

Purity and Adultery

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Jesus, Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:27-30.)

These are hard words. Happily, the Bible tells us that we do not have to follow rules or keep commandments in order to have a right relationship with our loving Father in heaven. All that takes is Jesus. (Ephesians 2:3-5.) No, the Sermon on the Mount is not wrong. But it is a sermon given before Jesus sacrificed himself for us, before he created the New Covenant and set us free from the law. It is a sermon that cannot be taken as a manual for right living, because Jesus did not die to make us better at following rules. He died to set us free, for as Paul put it: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.” (Galatians 5:1.)

So why did Jesus give us this insight to adultery? So we can understand God’s holiness. We are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus himself (2 Corinthians 3:18), and it is good to know what that looks like. Let’s study together this week what it means to seek purity for God.

Monday – Desperate Measures

“Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs than a fool bent on folly.” Proverbs 17:12

1. Please read Matthew 5:27-30. If this standard were carried out today, how many one-handed and one-eyed people would you see each day?
2. How seriously is sexual impurity taken in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20? What does this passage tell you about your relationship with God the Father, Jesus Christ God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit?

Text Insight: This letter from Paul to the Corinthians was written after Jesus died and rose again, and is therefore under the New Covenant.

3. Now look at Romans 7:4-6 and describe how it supports the idea that Jesus died to set us free from the Old Testament standards he described in Matthew 5:27-30.

Making it Personal: God desires to guide you in conforming to the likeness of Jesus. Since God already knows what sins you commit, you might as well turn to him for help!

Tuesday – Abraham Dishonors Sarah

“Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness, and he was called God’s friend.” James 2:23

1. Please read Genesis 12:10-12. Why did Abraham make the decisions he did? What does this say about his relationship with God? With his wife?

Text Insight: God later changed their names to Abraham and Sarah, showing their growth in him.

2. Long after Abraham made that mistake with Pharaoh, he lived in a kingdom ruled by Abimelek. Why do you think he made the same mistake in Genesis 20:1-18, after he had grown in relationship with God for years?

Making it Personal: Remember that God called Abraham his friend (Isaiah 41:8), and you are his friend too if you have faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior.

Wednesday – Judah and Tamar

“Judah the father of Perez ..., whose mother was Tamar.” From the ancestry of Jesus, Matthew 1:3

1. Please read Genesis 38:1-10. Why do you think Onan had intercourse with Tamar repeatedly?
2. Now continue with Genesis 38:11-26. What mistakes did Judah make? How did God redeem them?

Making it Personal: Do you trust God to work through even your mistakes? Why (or why not)?

Thursday – David and Bathsheba

“God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart.’ Acts 13:22

1. Please read 2 Samuel 11:1-5. What did David do? What did Bathsheba do in return? What happened?
2. Continue with 2 Samuel 11:6-1. What steps did David take? Why?

Digging Deeper: Read 2 Samuel 12:1-25 and describe David’s relationship with God.

Friday – Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife

“The LORD was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did.” Genesis 39:23

1. Please read Genesis 39:1-7. What was Joseph known for? How was he tempted?
2. How did Joseph respond in Genesis 39:8-23? Why (v. 9)?

Making it Personal: What priorities do you have when faced with temptation? Why?

For the Weekend: Read 1 Corinthians 10:13 and James 4:7. What are we to do with temptations? Now read Hebrews 4:14-16. What does Jesus, God the Son, know about the temptations you face? What effect does that have on our ability to approach God (v. 16)?