**Small Group Sermon Study Guide**

Shedding False Stories: (3) I Need Sexual Fulfillment At All Costs

 Matthew 5:27-30, Matthew 5:8 3/11/12 **A.M.**

1) *“You have heard that it was said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you that anyone*

*Who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*

 Is Jesus abolishing the law or offering to provide the best interpretation?

 Read Matthew 5:17-19

 In Matthew 5:20, Jesus suggests that he offers a righteousness “beyond the Pharisees”.

 How does Jesus command about lust go “beyond” Pharisaical righteousness?

 (See quote sheet, *How Can One Keep the Law)*

2) “*Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully.”*

The word translated lust here refers to super-sized desire. It is possible to notice with appreciation. Lust comes in with the second, third or fourth look: a gaze. It is looking *in order to lust.* It is like adultery in that we are treating a person as an object instead of treating them as a sacred being. (See quote sheet : *Lust a Form of Adultery* and

*Teach me to see them as Sisters and Daughters)*

What do you think of this distinction between an appreciative glance and a lustful gaze?

3) *“Gouge it out”*

In Jesus day, rabbi’s often exaggerated in order to make a point. Jesus point is to take

 Drastic measures to eliminate lust from your life. Shed it at all costs. If a website, a

flirtation, a tv show, or a chat room causes you to sin cut it out for the sake of your eternal soul.

 Some people object to Jesus vivid, even gross language here. What do you think?

 Is the “amputation imagery” needed or is it overblown?

5) *“Blessed are the Pure in Heart”*

Contemporary brain science has revealed that addictions literally develop pathways in

our mind. (See *Holiness Pathways)* The pure in heart are fighters. They defeat the “pleasures of lust” by purposefully cultivate innocent pleasures and holy pleasures.

Give some examples of innocent pleasures and holy pleasures.

**Reflection: What do I amputate from my life?**

 **What good pathways do I need to develop?**

 ***Quote Sheet***

***How can one keep the law?...Focus on the Heart***

(Jesus answer in John 6:29 is “believe in the one God has sent…”) Jesus knew that we cannot keep the law by trying to keep the law. To succeed in keeping the law one must try to aim at something other and something more. One must aim at becoming the kind of person from whom the deeds of the law naturally flow. The apple tree naturally and easily produces applies because of its inner nature. This is the most crucial thing to remember if we would understand Jesus’ picture of the kingdom heart given in the Sermon on the Mount.

--Dallas Willard, ***The Divine Conspiracy, 142-143***

***Lust A Form of Adultery***

Jesus explains to men that *epithumia* is a form of adultery. In adultery sexual desire triumphs over a person’s commitments. Adultery implies, “Fulfilling my desire is more important that fulfilling my commitment. I don’t care if I hurt others; right now all I care about is me.” The same is true of lust: valuing the other as a sacred being is tossed aside. Jesus brilliantly gets to the heart of the matter. He invites us into the kingdom in order to become new people—people who value and respect others.

--James Bryan Smith, ***The Good and Beautiful Life, @32%***

***Teach Me to See them as Sisters and Daughters***

Sole watchman of the flying stars, guard me

 Against my flicker of impulse lust: teach me

 To see them as sisters and daughters. Sustain

 My grand endeavours: husbandship and crafting *(poetry).*

--Poet John Berryman in *Eleven Addresses to the Lord* qtd in ***Rumors of Another World,***

By Philip Yancey**, 84**

***Combating Pornography by Deepening Holiness Pathways***

When I was young, I visited a farm that had an old-fashioned water pump. It was centered on a cement slab and would drip long after you stopped pumping. Over the years the dripping water had cut a trough to the edge of the slab. The trough was nearly two inches deep. So it is with pornography in a man’s brain. The male brain is prone to pick up on sexually relevant cues. These cues trigger arousal and a series of neurological, hormonal, and neurochemical events are set into motion. Memories about how to respond to these cues are set off. As the pattern of arousal and response continues, it deepens the neurological pathway, making it a trough. Each time an unhealthy sexual pattern is repeated, neurological, emotional, and spiritual erosion carves out a channel that will eventually develop into a canyon from which there is no escape. But if this corrupted pathway can be avoided, a new pathway can be formed. We can establish a healthy sexual pattern where the flow is redirected toward holiness…

--William Struthers, qtd *Preaching Today website,*