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Matthew 5:27-28, *Adultery Part 3*

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...and you know, this is a journey we are all on together, so let's just hold hands. Just hold hands with the people next to you there. "Father in Heaven, here we stand with bowed heads in Your presence. Lord, it's been a nightmare of a week. We have no idea what the future holds, but we know You hold the future, and we come to you in prayer. We ask Heavenly Father that You will fill this auditorium with Your very loving presence. That You would teach us through Your word. That You would speak courage and commitment, conviction to our hearts. That every single one of us will leave here closer to You than when we came. We are asking for a miracle to take place Lord. We pray that all the fears, and dread and concerns will be eliminated from our thought processes while we are engaged with You. Please teach us from Your word. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen."

I got a phone call about 1 o'clock, Wednesday afternoon. It was my son in law, Mickey, Hannah's husband. Hannah is our oldest child. And Mickey asked me if I could watch Conner, their baby. Conner is one year old today. He is our oldest grandchild, and what a thrill it is to have him. Mickey said Hannah just called, she's been in a bad traffic accident, could I watch Conner, Mickey had to get to the accident sight. I said, "Absolutely, bring him by!" So he brought Conner over, and Mickey with his police car, he is a city police officer in Chattanooga, rushed to the crash site, Shallowford and Gunbarrel. My daughter and an associate from work were traveling away from the mall area on Gunbarrel, headed back to Standifer place where she works.

And some man came down off that hill, headed towards the freeway on Shallowford. He was going about 45 miles an hour; at least that's what he said. The light was red on his side, he came right through the red light and T-boned my daughter and her companion, right in the side of her car, shoved it off, right off of the intersection and almost into the phone poll. Now Mickey, my son in law who is a police officer and polices many accidents, he said he's seen many accidents like that and usually there is a fatality. Well, praise God there wasn't. Though we were very concerned, the airbag had deployed, and it looks like the car is totaled. And initial reports where Hannah thought her wrist was broken and some ribs were broken, and eventually when they got her to the hospital, they found out there were no broken bones, but she had a very severe concussion. So she was able to go home that day. We are very grateful that she is okay.

Now on the way to the hospital while she was in the ambulance, she called me. And I always, if any of you ever call me, you might as well just know, you'll be on speaker phone. I can't hear the phone if it's just this little thing like this up to my ear, I can't hear you. So I have it on speaker phone, and force will have it, many times I'll hold that up to my ear. It's blurring out the back, but anyways, I had Hannah on speaker phone and I was holding the phone out with my right hand, and I had Conner in my left arm. And I was talking to Hannah, and of course, he could hear his mother's voice. And he can tell the voice and he was excited to hear her voice. After Hannah described the accident to me, I said, "Hannah, let me have prayer with you." Now Conner, this little guy, he is a year old today, and he can hardly talk. In fact, he spoke his first sentence today. When he woke up this morning he said, "Up Mamma?" Okay, his first sentence, and you know, we are getting there. We are getting there!

And when he comes over to the house, when Karen feeds him, she just gently takes his hands, folds them like this, and says a prayer over the meal. And the whole time Conner is looking at her, looking at the food, looking around, you know, but he's got his hands like this. And she is gently pinching them together. Well, you just never think in terms of what indeed can a child associate with that. Well, I am praying with my daughter Hannah, and I said, "Father in Heaven, thank you that Hannah was not hurt any worse then she is," and I started the prayer. And I always pray with my eyes open. The only time I pray with my eyes closed, I am either lying in bed trying to go to

sleep, or I am in church. Because people think it's weird when you pray with your eyes open, but I always pray with my eyes open. I prefer that.

And so, I've got my eyes open and I'm looking directly at the phone because I want to make sure she can hear me. And at the left side of my peripheral vision I look, and Conner has folded his hands. Now just think how tender towards God that little heart must be. How would he know to do that? Well, he did it, had a heart tender for God. Well when Mickey got to the crash site, he found out who it was that had run the red light and he talked to the men. The men said, "I saw that the light was red, but I thought I could make it before somebody came across. He was determined to go across. He was going at least 45 miles an hour, that's what he said, it was probably more. And Mickey, being the consummate professional police officer, began asking the normal questions. He said, "Do you have insurance?" He said, "Well, I haven't really driven for about 4 years, just decided to go driving today." And then he said, "But I think my daughter has me on her policy."

So this guy ran into my daughter, has no insurance, ran a red light. He had his heart set on going through that light, just thought it'd be okay. He was warned by the light not to do it. He was driving under the delusion that somehow he was covered, and he went against all common sense, and caused the crash that normally would create a fatality. He didn't see the faults in his reasoning. He didn't heed the warnings, he didn't think about consequences, and I've written here in bold letters: "Why do people act so foolishly?" And that's what I want to study with you today. Please turn in your Bibles to Matthew 5, verses 27 and 28. We are continuing our series of Jesus' teachings on the Mount known as the Sermon on the Mount. We have another about adultery. Someone this week said to me, "What are you dealing with this week Pastor?" I said, "Adultery." They said, "Again? When are you going to stop?" I said, "I guess when people stop committing adultery." We may be here a while.

Verses 27 and 28: "But you have heard that it was said to those of old, *you shall not commit adultery*. But I say to you that whoever looks at the woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." For those of you who have been coming regularly, you recognize that the definition of adultery is, 'voluntary sexual relations between a married man and someone other than his wife, or between a married woman and someone other than her husband.' The word adultery comes from the Greek work, 'adulterate' which is to corrupt, debase or make impure by the addition of a foreign and inferior element or baser ingredient. So we have a husband and a wife, and another person is introduced into the relationship, it adulterates the relationship. And the person involved with that person is an adulterer.

Now today we are going to deal with lust. And lust is actually an interesting word. If you studied 'lust' in the English, you would discover that it's only been in the last couple of hundred years that 'lust' has a negative connotation. Prior to that in the English language, 'lust' just meant 'a strong desire,' and it was not a negative thing. But because our morals have gone so array, now it is almost exclusively associated with something that is bad. In the Greek, there is only one word for lust. It is, "apa-themeo." Now that you are thoroughly impressed, I will not use it again. But that is the only word that is used in the Greek language to describe a strong desire. It is an intense longing; it's when somebody sets their heart upon something. And in the Greek the word is neutral, and it's the context that determines whether it is good or bad.

So to understand the word, we are going to look at it in the Bible. We are going to see this Greek word translated in three passages of Scripture where the context tells us it's a good thing. And then we'll look at three where it's a bad thing. Then we'll take the definition and apply it to chapter 5 verse 28. First text, Matthew 13 verse 17, we find the words of Jesus. Jesus said, "For surely I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired..." that's the Greek word translated as desired. "...many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see and did not see it." In the NIV it says, "Longed to see." The Amplified Version says, "Yearned to see." Look at Luke 22 verse 15.

Jesus is speaking to His disciples, “And He said to them, *with fervent desire...*” that’s it, “...fervent desire, I have desired...” that’s the word again, “...to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” In the New International Version it’s ‘eagerly desired.’ The Amplified Version, ‘earnestly and intensely desired.’ So this is something that He planned for, He looked forward to it in His mind and in His heart.

Hebrews 6 verse 11, here the author of the Book of Hebrews says, “And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end.” “And we desire that you’ll have a full assurance and hope until the end.” That word translated there as ‘desire’ is the same word translated, ‘lust’ in other passages. So what we see from these three verses is that the Greek word for lust is describing a longing, a yearning, an earnest and intense desire. The prophets and righteous man had that, to see the day in which Jesus lived. Jesus had that when He thought about eating the Passover with His disciples. And the author of Hebrews has that for the people so they would have a full assurance of hope until the end.

Let’s go back to Matthew 5:28. It behooves us to spend just a little time to understand what the Bible is actually saying and then we’ll make its application. In 5:28, “I say to you that whoever looks at the woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” Now let’s look at three passages of Scripture where the same Greek word is used, but it’s translated in such a way you know that it’s a bad thing. Let’s look at Galatians 5 verses 16 and 17. “I say then, walk in the Spirit and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” It’s pretty obvious that’s not a good thing. In the NIV it says, “...walk in the Spirit, you shall not fulfill the desires of the sinful nature.” That’s what’s being spoken of there when it refers to the flesh; verse 17, “...for the flesh lusts against the spirit.” Now that’s kind of strange. How is it that the flesh is desiring something against the spirit? Well it’s the way you look at the English. Let me read that to you in the NIV, it will make more sense.

It says that “...the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the spirit.” So when it says, “lust against”, it means it’s against it. And so we see that’s a very negative and it’s pretty obvious that that’s not a good thing. Look at Romans 7 verse 7. Paul will introduce to us another word associated with lust. I am sorry, keep your hand there in Romans 7:7, I’ve skipped the verse and I don’t want to. Keep your hand here because we’ll come to it. Turn to Acts 20 verse 33. Here the word for lust is translated, ‘coveted.’ Verse 33: “I have coveted no one’s silver or gold or apparel.” So we see the Greek word translated as ‘coveted.’ Now go to Romans 7:7. We will see coveted associated with lust, and they will be put together in the same verse. Romans 7 verse 7: “What shall we say then, is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would have not known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘you shall not covet.’”

Now note the last sentence, “...for I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘you shall not covet.’” In the King James Version it said, “I had not known lust except the law had said, ‘thou shall not covet.’” And so coveting, lusting, strong desire, they are all associated together. Coveting, according to the scriptures is ‘enviously desiring another’s possession,’ it is an ‘extreme desire to acquire something’. Now we are going to read Matthew 5 verse 28. And this time when we read it, instead of just saying lust, we will fill in the definitions that the Bible has given us regarding what this word actually means. This will teach us what it means, and it will also help us to understand what it does not mean. Matthew 5 verse 28, here is how it would read with our full definition: “But I say to you, that whoever looks at the woman to set his heart upon, with the intense longing and the desire to acquire, has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Now notice this. Fellows, if you don’t know it yet. You are created to be attracted to women. God made you that way. And when we read passages like this, we can be very confused and very discouraged because a man can see a pretty woman across the room. He can. It’s just natural, and it’s not wrong. God designed us that way. But unfortunately, when we see a pretty woman, we can think, “Oh man, why am I looking at her?” And there is a

difference between seeing, looking, staring, ogling, and you know what goes on down until we are lusting in our hearts. Fellows, please understand. When you notice a pretty woman, that's fine; what you do after that can become problematic. Okay? So noticing her is not the sin. What you do after that can be. And that is what we need to understand, the difference. The line is crossed when we begin to fantasize about being with that person in a sexual relationship. Well how does it happen? And how can it be prevented?

Somebody sees somebody, and they say, "Oh, they are pretty." Or, let's be honest ladies, "They are handsome." This applies to you; don't put it on cruise control. The principles apply to you as well. "Oh, he is so handsome." Well, how does it happen? How can it be prevented? We are going to study infatuation today. Infatuation comes from the Latin, "Fatuus." And if there are any scholars here that can tell me that I'm mispronouncing it, I would appreciate learning how to pronounce it correctly. I flunked Latin when I was raised. I was raised a Catholic boy, and I never could become an altar boy. It was breaking my mother's heart. But I couldn't quite grasp the Latin, never could get it. It always sounded like there were saying, Domino biscuits, and you know, just never got to it. So, "Fatuus!" Do any of you have any idea what it means? It means foolish! Infatuates, actually the dictionary's definition of infatuates is to cause to behave foolishly, to inspire with irrational, foolish love, attachment or desire.

Dr. Erin Back, the director of the center of cognitive therapy of the University of Pennsylvania writes that it's kind of insanity. It can have the full force of psychological disorders. Infatuation! It is an unremitting preoccupation with the thoughts and images of another and it shows hints of obsession and neurosis. And you can see a woman who is infatuated with a guy, and she can just sit there, just writing his name over, and over, and over. Think about it, it's weird. It is fantasizing, "Oh with them, I could be on a sea of bliss; there will be nothing but joy, and undying eternal love." And in this state of foolishness called infatuation, people don't see the faults of the other person. They don't heed the warning signs, and they don't even think about the consequences. They just move on as if they've lost control. That is the foolish nature of infatuation.

How does it begin? Well, obviously physical attraction is especially powerful, but it's not the exclusive starting point. Social and personal traits, such as grace, conversational skill and humor can draw somebody out. Virtue, such as dependability, sincerity and empathy can do the same; kindness, strength or decisiveness. I want to share with you an illustration just how foolish people get when they are infatuated. I was pastoring a church, we had a school and we had a choir. We had a good choir, robes and everything. And they sang well. And our choir director was a married man, and our school teacher was a married woman. And they were not married to each other. The school teacher could play the piano and the choir director, you know, recruited her. And you know they started spending time together. He started taking her to lunch to talk about music. He would come and pick her up, drive her to choir practice, bring her back.

These things were going on, and I was a young pastor. I saw what was going on. I want you to understand something, that that was an appearance of evil. If you are involved in something that is an appearance of evil, and you can stop it but you don't, it is evil. You see? Well I had to deal with it. And I'll be honest with you, back then I was young, I didn't like dealing with this kind of stuff. I will now. It's not easy, but I'm not afraid to do it. I'll get in your face. I have a God commission, ordained task to do that. Well, I go to this man's house. The husband of the school teacher, because the school teacher and choir director have ridden off to choir practice, and I know they'll be back at some point, I am trying to touch base with him. And I'm reluctant to bring it up, and so I kind of don't. And while we are just chatting about the weather and the sports teams and all that, all of a sudden the choir director and the teacher come walking in.

And they are just giggling and carrying on like, you know, two young lovers. And all through the evening, as we talk, everything is funny to them, and they keep reaching across the chairs and touching each other's hands, "ha,

ha, ha..." And I'm going, "hum, hum, hum..." I was thinking, "If that was my wife, with that man doing that, I would drag him out of the house and beat him to within an inch of his life. Then I would come inside, and it wouldn't be pleasant for my wife that evening either." I just couldn't understand why this man in his house, had this foolishness taking place. Well, I decided, you know, whether I am scared or not, God sent me here and I've got to deal with this. And I brought it up, and I said, "This is wrong. What you are doing, how you are acting is wrong." Do you know what their response was? "Oh Pastor, you need to grow up. You need not be so narrow. You need to understand, we are just friends."

But what they didn't know is that I had an ace in my pocket and I used it the next day. The ace in my pocket was the conference office. I called the education superintendant and explained what was going on. He was there that night to talk to the school teacher and her husband. I praise God, the relationship with the choir director ended. It ended. But people get so foolish. That's the nature of infatuation. They don't think about the consequences. They don't heed the warnings, they don't see the signs. They are just bit on whatever it is that their fantasy is driving them towards. Now, ladies, I want to talk to you because you have a responsibility in this. I recognize some of you young ladies have grown up in homes where you didn't have a father. Maybe you did have a father but he didn't engage much into your life. So I'm going to be your father for a few minutes. And some of you are too old for me to be your father, so I'm going to be your brother.

But I am going to talk frank. I am going to talk in a way that I hope you will listen and understand. Here it is ladies. Men, all over the world are spending billions of dollars to watch women undress. Yes, there is not much of a business to watch them get dressed, it's undressing. Nudity is particularly attractive to the carnal nature of a man. Now, what am I getting at? Cover yourselves properly ladies. Here are a couple of things that will help. Law neck lines; I have a saying that I use for Karen. It's kind of code, she knows what I mean and we have no arguments over it. When we are out and she is trying on clothes, she says, "How does it look?" All I have to say is this, you know, "It's so low I can see all the way to Brazil." She knows what I'm talking about. It's inappropriate. You see, men are attracted to the private parts of women. And the more they can see of that, the more they are attracted to it. I am going to talk about that in just a moment.

But back to the principles of dress; seek an appropriate length if you are wearing a dress, a skirt. Seek an appropriate length. What is it? I can't tell you from the ground up, but I can kind of guess from the waist down. You know, cover yourself. Don't just advertize, don't say, "Look at me, you can have me." You know it reminds me, I went to the Baptist church here in town, worshiped with them a couple of years ago. Tony DeYoung, their pastor was preaching and he told the story. He said, some pastor had announced to his congregation, 'you are what you eat.' And some older lady says, "Huh, huh, that makes me cheap and easy." Ladies, don't come across like you are easy. Have some dignity and respect for the body God has given you. Cover your legs to an appropriate length. And don't wear something that is skin tight or see through.

I am going to give you some information from the realm of a man. A lot of men like to fish and so do a lot of women. But note this ladies that when you get dressed up, come-on, let's face it, let's be honest. When you do your hairdo and your face, and you put on those clothes and all that, you are trying to be alluring. You want somebody to notice you. It's no secret. There is nothing sinful about that necessarily at that point. But the question is what kind of men do you want to notice you? Let's picture a tackle box. You open a tackle box of a fisherman and you'll discover there are all kinds of different weights and sinkers, all kinds of different types of hooks, all kinds of different lures because there are different conditions in the water, there are different type of fish that he is fishing for. He uses a lure to allure a fish. Ladies, you are one big men lure. And we see you. We see you. The type of man you are going to catch is so much dependent on how you are dressing.

What is your bait? If your bait is sexuality, you'll get a man. Oh yeah, you are going to get a man but he is going to be a self-absorbed man, and he will either not make a commitment or he will break the one that he makes with you, and soon he will chase another skirt; if you dress to attract him with your sexuality. Dress in such a way that a man will get to know you. He can learn about your body after you are married. You have a better chance of being happy and having a good home. Well, another area ladies, this is where you have a responsibility. Make sure that your friendliness is not flirtation. You know, if you are getting a buzz from watching the guys flit around you, you've already committed adultery in your heart. Conduct yourselves appropriately in the presence of God. Be kind, be friendly, but you know when you're over the top. You know when you're drawing attention to yourself. Just don't do it!

How can adultery in the mind be prevented? You know, here is a man, he sees a woman, she is beautiful, okay. Stop right there. He is okay. He's acknowledged one of God's creatures, God created her, that's good. It's okay at that point. But, "Oh man, whoa, whoa," his mind takes her on to that sea of fantasy. "Man, I'm sailing with that chick here and there," and on and on; he has sinned. How can he stop that? And by the way, all adultery, all physical adultery begins in the mind. So how do we stop it? Look at Psalm 119 verse 11. We will discover that victory for temptation is given ahead of time if we are right with God. And when it comes to infatuation and adultery in the mind that must be a decision made prior to the temptation. Does not mean you can't get out of temptation, but the decision is best made ahead of time.

Verse 11: "Your word I have hidden in the heart that I might not sin against you." The word of God, hidden in the heart so that the powerful, supernatural affect of it in my life is such that when tempted; I don't yield. I don't go down there. Also, Psalm 119 verse 133. Here is a promise for you. "Direct my steps by Your word, and let no iniquity have dominion over me," beautiful, powerful promise all centered around the Word of God. You and I must determine by God's grace through His word and through a prayer experience with God to have God's strength in us. Victory comes before the battle when you are walking with the Lord. Here is another thing. Love comes from God. He will not give you lust. He only gives love. If you are married, He will only give you love for your wife. I don't care what that other person is like. God will only give you love for your wife or for your husband. And if single, be careful. Listen to counsel, pay attention to the warning signs. Think about the consequences, and you'll know the difference between lust and love.

I want to share with you how this works in practical terms. I mentioned Conner. He is one year old today, Conner. What a fantastic kid. He has a temptation that he struggled with though. In his life, one of his greatest temptations is dog food. My daughter and her husband have a couple of little Chihuahuas. And, I've often told people two dogs are better than one, but two Chihuahuas don't make it together. They just..., they don't. But anyways, that's a different story. They have two Chihuahuas. So their food dish is only about two inches high which is just perfect for a crawling baby. So Conner and I mean that kid can crawl. Phew, he looks like he is swimming; his arms are going so fast. And he likes to go to the dog dish and reach in there for the dog food. It is just fascinating to him. He loves to do that. Well, Hannah has been teaching him, "No Conner, no, no, no!" And she said, just this week, she was in the kitchen where the dog food is. And Conner came in there, but didn't see her there. So Conner is all by himself as far as he knows.

He crawls over to the dog food, and he got on his knees. And he was kind of sitting back on his feet like this, and he is staring at the dog food. He is just staring at it. And then Hannah said, he took his hand, he put it right over the top of the dog food, and then he sighed like this, "Hum" and he pulled his hand away. And he stared at that dog food, he did it again. And he pulled it away and he left. Brothers and sisters that is a heart that is tender towards God. Temptations, absolutely! He doesn't even understand the danger of that dried dog food in his throat. How can choking kill him, etc? He doesn't understand the thing of it. All he knows is "No, no!" That's what God offers

us. If we will spend time in His word, if we will spend time praying to God about His word, He will give us victory in this area of our lives. And that brothers and sisters will be a wonderful thing for all of us.

You see, the devil works overtime in this area of our lives because we all want to be loved. We all want to be accepted. We all want to be cared for. And we all want somebody to love, and we all want somebody that we can accept and we all want somebody that we can care for even if we have to create the fantasy in our mind. The truth is Jesus is the only one that can really fulfill us in love. He says, "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Now, note this. Infatuation works spiritually. We don't see the faults of our person, we don't heed the warnings, we don't think about consequences, we press forward in a foolish way thinking it will be all right. Please, brothers and sisters, if you are playing a game with God, today is a good day to stop. Today I am offering you a real love. Not a fantasy, not something that is destined to ruin you, today I offer you eternal life. I offer you victory over foolishness, and I offer you hope for a good life, and a desire that is good. A desire for good things comes from God. I offer Him to you today.

You see brothers and sisters; the devil is offering you dog food. That's all he is offering you is dog food. God is offering you a banquet that will last for eternity. A food we cannot imagine, a fellowship we cannot imagine, a thing so wonderful and so glorious; that's what He is offering. The devil can only give us dog food. And we hold our hand over that. And I'm telling you, pull your hand back and grab for the banquet. Grab for God. Let Him love you. Let Him strengthen you. Let Him give you a desire for good. And so if there is anyone here today that would like to say to God, "God, I want a desire for good. I want Jesus in my heart and I want that banquet." I am going to ask you to stand right where you are at.

"Father in Heaven, here we are. Lord, we want Your love in our lives. We want purity and holiness that comes from You. Give us a desire Lord for what is good. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen."