



What's Lust Got to Do with It?

Devotional Thoughts for the Week of
October 4, 2020
by Jeff Hosner

This is week 5 of our series on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount and we continue working our way through. Our text this week is Matthew 5:27-32. Jesus continues to illustrate what the pursuit of a life that reflects the very character of our father God looks like... Our devotional author this week is Jeff Hosner. Jeff is one of our elders here at BCC and is married to Kathleen. He is an alumnus of The Ohio State University and enjoys biking, tennis, golf, and scuba diving. Jeff has a heart for teaching apologetics and the reliability of the Bible.



Reflection 1: Monday

Jesus was aware that the religious leaders had taken the Scriptures to a point where outwardly it would appear that they were sinless but inside their hearts were full of sin. That's why Jesus accused them of being whitewashed tombstones (Matthew 23:27), that they appeared good on the outside but dead on the inside. Jesus doesn't change the law, but he actually extends it to the spirit of the law. Its full intent was to measure not only your outward actions but what's in your heart. Because your heart guides your relationship with God and your

fellow man. So, let's remember that the law will not save us, it just points out our sinful nature. We need to be honest with ourselves to recognize our sin (whether it is outward or inward), own it, confess it, and give it to Jesus to forgive as he promised. After all, Romans 5:8 tells us Christ died for our sins while we were still sinners.



Reflection 2: Tuesday

Jesus stresses the theme of committing adultery in the heart when he talks about your right eye or right hand causing us to stumble. I don't believe he was actually suggesting that we physically damage our bodies, but he was using these as examples to show the seriousness of sin. It is important for us to guard our hearts against indulging our lives that run the risk of falling into lust and corruption. We need to keep ourselves out of harm's way by putting distance between us and potential temptations. Sometimes we walk along the edge of the temptation and we tell ourselves that we're not going to fall. We just want to see how close we can play with temptation.

I don't believe we truly have a full appreciation of the impact that sin has in our life and I believe Jesus was trying to convey how detrimental it is to our relationship to God and others. Some would say that the sin of Adam and Eve at creation was just a small thing, but it caused tremendous damage to the human race and the earth. God knows how destructive sin is in our lives and that's why he sent his own son to die to pay sin's price. That's how important it is to God and the closer we walk with Jesus and the Spirit, the easier it will be to keep us from playing with temptation.

Reflection 3: Wednesday



In Matthew 5:31-32 Jesus talks about divorce. If the statistics are right, about half of all marriages end in divorce in this country and that is a lot of broken families and hurt people. I can fully understand about broken families and the hurt people experience in

divorce because I went through this experience myself about 25 years ago. It was terrible. In many ways it felt like my whole world was crashing in on me. And it's even worse if there are children involved because they seem to experience more of the pain. God hates divorce because it is so destructive. While I recognize that there are some valid reasons for divorce like infidelity or physical abuse, I generally recommend against it. There is life on the other side of divorce. The good news is that God is bigger than any problem we're going to experience in marriage, and I've seen some downright miracles happen in terrible relationships that were healed by God. In our next reflection we'll take a closer look at what God's expectations are for marriage and divorce.

Reflection 4: Thursday

Before we dive into divorce details, let's take a look at what God intended for marriage. God describes the marriage relationship first in Genesis 2:20-24. Jesus talks about marriage in Matthew 19:6 "So they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate." The goal was a lifelong commitment, a deep integration between a man and a woman that together they would bring out the best in each other (they would complete one another). Within the marriage relationship we need to guard our



hearts as well (Ephesians 5:1-19). Our heart needs to be solely devoted to our spouse and they deserve our love and respect as detailed in Ephesians 5:21-33. If you are married, make it a priority to serve one another.

Reflection 5: Friday

Jesus was again going against the cultural grain concerning divorce in Matthew 5:32. He was not changing the law but was explaining the spirit of the law. At that time, you could divorce your wife for any reason. Jesus wanted to make it clear that divorce should be rare, and the only reason would be marital infidelity. This is not an automatic end of a marriage, but it does shake the relationship at its foundations. God's grace as well as forgiveness are two important ingredients in a healthy marriage. Marital infidelity and divorce are forgivable and are covered by Jesus' sacrifice. Following the advice given in Ephesians 5:21-33 goes a long way to make divorce less likely. Pray for your spouse, put them before yourself, love your spouse as you would want to be loved, and become the person that Christ intended.

