



SESSION 1 — SEX IS NOT THE PROBLEM (LUST IS)

THE TRUTH ABOUT LUST (Part 1: Chapters 1-3)

A RIGHT PERSPECTIVE —

1. *The right standard for holiness*

- WRONG — “the contract”: personal standard
- RIGHT — “not even a hint” mentally, verbally, visually, physically (Ephesians 5:3, NIV)
 - This is an ideal standard for ideal people (cf. Ephesians 5:1-2)!
 - NOT a “diet mentality,” “a little lust,” or “how far?”

2. *The right source of power to change*

- WRONG — personal willpower, ability → *Illustration*: Raynald III (pp. 45-46)—we are slaves!
- RIGHT — God’s power and ability
 - The above standard “brings me to the end of my own ability and effort” (p. 27).
 - But, the power of the cross — that’s sufficient!
 - What this looks like practically, then, is Spirit-led living— “It’s the Holy Spirit who enables us to change, to resist sin, to apply God’s Word to our lives. So the Spirit-led life is one submitted to the direction, agenda, values, and priorities of God’s Spirit, as illuminated through Scripture... only the Spirit can transform us. Our job is to invite His work, participate with it, and submit more and more of our thoughts, actions, and desires to Him” (pp. 56-57). → surrender + knowledge + obedience = Spirit-led

3. *The right motive for fighting sin*

- WRONG — “feel” like a pure person with a clear conscience, earth favor/worthiness/acceptance before God; pride that I can change; despair at failure
- RIGHT — love for God because of grace from God
 - We have been justified (i.e., “declared righteous and accepted by God” ...really!) and are being sanctified (i.e., our cooperative response)—in the grace of the gospel, we hear the good news that we have a Savior every day! (cf. pp. 49-54) → *Illustration*: “Before the Throne of God Above” lyrics (cf. Psalm 32:2)
 - “We must fight fire with fire. The fire of lust’s pleasures must be fought with the fire of God’s pleasures.” (Piper; p. 29).
 - “God wants us to despair in our own strength so that we have no other option but to throw ourselves on His grace....As you despair in yourself, you will find hope in Him. And as you turn your back on lust, you will discover that true pleasure is something only God can give” (pp. 29-30).
 - “In this story, C. S. Lewis shows the connection between killing our lust and finding life. It feels as though destroying our lust will destroy us. But it doesn’t. And when we destroy our lustful desire, we come not to the end of desire, but to the beginning of pure desire...God never calls us to sacrifice as an end in itself, but only through sacrifice on the way to great joy” (p. 28).
 - Psalm 16:11 — “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”

A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING —

1. What is “lust”?

- What it is not (p. 35): [“our sexual drive isn’t the same as lust”]
 - “It’s not lust to be attracted to someone or notice that he or she is good-looking.
 - It’s not lust to have a strong desire to have sex.
 - It’s not lust to anticipate and be excited about having sex within marriage....
 - It’s not lust to experience sexual temptation.”
- What it is (p. 35):
 - “Lust is a sexual desire minus honor and holiness” (Piper, p. 38).
 - “Lust is an idolatrous and ultimately insatiable desire that rejects God’s rule and seeks satisfaction apart from Him” (p. 38-39).
 - “Lust covets the forbidden” (p. 39).
 - “The very nature of lust is rebellion against God” (p. 40).
 - “That’s the payoff of lust—‘a continual lust for more’ [Ephesians 4:19]....It always grows. And as it does, lust will rob you of your ability to enjoy true, godly pleasure” (p. 41).

A RIGHT PRACTICE —

- “The crucial issue in each of these examples is how we respond to the urges and desires of our sexual drive.
 - Noticing an attractive person is not wrong; but undressing that person with your eyes or imagining what it would be like to ‘have’ them is.
 - A sexual thought that pops into your mind isn’t necessarily lust, but it can quickly become lust if it’s entertained and dwelled on.

- An excitement for sex in marriage isn’t sin, but it can be tainted by lust if it’s not tempered with patience and restraint” (pp. 35-36).
- “One way to [respond correctly to the urges and desires of our sexual drive]...is to talk to God about your sexual feelings. Invite His Spirit into the day by day, moment by moment process of yielding your sexual desire to His will....
 - God, thank You for making me a sexual creature with sexual desires! I don’t ask that You remove my desire, but that You help me to please You with it in my thoughts and actions.
 - God, in this moment my whole body seems to be screaming for sexual satisfaction— would You please quiet my desires? My body was made for You and for holiness, not for sexual sin. Help me to glorify You with my body.
 - God, You made me for true and lasting pleasure! Fill me with confidence that You have good things in store for me— something much better than what lust has to offer.
 - God, thank You for beauty and for my ability to appreciate it. That person is very attractive. But let me look on him with purity. I don’t want to covet and lust after him. Help me to view him as a person made in Your image, not an object of my lust.
 - God, I’m tempted to look to lust for comfort right now. Please help me to find my comfort in You” (pp. 37-38).

IN THE THICK OF THE BATTLE (Part 2: Chapters 4-7) STRATEGIES FOR LONG-TERM CHANGE (Part 3: Chapters 8-10)

1. A custom-tailored plan (chapter 4).

- Identify lust-triggers.
- Start somewhere!
- Understand the difference between guys and girls in this area, and help your brothers and sisters—this is a family issue (chapter 5)!

- Understand the selfishness of masturbation and take practical steps to eliminate it in your habits (chapter 6).
- Take your media entertainment intake seriously—it will affect you (chapter 7)!

2. Get accountability (chapter 8).

3. Immerse yourself in the truth of Scripture to combat the lies of lust (chapter 9).

- Highlight pp. 152-157

4. Endure in daily and practically sowing to the Spirit (chapter 10).

- Galatians 6:7-9 — “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”
- Practical list on p. 165.
 - “Take time to read and study Scripture daily.
 - Gather with fellow believers in our local church to worship and be instructed by God’s Word.
 - Serve in our local church.
 - Seek God in prayer.
 - Talk with a Christian friend about God’s character and faithfulness.
 - Memorize passages of God’s Word and meditate on His promises.
 - Read a Christian book that encourages us to love God more.
 - Listen to a Christian song that strengthens our faith.”
- Two helpful appendices