

Consuming Desire: Adultery, Idolatry, and Delighting in God – Part 1

Introduction: Why this Series?

1. Sexual immorality has done great harm to marriages, families, and cultures.

- It dehumanizes people, destroys healthy relationships, steals joy, deadens the heart, and diminishes life.
- It assaults the image of God and attacks the dignity of man.
- It is becoming 'normalized' in our culture by media, educational institutions, political movements, and even churches.

2. Sexual immorality has a real and growing presence even among the LORD's people. (I.e., Christians, the church)

- It is prevalent. Estimates: 70% of men, 35% of women who attend church use pornography at least once a month.
- People are in bondage. Countless people living in on-going sin, shame, and deception.

→ Confronting sexual immorality—when done Biblically—is actually a ministry of mercy.

3. Sexual immorality needs to be addressed by the church (just like in OT and NT times).

- The church has remained largely silent—in the pulpits, in the pews, and in the public square.
- Not trying to "out" anyone. We want to bring the light of Scripture to areas of our hearts that are in sin & bondage.
- Not trying to raise suspicions. We want to call each of us to examine our own hearts. Ps 139:23-24
- Not trying to make porn and sexual immorality CPC's 'main issue'—but we're also not going to ignore or deny it.

→ This issue must be addressed for the glory of God and the good of His people.

Sexual Immorality and the Danger of Self-Righteous Comparison. Luke 18:9-14

1. The audience. v.9

- Those who trusted in themselves. Those who saw themselves as righteous. Those who viewed others with contempt.

2. The differences between the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. v.10-13

- One man compared himself to others. v.11 "I am not like other people."

→ Comparison is a form of contempt. (I'm better than... I'm worse than...)

- One man approached God on the basis of his works. v.12

- One man numbered himself among sinners. v.13

→ The clear, unequivocal message that Christianity is for sinners. Luke 5:31-32; Matthew 1:21; Luke 19:10

Sexual Immorality and the Danger of Accommodation.

1. God's Word clearly and unequivocally calls the Christian to total purity and holiness of life.

- Matthew 5:27-30: 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 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.
- Ephesians 5:3: But among you there must not even be a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.
- Colossians 3:5-6: Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.
- 1 Peter 1:13-16: Therefore, prepare your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."
- Romans 12:1-2: Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you will prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable, and perfect.

2. God's Word teaches that sanctification (growth in holiness) transforms a Christian's life in real and tangible ways.

- 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5: For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that is, that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each of you know how to possess his own body in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God.
- 1 Corinthians 6:9-11: Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.
- 2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone and the new has come.
- 2 Corinthians 10:5: We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.
- 1 Corinthians 10:13: No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

3. God's Word teaches that the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit is evidence that our faith is real.

- 1 John 5:4: Everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.
- Luke 6:43-44: For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit.

- Heb 12:14-17: Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.
- Matthew 7:21-23: Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'
- Matthew 5:8: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Application

1. Ask God to do a mighty work of growth and change in your heart.
 - Do you believe that the sanctifying, transforming power of the Holy Spirit is for YOU?
 - Do you believe you can be free from the grip of sexual immorality?
 - Do you believe God wants to do something miraculous in you?
2. Ask God to reveal ways that you try to find life, safety, security, intimacy, control, escape from pain, APART FROM HIM.
 - This series is not ultimately about sexual immorality—it is about finding life in God.
-Sexual sin is a symptom of something else—something far worse.
 - We are HORRIFIED by the wrong thing! We are horrified by our sexual immorality—when we should be horrified by the deeply rooted, pervasive, core commitment of our heart to 'self-sufficiently' find and live life apart from God.
 - Apart from God, I can do absolutely nothing about it! (Jer 17:9: The heart is deceitful above all things & beyond cure.)
 - John 3:27: A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven.
3. Ask God to begin with you and your sin—not the sin of others. (spouse, friends, parents, children, etc.)
 - You will not be able to truly love your spouse, others or God until and unless you see the greatness of your own sin.

A Prayer About Not Being Idle About Idols

by [Scotty Smith](#), Pastor for Preaching, Teaching, and Worship
Christ Community Church,

Dear children, keep yourselves from idols. **1 John 5:21**

Dear Father, in Rome I saw a vast array of gods that filled the temples and lifestyle of that ancient city. In London, I wandered from station to station in a huge Hindu temple as worshippers offered prayers to deities that looked so odd to me. In Israel, I studied decaying remains of places and objects which competed for the worship of your people.

Yet for us to obey John's command to keep myself from idols requires so much more than simply staying away from ancient sites, pagan temples and man-made idols. Father, I've never been more aware of the **invisible pantheon of idols** that is constantly angling and clamoring for my heart's worship. How I wish as soon as you placed me in Christ that my struggle with idolatry would've ceased. That's simply not the case, or this Scripture would be entirely irrelevant. Hasten the Day when I will finally and fully worship only you.

Because sometimes the approval or rejection of people has more sway over my heart than what you think about me. Sometimes my need to be right is more compelling than my being righteous in Christ. Sometimes my desire to be in control claims more of my devotion than seeking your face and savoring your grace. Sometimes creature comforts are more alluring than Jesus' beauty. Sometimes my commitment to a pain-free heart looms larger than your occupied throne. These are just a **few** of the things which bear the marks of idolatry in my heart.

Have mercy on me, Father, and free my foolish heart from giving **anything** or **anyone** the attention, allegiance, affection and adoration you alone deserve. That I'm one of your "dear children"... forgiven, secure and beloved in Christ... should be all the motivation I need to keep myself from **any** form of idolatry. May the gospel of your grace relentlessly expose and dethrone all "empty nothings" from my heart. So fill my heart with Jesus that's there's little room for anything else. So very Amen, I pray, in Jesus' most worthy name.