

OVERCOMING IMMORALITY

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Many in our world today are slaves to sex. They don't seem to have control over their desires and passion. Immorality has always been a problem to man and is still a problem. Today, immoral behavior has grown to the point that children are getting corrupted and joining in this wickedness. The church is fast becoming a den of immoral people who refuse to allow the word of God and the Spirit of God to change them. The faithful are beginning to slip and fall into this evil, such that today, there are many casualties. Many marriages are failing and have failed because of extra marital affairs by those involved. Today it is becoming extremely difficult to find young people marry as virgins. Pornography seems to have gained much ground and is still becoming more popular than ever before. Homosexuality and bestiality is becoming the delight of many in our world especially in the developed and developing countries of the world. There are too many abominations in the world today. What used to be taboos are no longer looked upon as taboos. This is a problem that needs urgent attention.

This subject will be looked into here. The cause and the way out will be discussed so that all can overcome this monster and please God here on earth without being polluted by it.

“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Mt. 5:28)

People only see adultery as an unlawful sexual act. In other words, until a man or woman is caught in adultery, he or she is not guilty of adultery. Jesus taught that adultery or any other form of immorality is not just an unlawful sexual act, but includes lustful looks, which come from lustful thoughts.

The word heart in the Bible is used also to mean the mind, or in other words, it is used to encompass both the spirit and soul. According to Crudens concordance, *“The word heart is used in the scripture as the seat of life or strength; hence it means mind, soul, spirit, or one's entire emotional nature and understanding. It is also used as the center or inner part of a thing”*.

If the heart sometimes means one's entire emotional nature and understanding, it means that in such usage as in above, it is talking about the soul of man and not the spirit. One needs to read the passage very carefully to be able to understand if it is the spirit or the soul or both that the word 'heart' represents.

In this passage, the word “heart” as used refers to the spirit and the soul of man. For the sinner, he still has the evil nature in him, so evil like immorality can proceed from his spirit and soul, which is a combination of, mind, emotions and will. For the regenerated man (the child of God or born again), the word heart in this passage refers only to the soul. He is a new creation, and now has the nature and life of God on the inside of him. So evil like immorality cannot come from his “recreated” spirit, but from his unrenewed mind which influences and controls his emotional expressions.

Jesus said,

“... That everyone who looks at a woman lustfully...”

A surface reading of this will make one conclude that the problem is with our eyes and therefore we should pluck them out as he said in verse 29 of the same Matt. 5.

“If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

God gave us eyes to see, and as long as we have eyes we will see anything that comes into our view, whether they be naked men or women, we will see them all. The problem is not our eyes, but what we think as a result of what we see. If God didn't want us to see the people of the opposite sex, then he wouldn't have given us eyes. So, I don't believe that Jesus really wants us to pluck out our eyes because we lusted after someone of the opposite sex. I believe that what he meant is that we should deal with the problem of lust so that it will not lead us to hell. And that is my reason for writing this chapter. I want us to deal with this problem.

Lust is a thing of the mind. When you see something, it is immediately registered in your brain, which automatically triggers off some thoughts that will eventually produce a negative or positive response. Lust is a problem of men and women, believers and unbelievers alike. A Christian is not supposed to lust after someone of the opposite sex, but majority do, especially those with an immoral past before conversion. You can be delivered from lust today.

Your thought life is what you have to watch. When you see someone of the opposite sex, what you think after seeing the person produces the lust. If you think lustfully, you will discover that you will look again and again and think and look, and on and on it goes. But when you see the person, you just refuse to accept and think anything lustful in your mind; you will discover you will not look at the person again if you are passing by. But if you are standing or staying near the person, you will not look at her or him lustfully because you have refused to think that way.

Sex is in the mind. Like I explained earlier, if you don't think it, you won't desire it. If you don't desire it, you won't do it. Since it is a mind thing, lust can be dealt with by controlling one's thoughts towards the object of lust.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LUST AND ADMIRATION

ADMIRE: - To admire means to look on with wonder and pleasure; respect highly (Collins Gen English Dictionary). One can admire somebody without lusting after the person. It is in man to admire things we see whether they be human, plants or objects. We admire beauty, clothes, shoes, bags, houses, cars, flowers etc. It is not a sin to admire what you see. The problem is that we progress from admiration to lust. From admiring, we start thinking vain and immoral things towards the person. Most of us deny that we lust, but that we only admire people; but a closer look at our thoughts while we admire the person or object, will show and prove that what we are

actually doing is lusting after the person or object. We should stop covering up our sin. You can deceive me, but you can't deceive God because He sees your thoughts.

LUST: - Is strong desire for sexual gratification: any strong desire (Collins Gen English Dictionary). Lust has to do with our desire, and desire comes as a result of the disposition of our minds. Desire comes from what we think. If I am sitting very close to a lady, and I don't let my mind wonder into immorality, I will not lust after her or desire her and I will not be sexually aroused. But the moment I begin to think – “This girl is beautiful, look at her nose, her lips, her legs and her pointed breast, she has got a very good shape. How I wish I could have her as a girlfriend, how I wish she was mine!” I will begin to get aroused, and if I don't control myself, I will find myself talking to the lady about how much I fancy her; or I will start making plans on how I will win her love.

The whole thing starts from our thoughts, and is fuelled by further thoughts, and later matures (still in our thoughts) before we carry it out. From the above example, you will see that like in every other case it starts from admiration and progresses with an incredible speed into lust.

One can admire without lusting. But in admiring, control your thoughts so you don't “over-admire” and start lusting. When you admire, always see that person as the perfect work of God's hand created to honour and worship God with all He had endowed him or her with. If you always look at people this way, you will not lust after them. Guide your thoughts against immoral suggestions of the devil, and thoughts that will naturally want to come as a result of what you see and hear.

If you have been lusting but have been covering it up by saying and making yourself believe you are only admiring people, you should repent and acknowledge your sin. Most Christians indulge in this practice as if God does not see them. But God says in Jer. 23:23-24

“Am I a God at hand, says the LORD, and not a God afar off? Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Says the LORD. Do I not fill heaven and earth? Says the LORD.”

“The LORD knows the thoughts of man that they are but a breath.” (Ps. 94:11)

“For I know their works and thoughts, and am coming to gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and shall see my glory.” (Isa. 66:18)

Every man's thought is laid bare before God and God sees it all. If you will control your thoughts, you will not think immoral or lust after someone of the opposite sex.

WATCH WHAT YOU FEED YOUR MIND WITH

As a result of the shame and problem that comes from illegal sex, almost every professed Christian keeps away from it. Though they keep away from real sexual act, they still enjoy their own in their minds. They think about it a lot. Some feed their minds with pornographic pictures and films, and they think it doesn't matter forgetting the fact that the Bible says in Prov. 23:7 and Prov. 27:19

“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” (KJV)

“As in water face answers to face, so the mind of a man reflects the man.” (RSV)

As long as you feed your mind with such things, you will necessarily think about it. The more you think about it, the more you are overcome and obsessed with immorality. It will be difficult for such a person to see someone of the opposite sex without lusting after the person. Such a person cannot stay or sit close to an attractive woman or man without getting sexually aroused, what you think matters a lot. Some Christians are so obsessed with immoral thoughts that in their minds and even in dreams, they have sex with the particular persons they are lusting after, or with some strange faces. Some will come for prayers for such dreams to stop, but the solution to such problem is to stop thinking immoral.

Those who are courting have this problem too. They love their partners so much and they often think about them. Sometimes they think ahead of time. They take their minds into the future when both will be living as husband and wife. He or she will begin to imagine how they will sleep and bathe together, how they will have sex together and always fondle themselves and so on. They pre-occupy themselves with such thoughts to the point that their ability to resist is broken down completely. That is why a lot of courting Christians end up having sex before marriage. The thoughts will overwhelm such a partner or both as the case may be; when they now come together to share, they find themselves acting out their thoughts (their mind starts reflecting in their actions). Maybe when they first start to fondle themselves, they are able to keep out of sex. But as such intimate “game” continues, the thoughts will grow wings – they will begin to see how sweet and exciting it is, and will be in future. Before they know what is happening, they are already involved in the sexual act. At the end of the day, they will cry and be surprised at their own actions. Do not be surprised because your thoughts were what led to it. It was you that fuelled the fire that burnt through your thoughts. Some will repent, and some will excuse themselves and say after all we are getting married. And they just continue in their illegal sex acts. Stop that sin now! Control your thoughts towards your partner. Do not always think about your sex life in the future when you will be married, for it will make you act immoral towards your partner before you even get married. Spend your time together in prayer, bible study and self-development.

CONCLUSION

A closer look at these words for immorality shows that the thought of man plays an important role in each of the sins. Immorality does not occur by accident, it starts from the mind. All we need to do is to control our thoughts and refuse to think anything immoral. If you think immoral, you will be immoral. Your thought life will always reflect in your actions. If you are that type that preoccupies yourself with immoral thoughts, you will always find yourself unable to control your sexual desires.

Masturbation is not the cure for lust and sexual desire. In fact, it fuels it. It encourages you to think more lustful thoughts in order to have the feeling through masturbation. Thought control is the way out of this problem. When you are far away from your spouse due to your job, don't

masturbate. Deal with the thoughts and you will be okay. Masturbation will lead you to adultery when you can no longer control your emotions. Discipline through thought control is God's way of managing our emotions. Break free from masturbation immediately in Jesus name.

Homosexuality and lesbianism is evil and an aberration of the order of life. It is a manifestation of a distorted thought life. It is a rebellion against God and his laws. God did not create us to live that way and rejects that kind of life in his word. When a man or woman allows his or her thoughts to run wild without control, definitely, 'man to man' and 'woman to woman' will become the end result. Purge your thoughts from all immoral thoughts and desires, and draw near to God and you will be accepted and saved in the end.

To control your thoughts, you need to control what you feed your mind with or you will be fuelling the fire that will eventually burn you. Do not feed your mind with pornographic literatures and movies. Do not listen to immoral stories. Think pure towards people of the opposite sex. If there is somebody you are lusting after now, pray that person out of your mind, control your thoughts towards him or her, and as much as possible avoid seeing or being close to the person until the lustful thoughts are gone. By so doing you will deliver yourself from a shameful act that can ruin your life.

A lot of people including preachers have fallen into immorality, even those who are courting, do so because they let their minds run wild in sensuality and fantasy. They entertained these thoughts, and enjoyed them until they were obsessed and overwhelmed by the immoral thoughts.

"As he thinketh in his heart (mind) so is he".

You cannot live above your thoughts. As you think so are you. Change your thought life today, and you will see changes in your life as far as this issue is concerned. You will walk in purity as you think pure thoughts.

You may have prayed, "God deliver me from this immoral life that I am living", or "I don't want to lust after anybody anymore.", "and yet you didn't control your thoughts by refusing to think immoral or lustfully; there is no way you will see the answer to your prayer. If you want an answer, you must first be ready to be delivered and to stop thinking evil, or else, there will be no change in your life. You must bring your mind under control by the help of the Holy Spirit. You must make a practical effort for that is your duty, while God supplies you with the spiritual strength that you need to control it. You must make an effort; you must control your thoughts. It is not just theory, it works for me; and I know it will work for you. This is the only way out. Don't let your thoughts run wild, control it all the time, and the Holy Spirit will help you.

You might ask, "How can I control my thought? I don't have power over what I think". But I say to you, you have power over what you think. The Bible says that we have been delivered from the powers of darkness, which means that the devil has no control over you and your thoughts. It means that you are the "master" of your own body and you can either yield your mind to evil and immoral thoughts, or you can refuse to yield. The devil does not have control over you as a child of God, except you let him. You have already been delivered; do not get yourself bound again through evil thoughts. Remember that the devil wants to have control of your thoughts in order

to bind and control your life. Your thought life is in your hands; it all depends on your decision. If you want to be free and think pure all the time; you can, and if you want to think impure all the time and be bound by the evil you think and the devil behind it, you can as well. It all depends on your decision. Your life is in your hands. Remember God is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of man's heart (Heb. 4:12). God will bring your thoughts to judgment. Do not forget, your thoughts will bring you out, for

“As he thinketh in his heart so is he.” (Prov. 23:7)

“And the mind of man reflects the man.” (Prov.27:19)

There are agents of the devil and those possessed of seducing and immoral spirits, they will want to do everything within their power to seduce you. You must not give them any chance. Some of them like sitting carelessly in public, even in the church to pollute your mind. Some will use their demonic powers to draw your attention to them, and make you always to look at them, and think about them, while some will draw themselves closer to you in order to register themselves in your mind and make you lust after them. Be watchful and sensitive in the spirit. When you encounter such people, pray them away and bind the spirit in them: You must refuse to think along with them. Resist their seducing thoughts, and you will not fall into their traps. Guard your mind always against any and every evil, especially immoral thoughts.