

The Sermon on the Mount

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

Matthew 5:27 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.'

Matthew 5:28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Have you heard of xxxchurch? It's not what you think!

Two young California pastors say the church isn't facing up to one of the nastiest temptations facing most believers these days, which is pornography. So these men have started up a controversial ministry to take on porn.

Mike Foster and Gross started up a web ministry that calls itself "The number one Christian porn site." And they set up booths at America's biggest porn conventions. The purpose? To help people break free from porn.

Foster said, "I think it's time for Christians to be aware of the issues and be pro-active, and not simply let the wave of pornography sweep over us."

At 12 billion a year, the revenues of the sex and porn industry in the U.S. are bigger than the NFL, NBA and Major League Baseball combined. Worldwide porn sales are reported to be 57 billion. To put this in perspective, Microsoft, who sells the operating system used on most of the computers in the world (in addition to other software) reported sales of 36.8 billion in 2004 (Family Safe

Media).

4.28 billion: Revenues in the U.S. in 2005 of adult movie sales and video rentals alone (AVN News, State of the Adult Industry).

60% of all website visits are sexual in nature (MSNBC Survey 2000).

The No. 1 search term used at search engine sites is the word "sex". Users searched for "sex" more than other terms such as "games," "travel," "music," "jokes," "cars," "weather," "health" and "jobs" combined. The study also found that "pornography/porno" was the fourth-most searched for subject (Alexa Research).

45 million: The approximate number of unique visitors to adult websites in April 2005 (AVN News, State of the Adult Industry).

17% of all women struggle with porn addiction; 1 of 3 visitors to all adult websites are women; 9.4 million women access adult websites every month (Internet Filter Review).

From the results of a ChristiaNet poll reported by Marketwire.com: August 7, 2006: 50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women are addicted to pornography. 60% of the women who answered the survey admitted to having significant struggles with lust; 40% admitted to being involved in sexual sin in the past year; and 20% of the church-going female participants struggle with looking at pornography on an ongoing basis.

Roger Charman of *Focus on the Family's Pastoral Ministries* reports that approximately 20 percent of the calls received on their Pastoral Care Line are for help with issues such as pornography and compulsive sexual behavior.

xxxchurch.com, a web address deliberately picked to lure porn-seekers who type in the letters "XXX."

"And if you are personally struggling, go to this site, and you are going to realize, you're not alone, that there are other people out there struggling with the same things," said Gross. "We have sections for wives, sections for parents, sections for teenagers. One of them is a prayer wall where you can post your prayers and read about how porn is really affecting others. We have an 800 number where you can call in."

Another freebie that xxxchurch.com offers is "accountability software" that shoots off a biweekly list of web sites you've been visiting to two people of your choosing.

Gross says, "It takes away the secrecy, and a lot of the problems that people have on-line, if you're willing to let someone else see what you see."

The other major purpose of xxxchurch is to let porn industry professionals know Jesus loves them. Gross and Foster have been to several porn conventions, accompanied by their mascot Rex the Rabbit, their answer to the Playboy Bunny.

At these porn shows, they pass out postcards that say "Jesus loves porn stars."

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It is likely that the Pharisees had explained this commandment as extending only to the external act; and that they regarded evil thoughts and a wanton imagination as of little consequence, or as not forbidden by the law. Jesus assures them that the commandment did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the eye. He declares that they who indulge a wanton desire, that they who look on a woman to increase their lust, have already, in the sight of God, violated the commandment, and committed adultery in the heart.

The intent of this law was to reveal the sanctity of sex and the sinfulness of the human heart. God created sex, and God protects sex. He has the authority to regulate it and to punish those who rebel against His laws. He does not regulate sex because He wants to rob us, but rather, because He wants to bless us. Whenever God says, "No" it is that He might say "Yes."

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There must be an emphasis on inward purity. The law forbade the act of adultery; Jesus forbids the desire: Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. E. Stanley Jones caught the import of this verse when he wrote: "If you think or act adultery, you do not satisfy the sex urge; you pour oil on a fire to quench it."

Sin begins in the mind, and if we nourish it, we eventually commit the act.

To portray just how important are our thoughts, Jesus illustrated His teaching with a shocking statement:

Matthew 5:29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Matthew 5:30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

The first thing to realize is that the Lord already established that it is in the heart, and in the mind, that sin is born. Missing one **eye**, or one **hand**, or one **member** of any kind, would not eliminate sin in the heart and mind.

Jesus is using the illustration of physical amputation to show how radically we must guard and protect the heart and mind from the thoughts that are sin and bring forth more sin.

In other words, if you could keep yourself from sinning in some heinous manner by cutting off your hand, you'd do it! How much more must you do whatever is necessary, then, to have the mind of Jesus Christ, and to bring all your thoughts captive to Him.

If it were necessary to lose a member rather than one's soul, then we should gladly part with the member. Fortunately it is never necessary, since the Holy Spirit empowers the believer to live a holy life.

Jesus said, "Deal immediately and decisively with sin! Don't taper off - cut off!"