

“Stolen Water – Breaking Free from Lust”

Matthew 5:27-30

Small Group Discussion Guide

Note for leaders: You may want to break up into sub groups by men and women for more comfort in sharing about today's topic.

Opening Question (get everyone involved in discussion): When you were growing up, what were the views on sex in your family? Was it discussed or not discussed?

Transition: *Today we're talking about something that seems as safe, harmless, and beautiful, as the Bolton Strid – a narrow river – and yet something that is even more deadly. We're wrapping up our series, Breaking Free. We've been talking about how the death and resurrection of Jesus give us the possibility of having a new life now, free from all the destructive patterns that have enslaved us. Today we're talking about **breaking free from lust**. In order for us to see how the gospel enables us to break from lust, we need to see three things: **the gravity of lust, the fuel of lust, and the end of lust.***

Many think the Bible is only negative about sexual intimacy, but read the passages below and answer, “How does the Bible view sex when used within the confines of marriage?”

- Genesis 2:21-25 (note that Adam's exclamation in v23 is a poem)
- 1 Corinthians 7:3-5 (topic is sexual relations though mentioned euphemistically).
- Proverbs 5:15, 18-19 (sexual intimacy is compared with drinking water).
- Song of Songs 2:9 and 4:5

There is a theme in Scripture that the intimacy in human marriage is a foretaste of what it will be likely to fully know and be fully known by God in the future, when Jesus returns and makes all things new. (See, for example, Ephesians 5:31-32). ***How does this change your view of sex?***

Read Matthew 5:27-30

- First, let's define lust. How would you define “lust?”
 - In Greek, the word for lust in our passage is “*epithumeo*.” It's the same word that's translated, “**Covet.**” A strong desire for what does not belong to you.
 - How does this definition shed light on lust?
 - Coveting is like idolatry, “taking good things and turning them into ultimate things.” How does looking at lust as “sexual idolatry” shed light on the nature of lust and its effect on our relationship with God?
 - Lust can be compared to drinking salt water. How does this inform you about lust?
 - How does the comment below help you to understand what lust is? Regarding the initial temptation to lust: “You can't help it if a bird lands on your head. But you don't have to let it build a nest there.” (Martin Luther)
- Jesus seems to take lust very seriously in this passage. Do you agree with him about its gravity? Why or why not?

- What is your reaction when you read the following statistics that Josh offered in his sermon? Do they surprise you? Do they bother you?
 - Among Christian young adults, men *and* women, 76% regularly use pornography.
 - When you study Christian men and broaden it to all ages, 68% of Christian men regularly use pornography.
- Josh identified subtler forms of lust: a) a strong desire for emotional intimacy with someone who is not your spouse, b) when you look to your spouse to satisfy your heart, to complete you, in a way that only God can, c) an unrealistic fantasy about what a perfect marriage or relationship is supposed to look like, and/or d) any time you use something other than God to be fulfilled. ***Do these subtler forms of lust strike home? Discuss.***
- What does Jesus mean when he says to gouge out your eye or cut off your hand?
- Josh stated, “Almost always, the first, drastic step in that is telling a trusted friend or mentor.” How does lust, or any type of sin, stay strong when kept secret?
- On Sunday, we heard that “Lust is an unquenchable thirst on the road to a place of unquenchable thirst.” What did Pastor Josh mean by this? Do you agree or disagree?
- Josh identified several things that can be the “fuel for lust,” which are deeper issues of the heart: a) need for approval, b) need to be desired, c) anger at the life you think you “should” have had, d) need to be in control, or e) expectation of comfort. Have you ever realized that one of these needs was driving you? ***Discuss.***
- Read Jeremiah 2:13. How does the image of water in this passage shed light on the solution to lust?
- In John 4, Jesus communicates to the woman at the well that only he, as Living Water, can quench her thirst permanently. To do that, we have to accept that Jesus experienced cosmic thirst or separation from God (momentarily) in our place. But more than that, we need to ***experience*** the love of God in our souls in order to be free from the lust of trying to fulfill ourselves apart from Christ. ***Where might you be seeking fulfillment in a person, experience, or area apart from Christ?***

Let's move into Prayer

- Among our prayer requests, let's pray that we might identify our lusts, the deeper heart issue that fuels them, and experience Christ's love in a way that sets us free from our lusts.