

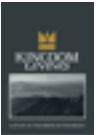
Purity in the Kingdom

Kingdom Living #5 - Pastor Gary Combs - April 27, 2025 - Matthew 5:27-30

INTRO: Good morning church! We're continuing our sermon series today entitled, KINGDOM LIVING. It's an expositional study of Christ's Sermon On the Mount found in Matthew 5-7. Many have described it as the greatest sermon ever preached by the greatest preacher who ever lived. It describes what life looks like in His kingdom—a kingdom that is radically different from the culture of this world. Indeed, as John Stott wrote (Stott, *The Message of the Sermon On the Mount*):

"The Sermon on the Mount is the most complete description anywhere in the New Testament of the Christian counter-culture. Here is a Christian value system, ethical standard, religious devotion, attitude to money, ambition, lifestyle and network of relationships – all of which are totally at odds with those of the non-Christian world. And this Christian counter-culture is the life of the kingdom of God, a fully human life indeed but lived out under the divine rule." — John Stott

Jesus announced a new way of life, one that is a "counter-culture" to the world! But let us not misunderstand the Sermon as some external law-keeping way to earn kingdom citizenship by our own effort. No, it is a description of Kingdom Life by those who follow Jesus as King! This is why we're calling our sermon series, KINGDOM LIVING. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus proclaimed how Christians are meant to live in the kingdom of God. (So I hope you picked up a copy of our study booklet for this 16-week series.)



Trans: We took a short break from our series for Easter Sunday, but today we're back with part 5 of our series. Today, Jesus takes us into one of the most personal and challenging areas of life—our sexual purity. In a world flooded with temptation, sensuality, and distorted views of love, Jesus speaks with clarity and authority. He doesn't lower the bar. He raises it to the level of the heart!

Need: Let's be honest, no one escapes this struggle untouched. Lust isn't just a temptation we battle out there in the world. It's a battle in *here*, in our hearts. If we're going to live as faithful citizens of God's Kingdom, if we're going to live counter to the world's culture as salt and light, we need more than just a pursuit of outward obedience, trying to keep ourselves pure through self-effort. We need transformation of the heart!

Trans: In our text today, Jesus exposes the root of our problem and calls us to radical, grace-filled purity.

BODY: In the gospel of Matthew 5:27-30, Jesus confronted His hearers with the deeper intent of the Law, exposing the seriousness of lust as adultery of the heart, and calling them to a life of sexual purity as true citizens of God's kingdom. We can answer Christ's call to sexual purity as His Kingdom citizens. How can we answer Christ's call to sexual purity as His Kingdom citizens? The text gives three key areas to answer Christ's call to sexual purity as His Kingdom citizens.

Read text: Matthew 5:27-30 (ESV) ²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

ANSWERING CHRIST'S CALL TO SEXUAL PURITY...

1. We can ask God to clean and renew our hearts.

EXP: (27-28) 1st key area is the heart. Sin begins as an ATTITUDE of rebellion in the heart. Jesus begins with the heart because that's where all sin starts. Lust is not just a physical act, it's an internal rebellion against God's design for love and sexuality. Lust reduces people to objects and elevates self-gratification over God's glory. Jesus doesn't just want better behavior—He wants your heart.

"You have heard" (27) - "It is probable that the Pharisees had explained this [7th] commandment, as they had the sixth, as extending only to the external act... Our Saviour assures them that the commandment did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the eye." (*Barnes' Notes*)

"You shall not commit adultery" (27) (μοιχεύω, *moicheuō*) - adultery, unlawful intercourse with another's wife. Yet, this law is like a chapter heading for a list of unlawful sexual acts such as: fornication, incest, homosexuality, prostitution, bestiality, rape, gender confusion, pornography, etc.

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"But I say" (28) (ἐγὼ λέγω, *egō legō*) - Emphatic use of "I." Jesus is the authority over the law.

"Look at a woman" (28) (βλέπω, *blepō*) - to see; look upon, gaze at. The first glance might be accidental but the long second look is lustful.

"Lustful intent" (28) (ἐπιθυμέω, *epithumeō*) - Lit., "over-passion or boiling over." Over-desire.

"His..." (28) - although aimed at men, it takes two to commit adultery. Jesus was speaking to both.

"Heart" (28) (καρδία, *kardia*) - the heart, denotes the center of all physical and spiritual life.

ARG: Ezekiel prophesied of a day when God would give His people a new heart and Spirit.

Ezekiel 36:26-27 (NLT) ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. ²⁷ And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.

David asked God to create in him a clean heart.

Psalms 51:10 (ESV) Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

ILL: It's hard to grow grass, but easy to grow weeds. Think of a seed in the soil. You don't see the plant until it starts growing. So, sinful thoughts in the heart can grow into sinful behaviors. (4 soils- Mk4)



APP: Where is your thought life taking you? Are you nurturing hidden desires that, left unchecked, will shape your actions? Are the TV shows, books, or social feeds you're following making you discontent with singleness or marriage? Are you feeding romantic fantasies? Emotional affairs often start in the mind. Ask yourself: What am I really craving—intimacy, control, validation? When do your thoughts drift? What emotional states (loneliness, boredom, anger) make you vulnerable?

Have you asked God to purify your heart? Pray like David: "Create in me a clean heart, O God."

2. We can look to God to help guard our eyes.

EXP: (29) 2nd key area is the eyes. The eyes represent what ALLURES, tempting us to lust. Jesus used hyperbole to make a strong point: if your eye leads you to sin, do whatever it takes to stop it. The eye is the gateway to the heart. In a world of constant visual stimulation, this teaching has never been more relevant.

"Right eye" (29) (δεξιός, *dexios*) - right, metaph. a place of honor or authority. (ὀφθαλμός, *ophthalmos*) - the eye; metaph. the eyes of the mind, the faculty of knowing. The gateway to the heart.

"Causes you to sin" (29; 2x) (σκανδαλίζω, *skandalizō*) - to put a stumbling block or impediment in the way.

"Tear it out" (29) (ἐξαιρέω, *exaireō*) - to pluck out, draw out, i.e. root out

"Throw it away" (29; 2x) (βάλλω, *ballō*) - to scatter, to throw, cast out

"Better" (29) (συνφέρω, *sumpherō*) - better. Small to greater comparison.

"Lose one ... members" (29) (ἀπόλλυμι, *apollumi*) - to destroy, to lose entirely.

"Whole body" (29) (σῶμα, *sōma*) - all, whole, completely. Better to lose part than the whole.

"Hell" (29) (γέεννα, *geenna*) - Lit., "Gehenna" ("Valley of Hinnom"). Metaph. Hell, place of punishment. "We are to deal drastically with sin. We must not pamper it, flirt with it, enjoy nibbling a little of it around the edges. We are to hate it, crush it, dig it out... sin leads to hell. And that is the ultimate reason why sin must be taken seriously" (D. A. Carson, Sermon, 44-45).

ARG: The desires of the eyes are not from the Father... (Remember Eve who "saw that the tree was good")

1 John 2:16 (ESV) For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world.

Have you made a covenant with your eyes? Job did.

Job 31:1 (NIV) I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman.

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ILL: - In cybersecurity, one weak point of access can compromise an entire system. That's why firewalls exist. Likewise, we need "spiritual firewalls" to guard our eyes.



APP: What needs to go? A certain app? A late-night habit? An unhealthy friendship? Don't negotiate with sin. Eliminate what's poisoning your soul. "Tear it out and throw it away!" Maybe it's time to unfollow that influencer whose content stirs up insecurity, jealousy, or obsession with appearance or romance. It could be a friendship with flirtation woven into it—even if it feels innocent, if it's crossing boundaries in your heart, it's time to step back. Is your phone your quiet escape where you slip into fantasy or comparison traps late at night? What boundaries need to be set? What can I remove?

Your eyes are windows to the soul, and what you look at eventually influences what you long for. What you let in will either stir your affections for God or distort your view of people and relationships. Set up guardrails. Use accountability software. But more than anything—ask God to fix your eyes on Him.

3. We can rely on God for power to discipline our hands.

EXP: (30) 3rd key area is the hands. Jesus moves from the eye to the hand—what you do—ACTION. Lust unchecked leads to sinful ACTION. Jesus says: be radical. Do whatever it takes to remove sin's influence from your life. Not literally amputate—but be willing to take drastic, obedient steps.

"Right hand" (30) (χείρ, *cheir*) - normally translated hand, but literally means by the help or agency of any one, by means of any one; fig. applied to God symbolising his might, activity, power.

"Cut it off" (30) (ἐκκόπτω, *ekkoptō*) - to cut out, cut off; of a tree.

ARG: **Present yourselves to God and your members as instruments of righteousness.**

Romans 6:12-14 (ESV) ¹² Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. ¹³ Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. ¹⁴ For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace.

ILL: In 2003, experienced climber and outdoorsman, Aron Ralston, went hiking alone down Utah's Bluejohn Canyon. As he climbed over a boulder, it shifted, pinning his right arm against a canyon wall. Five days later, after having tried fruitlessly to budge the 800-pound rock, he broke the bones in his forearm and amputated his arm below the elbow with a dull pocketknife. The operation took about an hour. Once free, he rappelled down a 60-foot cliff and walked five miles before finding help.



APP: Jesus isn't exaggerating for effect. Sin left unchecked grows until it owns you. But in Christ, freedom is possible. Jesus isn't telling you to literally maim yourself—He's calling you to act decisively. Sinful habits don't die with good intentions—they die with intentional action. Your body follows the leadership of your will, and your will needs to be surrendered to the Spirit.

What action, what habit, what secret needs to be "cut off"? Rely on God's grace to take bold steps: remove yourself from tempting environments, end ungodly relationships, seek help. God not only forgives—He empowers!

CONCLUSION: Church, this isn't just a call to purity, it's a call to freedom. Jesus isn't trying to rob you of joy—He's inviting you into something better. Purity isn't about legalism, it's about loyalty to your King. He offers not just pardon for your sin, but power over your sin.

Where is the battle raging in your life today? Is it your heart? Your eyes? Your hands? Run to Jesus. He died not only to forgive your lust—but to free you from its power. He is able to cleanse, guard, and empower you to walk in purity. So come to Jesus. Surrender again to the King and live the counter-cultural life of purity in His Kingdom.

Let's pray.