

Hey, how are we? Are we good? If you have your Bibles, let's go to Song of Solomon 7. I know those of you who have been here for the last few weeks are maybe wondering what happened to Matthew 5 and the Sermon on the Mount. This is the fifth week we've been teaching out of the Sermon on the Mount in a series we've just called *City on a Hill*.

What we've said up until this point is once we were not a people, and now we are a people. What the gospel of Jesus Christ has done has formed a completely different people than we once were. At one point, we were defined differently than we're defined now. How we're defined now is you and I, regardless of background, regardless of socioeconomic status, regardless of ethnicity, have become a new people, a people belonging to God, a people of his own possession.

As we are his people and belong to him, God has asked us to interact in a certain way with one another. We are to care for one another, serve one another, and in fact *outdo* one another in honor, which means my head is always on a swivel looking to honor you, bless you, serve you, lower myself and exalt you for the sake of Christ, for the name of Christ every time I'm around you.

Whether that's when we gather at church or when we're in Group or as I see you around town, I am to seek to outdo you in honor as you seek to outdo me in honor. He has wired us uniquely and placed us uniquely to be all we need corporately to grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, which means he has given you specific gifts and abilities. He has given me specific gifts and abilities. Those gifts and abilities actually collide, and you bring what you bring to the body and I bring what I bring to the body, and that helps us all mature into all Christ has for us in the gospel. We're to serve one another, love one another, and walk with one another. The Bible says, and what we heard in this series so far, is God calls us to be a new people.

The purpose behind that is so we might be salt and light to the world around us. We said salt in the first century was not an agent of flavoring, but rather an agent of preserving. They would use salt to preserve their meat because they lacked refrigeration. Christ, in the Sermon on the Mount, is preaching that as the covenant community of faith, we are to play a preserving role in culture at large, which means we are not to walk in worldliness, not to give ourselves over to what our culture deems as right and good, but rather what God has redeemed, or what God has revealed is right and good in the Scriptures. As we obey God's revealed Word to you and to me, we serve as preserving agents in culture at large.

But he goes on to say not only are we salt, but we are the light of the world. Now this is where we reflect to the world... Now hear me, because if you're not a believer and you're just a guest with us, I want you to hear this because it's going to sound arrogant, but I promise you it's not arrogant. The body of Christ, the church of Jesus Christ, not only serves as a preserving agent in culture, but it reflects the glory of Christ to the world. What I mean by that is we reveal God's way is better than man's way.

I know that might sound arrogant to you, but I promise you the Creator of all things, including you, including me, is smarter than whatever topic you want to insert, is smarter than us regarding that topic. Whether that is how we should interact in relationships, to how we should view marriage, to what sin is, to what righteousness is, there is an intrinsic "I think I know the answer to that" that must be subservient to God's revealed answer to that question. We reflect the knowledge, wisdom, glory of Christ as we live in the ways Christ has empowered us to live by the Holy Spirit inside of us and by the revealed Word of God.

Since we saw that in the Scriptures, we began to look at really Jesus saying the righteousness you and I are going to walk in as believers in Christ is going to supersede the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes. Those were very religious people who had this external list of rules they were going to obey and they were going to walk in. There were 613 commands. They were seeking to obey those...365 negative "Thou shalt not's" and 248 positive "Thou shalt's."

They kind of judged how they were doing with God by how well they obeyed the rules. But Jesus shows up and redefines righteousness altogether. He said it's not about external actions, but rather about internal transformation and that you and I, with our discipline, with our energy and with our strength, might be able to follow rules, but we will never be able to transform our hearts.

Now most of us know exactly what I'm talking about right now. Almost all of us have behaviors we've tried to either do better at or stop doing altogether. There are things in our lives we wish we could do better. No matter how hard we try, we tend to stumble and fall. Or things we wish we wouldn't do or wouldn't be prone to that no matter how hard we try, we still tend to fall into those things. Jesus is saying, "You don't have the ability to transform your heart. Only I have the ability to transform your heart."

Then the rest of the Sermon on the Mount from that point moving forward, Jesus is going to expose what he is after is not just moral conformity to law, but rather the transformation of our hearts. Get this, because this is where I think you really pick up on God's goodness, love, and grace towards you is not just in moral conformity but actually in internal freedom. What Jesus is after is not you white-knuckling your behavior, but rather being transformed in your heart in such a way that you desire to do what is right and you're empowered to do what is right and you line yourself up with how God designed things to work.

We saw this kind of trade-off from external to internal two weeks ago when we talked about the difference between murder and anger. Jesus is going to say, "You have heard it said, 'Do not murder,' but /say if you have anger in your heart, you're guilty of the same sin." We fleshed that out at length and really just tried to show...listen...Christ is good when he makes these commands because what he's after is a freedom of heart that doesn't exist just if you don't *kill* someone. We talked about really how devastating anger can be in the heart of a man or a woman, how it can fracture relationships, how it can set you apart from other people in regards to relational capacity.

We walked through all of that, and now this week I think we get into a massive one. We get into sex and lust and adultery. Those are massive topics in our culture. They are issues that by and large are wreaking havoc really in regard to our emotional and relational capabilities. What I want to do before I get into the Matthew 5 text is I want to talk about how God feels about sex. I think way too often God gets painted in a light when it comes to sex and sexuality that isn't biblical or fair, so let me show you a couple of things. I want to paint a picture of God's view of sex and God's view of what sex is a part of, and then I want to lay out, by and large, culture's view of what it is and how it works. I want us to compare and contrast and then I want us to go look at what Jesus says on the subject.

In Genesis 1, you have this full-on God creates, and he creates man, and he creates woman. Then God blesses them. In Genesis 1:28, you have Adam and Eve there. They're naked in the garden. They're unashamed, the Bible tells us. Then in 1:28, the Bible says, "**And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply...'**" Now just so I know where we are, you know how you're "fruitful and multiply," right? We're not gremlins. That doesn't happen when you pour water on us. To be fruitful and multiply is God saying, "I've created you. I've made you. I've placed you here. Now be fruitful and multiply."

You just have *God* saying, "I'm the One who did this. I'm the One who wired Adam like this. I'm the One who wired Eve like this." If you can think without going someplace you shouldn't go, marvel at all the physical details that have to be in place for a man and a woman to not only have a sexual relationship but to produce from that sexual relationship new life. In all of that, God designed it all. God designed certain cells to swell, certain cells to secrete, certain cells to really duplicate and spread. You have a God who was intimately involved in the design of the act of sex.

Here's something I would like to point out: Some have read this text historically and then what they've done is they've taken sex and they've made it, "Yeah, God created sex for procreation." The problem with that is... Well, there are a lot of problems with that. My predominant problem with that is the Bible would teach otherwise, and let me show you just one of the places we could go. Song of Solomon 7. We're going to pick it up in verse 1. "**How beautiful are your feet in sandals, O noble daughter! Your rounded thighs**

are like jewels, the work of a master hand. Your navel is a rounded bowl that never lacks mixed wine. Your belly is a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies."

There has to be some contextualization, men. You're not going to want to pull this line from line. I don't recommend telling your girl her thighs are like rounded jewels. That's going to go bad for you. I think surely you're smart enough to stay away from, "Your belly is like a heap of wheat, encircled with lilies." I'm saying it's not going to go well. I feel like you know that. I feel like you're not, "I'm going to show my girl this. I'm going to say this to my woman." I feel like you know that, but I just want to shepherd you well. This is dangerous.

"Your two breasts are like two fawns, twins of a gazelle. Your neck is like an ivory tower. Your eyes are pools in Heshbon, by the gate of Bath-rabbim. Your nose is like a tower of Lebanon, which looks toward Damascus." Another one I would stay away from. "Your head crowns you like Carmel, and your flowing locks are like purple; a king is held captive in the tresses. How beautiful and pleasant you are, O loved one, with all your delights! Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its fruit." Okay, that's just making me get red. "Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, and your mouth like the best wine." Can we stop?

That's in the Bible! That's in the Bible, so you can't paint God to be this kind of, "That's only for procreation. It should only be used to have a baby." This is in our sacred literature, and this man is looking upon his woman in a way that biblically is right, good, just, and can be described, if we're looking at it, as a type of *righteous* lust. He is looking at his bride, looking at his wife, and he likes what he sees. Sex is not just a gift for procreation but is a gift for pleasure.

God is pro-sex. God is not against it. God is not trying to rob from you any experiences. He's not trying to take from you anything in regard to this gift. He is the author of the gift, likes the gift to be celebrated, but there's a hitch in sex and sexuality that makes us really need to dial into who God is and what God has done, because there's a very dangerous component in this physical exchange between man and woman. I want to show you this.

In Genesis 2:24, you find this text: **"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."** Now look right at me. You have to hear this because what I'm about to say flies in the face of and goes contrary to current cultural understanding of what sex is. The Bible just said sex goes well beyond a physical act. Sex goes well beyond a *mere* physical act. In one sense, it's very much a physical act, but it goes well beyond that, because the Bible just said that what

happens in the physical act of sex is two people become one, and that happens physically, but the Bible is going to teach us it happens in *more* ways than just physically.

The Hebrew word for marital connective sex is *dod*. It literally translates a mingling of souls. Sex is not just a physical act, but a spiritual, emotional, and mental act. To treat it like it's a mere physical act is to put your mind, soul, and heart at risk. Let me show you another text here. This will read negative, but I want us to look at it from the positive. First Corinthians 6:15-18:

"Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two will become one flesh.' But he who is joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body."

Now hear that. For all the sins one can walk in, there's one that's a sin against our own bodies, that wounds our own body, that cuts us deeply in the soul, in the emotions, in the heart, in the mind, and it is the sin of sexual immorality. I want us to look at this in two ways. I want us to look at this in the positive. The positive way I would want you to look at this is that God's plan for sex is far greater than the world's definition of what sex is.

What God has in mind through the physical act of sex is that within a covenant relationship, a ferociously-committed... Not "I *feel* things about you," but, "I'm ferociously committed to you. Feeling or no feeling, I'm *in*. I'm not going anywhere. I'm with you." Within the confines of a deep and abiding friendship with one another, in mutual submission to God Almighty, the man and the woman come together spiritually, emotionally, and physically. When that happens, satisfaction in the physical act actually occurs.

But when we look at this text and see when you're just treating it as a physical act, you're actually doing things to your soul you're completely unaware of, or maybe you can feel deep down. You can see we're doing damage to ourselves when we step outside the bounds of what God has given us as a good, right gift to be celebrated as he created it to be celebrated.

Now that idea, that sex is more than physical, will be argued by predominant culture and *is* being argued by predominant culture. As your pastor, here's what I could tell you: If there was any evidence that the current, modern view of sexuality was creating more respect between the genders, was creating safe environments for children to be raised, loved, and cared for, was bringing about fullness of heart, was eradicating loneliness... If it was doing all of that then I think we'd have to take a step back and wonder

whether or not the Bible is speaking the truth to us in this reality or whether this is some kind of old-school Book that doesn't get how enlightened we are.

But in reality, all data, secular and Christian, is pointing to the reality that our view of sexuality is *not* eradicating loneliness, is *not* creating environments that sustain mutual respect among genders, is *not* creating environments where children are healthily sustained and raised and encouraged and edified, is *not* doing the things it's promising it will do. In fact, our culture is so *displeased* with sex that its full concentration now is on technique rather than frequency.

Here's what I mean by that: If you will pay attention in the grocery store this week when you check out, in almost every magazine in the checkout line you'll see an article on technique in sex. If you're a female, in *Cosmopolitan* or in one of those, you'll have six ways to drive your man wild. If you're a man, in *Men's Health* or *Sports Illustrated*, you'll have everything from performance-enhancing sugar pills you can take to technique DVDs you can order. All of this says what? You're not satisfied with the sex you're having, so what you need to have is better sex.

If there should be anything that reveals we're a bit off track it is that frequency isn't solving anyone's despair. It's just creating this treadmill of, "Oh, if I were just better, then I would feel fulfilled, then I would feel satisfied." You have to know it's not going to happen that way. Sex is a part of relational, emotional, spiritual connectivity. The thing that's so crazy about our culture is they want to take a scalpel and they want to cut away those other pieces and exalt sex as though it's on its own, and then we lift it up as though this is the thing that's going to satisfy us. Outside of its connection to God's design for it, it has no hope of doing that.

A man or woman who endlessly switches partners looking for that mythical experience that's going to satisfy all the longings of their heart has severed the flower from the plant and will not ever see life, growth, or fruit. God's plan for sex is a relationship between a man or woman where there's a covenant connection with one another. "I'm not going anywhere. I love you. I love not just your body; I love your soul. I love your mind. I love who you are. In fact, I'm so committed to you that if sex is way down the list of what we get to enjoy with one another because of either some baggage in my life or some baggage in your life, I'm still ferociously committed to you. I'm still dialed into you. I'm still committed to you."

In that environment, you have the shot at deep, deep waters. Everything else is diving off a high dive into two inches of water. With that set as God's plan for what sex is, not primary... Isn't it a weird thing we define ourselves by our sexuality now? When did that become the definition of ourselves? "This is what I am in regard to sexuality." That's so far down the list in regard... We're just so over-sexualized, that feels so

predominant, we get lost chasing the wind. With that said, I want us to look at what Jesus teaches in regard to sex, lust, how to handle ourselves.

Flip over now to Matthew 5. We're going to pick it up in verse 27. **"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with..."** What? **"...lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."** I want to stop there and I want us to chat about what it means to look upon a woman, to look upon the opposite sex. Although this is addressing predominantly men looking at women, we all know that cuts both ways. It might work differently, but it cuts both ways.

Lustful intent is to look upon a person sexually or emotionally in a way that desires what it is not covenanted in for. Are you with me? What it means to look upon a woman with lustful intent, to look upon a man with lustful intent, is to want from them what you are not in a covenant with them to get. To take what is not yours is a better way to say it. To take from that person what is not yours. The predominant way lustful intent plays itself out in our culture is via pornography and fantasy. We are a culture captivated with pornography and fantasy. I cannot in history find a more corrosive, destructive thing for relational capacity than pornography and fantasy. Let me run through why some of that is.

The first reason why pornography/fantasy... If you don't know what I mean by that, when I say pornography I mean illicit material. If you want to start hashing that out, I'm worried about you. If you go, "Well, soft-core or hard-core," I'm already worried for you, bro. Already concerned. This is everything from images to movies to clips to you looking at a catalog that came in the mail. This is *Fifty Shades of Grey*. Don't email me. Don't do it. This is romance novels. This is anything where you begin to create in your mind an alternate reality than the one you're walking in, with a sexually lustful or an emotionally lustful attitude towards what is not yours.

1. *Pornography and fantasy are devastating because they dehumanize their object.* When God gave us the gift of sex, he gave us the gift of sex...listen...wrapped in souls. Tracking with me? My wife has a soul. She's a person. She's not just her body. In fact, the Bible tells us at our day that body is going to go into the ground. My wife, Lauren, is not just a physical body. Your spouse is not just a physical body. They're souls! They have emotions. They have mental health. They have a heart. They have desires. To simply want from them a physical act is to dehumanize them and to use them as a good for your end with no real care for their emotional, spiritual, mental state. It dehumanizes.

Those men and women you click on and watch, have you ever wondered what their stories actually are? That's somebody's daughter, somebody's sister, somebody's brother, somebody's son. If I personalize that, if I think about Audrey, who's 9; if I think about Norah, who's 3; if I think about Reid, who's 6, what has

to happen between that and what we're viewing, so avidly eating up in our culture... Listen to me, pornography year in and year out takes in more money than all three professional sports combined. I know some of you are like, "What?" Basketball, baseball, and football...the biggies.

We're spending more on pornography every year than those three sports combined, so you can't tell me it's not pervasive in our culture. It's eating our culture alive. Have you ever thought what happened to those men, those women, to get them to that moment, what type of desperation? I don't care what kind of smile is on their face. I don't care what you have to lie to yourself and deceive yourself into believing. It's dark. It's dehumanizing. It's taking advantage of wounds and hurts and loss and issues. We're *eating* it up as though there's no real loss, no real hurt, no real pain involved in this. It's awful. Pornography. Fantasy. It dehumanizes people.

2. *It rewires the brain.* William Struthers is a biopsychologist. He rolled out a ton of information on what they're learning about pornography. Really, pornography, in the scale we're talking about, is very much a modern phenomenon. Now I think you can go back as long as human history and see explicit material drawn on a cave, but in the amount we get it, in the way we get it, that's a new thing, and it's jacking up our brains.

What he found is as either a man or a woman views pornography they are creating in their brain little neural pathways. Think Pavlov's dog. If you desire the rush of the sexual experience and you desire the release from the sexual experience and you train yourself that the way that works is via pornography, then your brain picks up on that, and now the only way for you to get to that now is via pornography. You begin to objectify women. Women and men cease to become emotional, spiritual humans, but rather become a means to your end. In some cases, the brain gets so rewired that you would rather just have pornography than a real person.

I know some of you are like, "That's ridiculous." John Mayer did an interview with *Playboy* magazine. I didn't get the magazine. The article was all over the Internet. Just everybody relax. In that article, he really praised Internet pornography and said he actually prefers that to actual women. Now look right at me. John Mayer. Do you see who he's dating? He's with women who are in magazines, on movies, some of the most beautiful women in the world, and our boy has so jacked up his brain that he's like, "I'd rather have my computer. I'd rather just go sit in my living room with my pants around my ankles." This is what happens when you rewire the brain.

Even in some of our counseling here and even in some of the patch work we've done here with people, there are men and women who find it difficult to make love to their spouse before viewing explicit material. How would that make the spouse feel? How is that sowing into the soul of your wife, into the soul

of your husband? Do you see the emotional, relational breakdown that begins to take place? It rewires the brain.

3. *It robs of the ability to enjoy the connection of souls that could occur when people grow together as a whole.* When you're growing together spiritually, growing together emotionally, growing together intellectually, and growing together physically, you have what God is after. If you take that physical component out and you begin to let that physical component go somewhere else, then all of a sudden you're not able to connect emotionally, you're not able to connect intellectually, you're not able to connect in regard to the soul, and now the whole house of cards comes crumbling down. It is corrosive to our ability to feel love, receive love, enjoy love, and to feel legitimate, healthy connection with other human beings.

Some of you know *exactly* what I'm talking about right now. Some of you are in marriages where there's distance and you're not sure what it is. For some of you, that reason is pornography/fantasy. Let me be straight lest the men feel picked on. Pornography/fantasy is not just a male issue. It's not. In fact, a lot of statistical information is showing us that the fastest growing users of pornography and fantasy material are females, not just males. In the end, we are tapping out on what our hearts really crave, which is connection to another human being, because we farm out...

First of all, we introduce the physical way before the physical is supposed to be introduced. There should be a ferocious commitment to one another before the physical is even introduced. Then the physical serves the emotional/mental connection. It doesn't work in reverse. Do you hear me? The physical is not going to lead to more emotional/mental connectivity, but emotional/mental connectivity can really breathe life into physical connectivity. It doesn't work in reverse though, which is why (I don't want to jump ahead to when we get into marriage next week) cohabitation doesn't seem to work statistically right now. But that's neither here nor there.

Now look at what he says next. This is a corrosive issue on the lives of men and women in regard to emotional connectivity, relational connectivity. Since what God wants is your fullness and gladness of heart, and since God created the opposite sex and created for us the gift of sex, he's going to talk to us in verse 29, and you'll see how serious he is about this issue. This is serious. Verse 29: **"If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell."**

Now before everybody comes back next week looking like a pirate, let me finish reading this, and then we'll talk about what he means. **"And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."** Again, let

me chat here, because I think this is a bit of hyperbole. I don't think that next week you should all come back with an eye patch on and a hook. I think you need to hear what he's saying here.

What Jesus is saying is, "This is such a serious issue to your *soul*. This is so dangerous for your soul that you'd better be serious about what I just said. I'm so serious about how corrosive lust will be to your joy, to your ability to connect with one another, and for your ability to feel intimacy at the level I created you to feel intimacy at, that you'd better be serious about the life of your mind, about the intent of your eyes, about where you glance, about what you think, about where you dwell, about where you let your mind and heart go."

Really what you have in these last two verses is a very serious call to action. Now we have to battle lust on two different fronts. It's a very powerful enemy. You have to come head-on in some ways and then you have to flank the thing. We live in a day and age where it's almost impossible not to see explicit material all around us. From ads that are on television... I can hardly watch television with my children. I can't watch a game with my children without having to, "Oh! Victoria's Secret! Let's get past the angels commercial." Right? It's everywhere. We're going to need really a two-pronged assault on this thing.

1. *The greatest weapon you have in your battle against lustful intent is a vibrant, growing, passionate relationship with Jesus Christ.* That's the best weapon you're ever going to have. "Well, what about Internet filters?" We'll get there. That's the flank. Our head-on assault on lustful intent is a vibrant, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. Again, maybe you're a guest and you don't know this. Christianity is not a list of do's and don't's; it's a living relationship with God. It is a vibrant, growing relationship as we've been reconciled to God through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. I'd feel just completely fine telling you without a relationship with Jesus Christ you're always going to have lustful intent.

In this culture, with what we have available to us, with what we're seeing day in and day out in commercials and billboards and all these things, you're going to have to have that full-frontal assault on lustful intent, and that is only available as we've been given new hearts and we're growing in our relationship with Christ to the point that he has become more lovely than our lustful intent, that we begin to see the opposite sex as our sisters and our brothers and not as objects and we begin, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to be disgusted by the objectification of and the dehumanizing of men and women. That happens as the Holy Spirit churns up our heart. That's the first prong on our assault on lustful intent.

2. *Wisdom.* In the first thing, we want to be studying the Word of God, not to know the Word of God but to know the God of the Word. We want to be prayerful. We want to be walking in community. We want there to be confession and repentance as marks of our lives. Then we want to walk in wisdom. I just think you should have something on all your mobile devices. "Well, I don't really struggle with this." I'm not saying

you do. I just think in this day and age it's foolish not to have some sort of either filter and/or browser, on specifically your mobile devices, that is going to help you here, that is going to just help with any impulse, help with any problem.

One of the things I've learned as we've done some counseling here is that some of you... Actually, the reason you have a pornography/fantasy issue as opposed to actually having an intimate relationship with your spouse is that you're just lazy. Loving, serving, going after the heart, soul, and mind of a spouse is far more difficult than clicking on a link. But what God has called us to is to lay down our lives for our spouse, for that one we're in a covenant relationship with.

Once again, physical is not primary in the relationship. It's only the world that says physical is primary. The Christian says, "The physical is a gift. The physical is a good, right, beautiful gift from God. But my commitment is not to the physical; my commitment is to the woman. My commitment is to the man. The person, the soul."

When I talk about wisdom, I'm talking about everything from what you allow into your home in regard to access on the Internet, what you can order via your cable provider, whether or not that's blocked from you. Again, for some of you, what your issue is Facebook and romanticizing ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends. They were the one who was going to make you happy and satisfy your life, which is why you guys broke up in fire, ashes, and tears 10 years ago. But now they're awesome. Some of you, your issue is you need to shut down that Facebook page because you use it to fish. On and on I could go.

If you're single, there are certain things... I can't point you to the verse, but I feel very safe saying that. You should start lying on a couch together at 11:00 at night and watch a movie. That's going to end a certain way. Isn't it? "Let's get in our pajamas and watch a movie." It's 11:00 at night. That's ending some way. It's not with you guys talking about how good of a movie that was. That's wisdom. That's walking in wisdom to honor your sister and brother in the Lord, to see them as souls, to see them as hearts, to see them as sons and daughters of the King.

Men, to recognize you've been entrusted with a daughter of the King. You shouldn't touch what isn't yours and you shouldn't take what hasn't been given to you. On that day, in that ceremony, when you covenant to that person and to God that you're in, now you can add the good, right gift of the physical to the relationship. But before then, you're cultivating mind, heart, emotions, dreams, soul. That makes the physical fly.

I want to end like this. I desperately don't want you to feel the weight of shame here. I want you to feel convicted. In fact, I've prayed the Lord would convict you. I *really* want you to feel convicted because, as

you can tell, Jesus is pretty serious about this. Again, this text is one that requires action. What does it look like for you to pluck out your eye, what does it look like for you to cut off your hand if you're stuck in fantasy, if you're stuck in pornography? Maybe you wouldn't even define yourself as stuck; maybe you just frequent it, which is the same thing as stuck. What does it look like for you to pluck out the eye? What does it look like for you to cut off the hand?

Well, I continue to say week in and week out, and one of the things we want to be normative around here, is for us to simply respond to the Word of God via confession and repentance. As we close out today, I want to give you some options. There'll be some men and women up front who are willing to pray with you, to encourage you. I know some of you are like, "Man, I'm sitting right next to my spouse. If I go up there, they're going to wonder what's going on." Yeah, and you should probably tell them. "Well, they're going to be furious."

Yeah, they probably are going to be furious, but wouldn't you trade a week or two, a month or two of furious for a relationship that could grow deep and intimate for the first time because you're finally being honest? For those of you who maybe today will receive the news that a spouse has been viewing, thinking, fantasizing, will you extend the grace to your spouse Christ has extended to you? Don't be the older brother sitting outside the party in Luke 15, complaining about God's grace towards the younger brother. Just go in and celebrate that confession and repentance have occurred.

There'll be men and women who you can come down and confess and repent to. I think that circle needs to get larger than that, whether that's your Home Group leader or a friend. For some of you, this is going to be such an issue that you're going to need to get help. What I mean by help is biblical counseling. You're going to need to seek a guide who can help untangle this stuff in your heart and help you see things differently than you see them now, help rewire you, if you will. You shouldn't be ashamed of that. You should seriously take those steps to pluck out the eye and to cut off the hand, because it's better to lose an eye and a hand than to have all of you consumed.

My hope for you is that relationally, emotionally, spiritually, mentally, and physically you might enjoy all God has for you in Jesus Christ. Please don't feel like you've already blown it. Please don't do that. The cross gives us a mulligan. Take the mulligan, man. Take the do-over. Repent, confess, and let's walk in the newness of life. There are no secrets in this room God does not know. There is no dark, insidious sin God would be repulsed by and not extend forgiveness for.

The cross of Christ has paid the price for all sins past, present, and future if they are confessed and laid at the feet of Christ, and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit takes root in your heart. Give your life to Jesus. Lay this issue down at his feet and let the healing begin. Let's pray.

Father, we need you. Help us. I know there are some in this room who are just so weighed down and beaten down and so much of their life and vitality are sucked dry on this issue that it feels impossible. I just pray, God, for the realization that nothing is impossible with you. With man, there are things that are impossible, but with you there is nothing that is impossible.

Holy Spirit, move in power among us. I pray we would quickly move and confess and be honest and not be ashamed but deal with our shame in confession and repentance. Thank you for the good, right gift of relationships, sex, marriage, and intimacy with one another. Protect our hearts. Heal our hearts. It's through your beautiful name I pray, amen.

Love you, guys.

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