**Real Eyes, Realize**

**Two Eyes Make Blind**

Matthew 5:27 You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ **28**But I say to you that **everyone** who looks at a woman with lustful **intent** has **already** committed adultery with her in his heart. **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. **30**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. (ESV)

Adultery is a word we don’t use a lot anymore. There are lots of other words we throw around that mean similar things but don’t carry the same weight ‘adultery’. We often use the word ‘cheating’. Adultery is an act. It is an action and it is an action that permeates our culture today. While adultery is typically associated with marriage the general principle of what adultery is can carry over to dating as well. People constantly cheat on their partner by emotionally or physically doing inappropriate things with someone that is not their partner. You will witness it happen a lot in middle school and high school and possibly even more after graduating high school. But this is not just a problem that began recently. Adultery has been a problem since the beginning of the world. God Himself addressed this problem in the Ten Commandments. The seventh commandment is “You shall not commit adultery.”

About 1500 years later Jesus addresses this very thing. “You have heard it said”. Jesus is talking to a crowd of Jewish people—people who would have known the Ten Commandments and would have known that adultery was a clear sin denounced by God. It had been taught by their Pharisees and scribes and religious leaders. Those that committed adultery were punished severely. There was no denying that adultery was sin and that it was looked down upon by God and the general public. No one today can deny that adultery as a physical action is a sin and very wrong. Even people that don’t believe in the God of the Bible believe that, but it’s a little harder to deny that thinking about those things is a sin too. But Jesus takes it further.

Jesus puts to rest any suggestion that you can think about adultery or act out adultery in your mind and it not be wrong. Jesus takes it right back to the heart. Not only is the act of adultery wrong but thinking about it is wrong. Jesus uses the word ‘lust’. To lust after something means to desire it or, as the Old Testament might put it, to covet it. Jesus makes it very clear that not only is the physical act of adultery a sin, but the mental act of lust is as well. To even think about doing those things with another person is wrong. Plenty of people have never cheated on their wives or husbands, but they have cheated in their heart.

This passage has long been used to address the problem of lust. If lust is wrong then pornography is wrong. If lust is wrong, then masturbation is wrong. If lust is wrong then asking for nudes is wrong. All of this has been determined by believers based on what Jesus said here. But it’s important to understand that Jesus was addressing more than just pornography or lust or masturbation. Jesus is addressing a much deeper issue: our problem with sin.

Just like we talked about a few weeks ago, it’s a matter of the heart. There is a deeper root to the problem of adultery. Adultery does not begin when you get in bed with a person—it begins when you think about getting in bed with a person. Casting Crowns is famous for their song that says, “It’s a slow fade when you give yourself away”. The music video to this son depicts a man that slowly begins to cheat on his wife while on business trips. Jesus wants us to understand that not just adultery, but all sins begin in the heart and thoughts.

A lot of the trouble in the world today is that people do not recognize the different between ‘sin’ and ‘sins’. Sin is the disease, the nature, the root of the problem. Sins are the symptom of our disease, the working of its power in our lives. Sin is that nature in us that leads us to do evil things. Lust is sin, and it works itself out as adultery. God didn’t just come to save us from ‘sins’. It is not just the actions that we need delivered from, but the root of the problem.

Jesus tells us that we do have a part to play in the elimination of sin in our lives! While Jesus came to save us from sin, as long as we are in these human bodies prone to sin, we will still battle the power of sin. We have to be cautious of our own hearts and wary of the fact that we are not perfect.

Jesus says sin is so wicked, so filthy, so wrong and so controlling that we must eliminate all the things that lead us to commit sin. He goes so far as to suggest that a person should gouge out their eye if it is causing them to sin. Now herein lies the problem: if Jesus was really serious about this teaching why are there not more one-eyed Christians walking around? No doubt there have been a few fiery believers over the ages that have decided one less eye was the best course of action, but why not everyone? I thought we were supposed to take what Jesus said seriously? We do indeed, but we must remember that Jesus was a master of figurative language and I think that we all are glad to realize that is what He is using here. Jesus uses this hyperbole to illustrate a spiritual truth.

What Jesus is really trying to say to us is that we cannot let anything remain in our life—no matter how special to us it is—if it leads us to sin. Pluck out your right eye and cut off your right hand and see if you don’t still sin. You’ll still have another eye to lust with and another hand to hurt with. Jesus is not calling us to literally remove essential body parts; He is calling us to remove those things in our life which cause us to sin. Your eye is one of your most prized possessions. It is the very thing that brings you guidance. No one wants to live life without the ability to see. Jesus is saying that even the most important things in our life cannot be allowed to stand between us and God.

So, is Jesus really talking about eyes? No—really, He is talking about different things for different people. For one, certain apps on your phone may lead you to sin. For another person, a TV leads to dangerous things. For yet another person, certain books. Yet another person, certain clothes, possessions, etc. We get into tricky waters with this

Titus 1:15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to the defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure; but both their minds and their consciences are defiled. (ESV)

Don’t misunderstand—the eye is a good thing, but the misuse of the eye leads to dangerous things. In the same way, there are a number of things in this life that are not inherently evil or wrong—they are not bad or sinful by nature of their existence—but they can be misused and abused for sin. A prime example of this in today’s world is the phone. A cellphone is not inherently a bad thing—matter of fact it has many good uses—but it can also be used for evil purposes. It all depends on the person. It all depends on the heart. Every person needs to realize the things in their own life that lead them to sin. These things are more than likely going to be different than other people’s. David Wilkerson was absolutely convinced he could not have a TV in his home because of the temptation, but when he approached Leonard Ravenhill about it, Ravenhill made it clear he would not get rid of his own TV just because Wilkerson did. Ravenhill knew that for himself, TV did not lead to sin. But that is the problem we run into. Sometimes we think that the things that lead us to sin lead everyone else to sin, so we try to prohibit those things in other people’s lives too. Every person needs to realize that the things that lead them to sin don’t always leads others to sin.

Plenty of people that won’t buy a TV for themselves or have locks on their phone intentionally get made fun of for being legalistic and too religious. They are looked down upon in the religious community and told they are taking it too seriously. But it is simply that they understand what Jesus was saying. Don’t ever look down on someone who has shut certain things out of their life to live closer to Jesus. Shame on you as a Christian if you ever look down on a person for wanting to cut sin out of their life to be nearer with God. That is behavior unbecoming of a Christian. That person is literally obeying the words of Jesus. They recognize that the heart is deceitful above all else and they are prone to sin if tempted.

We must always keep in mind the price that was paid to deliver us from sin. Jesus did not die so that we could keep on sinning after believing on Him. It’s easy to excuse sin in our own lives, but Jesus said to get rid of it—to get rid of even the very things that even lead to it. We are not called to just quit acting on sin, but to kill the very root of it. Holiness is not just avoiding certain actions—it is aiming at having a pure heart.