this evil from Israel."** God understands the horrific damage adultery causes to everyone touched by it. But friends, do you notice Jesus was calling people to consider *an even more destructive type of adultery... EMOTIONAL Adultery!* Let those words of Jesus penetrate your heart as you look closely at the values of the society where you live: **"But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery in his heart!"** So, consider the music of your culture, or the marketing advertisements, or the attire produced and available for sale for women in your culture, or the humor (jokes) or what is acceptable entertainment in your society, whether TV or Movies or video games or even live entertainment. *As you evaluate all that, do you see clear evidence of the celebration of LUST and efforts in almost every segment of society to promote looking at women lustfully?* And what about the pornography industry in your part of the world?

So, we need to ask some very important questions of ourselves in view of what Jesus said...

1. Do you find yourself LUSTING from time to time. Oh, by the way, *LUST is not an exclusively male problem, is it my friends. Women lust as well, don't they?*
2. Do you find yourself making excuses for your LUST, perhaps thinking that it's not harmful, it's simply a thought or maybe a desire and as long as you don't actually do or say anything about it, then it's a private matter, right?

Do you perhaps find yourself thinking that LUST is so deeply embedded in your society that it would be impossible to live completely untouched by it and therefore you give yourself license to LUST, since you presume everyone does? *Both of these are horrible lies and traps for people to be drawn into inescapable lust addictions.*

3. *Have you given thought to how lust provides a foothold for the devil into your heart and mind and lust is an insatiable appetite which demands satisfaction? Have you found a little lustful thought can fairly quickly become a frequent intruder into your thinking and soon you find yourself often choosing to go to that lustful playground in your mind and heart?*

4. *Physical adultery is the end result of a lustful thought which was NOT brought under control and was allowed to develop into a growing lust passion which eventually took action to accomplish its desire.*

Here are some very powerful Scriptures which I have found help to fight this emotional adultery problem:

1. Proverbs 4:23 ***"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of your life."***

2. ***"The heart is deceitful above all things... I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward (or punish) a person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve."*** (Jeremiah 17:9,10)

3. ***"If I had cherished sin in my heart, the LORD would not have heard my prayer."*** (Psalm 66:18)

4. ***"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own, you are bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body."*** (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

Jesus went on to say some radical things about how to deal with emotional adultery. ***"If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out... It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."*** (Matt. 5:29) Now that sounds beyond outrageous doesn't it. But Jesus was challenging both those listening to Him that day and us, 2000 years later, *to consider how important this matter of lust and adultery is to us and to what extreme we are willing to go to protect our marriages and families from our own out of control lust?* Jesus' reference to going to hell is a clear statement that those who commit adultery are people who have rejected God, God's truth, God's values, God's warnings and have succumbed to the strong influence of the devil and have chosen his authority in their lives rather than God's authority.

Hell will be the final destination of Satan and all those people who have refused the offer of Jesus Christ's Easter weekend atonement accomplishment and have instead chosen to live their lives under the influence of the devil.

So, let's spend a few moments in honest personal and cultural reflection...
How prevalent is LUST in your society *and in your personal life?*

How often do you excuse lust in your heart and mind, and maybe even nurture it?
What steps are you willing to take, and perhaps needing to take, to deal with this lust issue which is so important to God and so damaging to human life and relationships *and especially damaging to our relationship with God?*

Has this struck a vulnerable place in your life today my friends? There are many resources available to you and I'm going to give you several links or suggested authors that may help you. *Please don't minimize the destructive power of LUST or the horrific damage of Emotional Adultery.* I urge you to spend some time talking with Jesus about this right now, and maybe make some life decisions. Develop a self-protection action plan and write it in your journal today! This is serious stuff and the steps you take today might save your marriage and even your life!

Some suggested RESOURCES...

* <https://www.provenmen.org/>

* "Freedom In Christ Ministries" <https://www.ficm.org/>

Books:

At the Altar of Sexual Idolatry; Steve Gallagher

Brokenness - the heart God Revives; Nancy Lee DeMoss

An Affair of the Mind; Laurie Hall

Today's Scripture is Matthew 5:27-29.