

Part Three: The Way Out

Session 23

Overcoming Your Lust and Sinful Habits

“And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”
Ephesians 2:1-3

A. The Anatomy of a _____

1. Lust as used in the Bible is any strong _____—good or bad.
 - a. *“Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust.”* (James 1:14).
 - 1) Lusts (strong desires) provide points of _____.
 • You cannot be tempted with something you do not _____.
 • This is why “_____” is so dangerous.
 - 2) Lusts (strong desires) are _____—“own lusts.”
 - b. *“We too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh [sinful nature], indulging the desires of the flesh [body] and of the mind”* (Ephesians 2:3)
2. Desires of the _____—appetites we are born with (part of our human nature)
 - a. A limited number of bodily lusts—none of them in themselves are _____.
 - 1) Desire for food and oxygen
 - 2) Desire for sleep
 - 3) Desire for sex after reaching puberty
 - b. These lusts are permanent and cannot be eliminated. They must be _____.
 • *“But I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.”* (I Corinthians 9:27).
 - c. The _____ (sinful nature) can appeal to the body to fulfill these bodily cravings outside of God’s laws (wrong purpose, wrong time, wrong way).
 - d. Repeated indulgence in bodily cravings results in _____.
3. Desires of the _____—appetites we learn (part of our personal nurture)
 - a. An unlimited number of learned lusts—do not necessarily have to be _____.
 - b. They are imprinted—learned—more readily by...
 - 1) Repetition
 - 2) Concentration
 - 3) Emotion
 - c. These are the lusts spoken of in I John 2:15-17.
 - 1) Lust of the _____ (intensified bodily cravings for pleasure—learned from the world as exposed to and influence by its music, movies, magazines, etc.)
 - 2) Lust of the _____ (intensified cravings for possessions—learned from the world)
 - 3) _____ of life (intensified cravings for power/prestige—learned from the world)
 - d. Desires of the mind are not permanent.
 - e. Desires of the mind must be restrained until they can be _____.
 - f. Desires of the mind can be mixed with desires of the body.
 - 1) Pornography, homosexuality, all forms of unconventional sexual practices
 - 2) Eating issues

B. Strategies for Change

1. _____ and begin forsaking the _____-centeredness that lies at the core of unbridled lust.
 - a. No man can have lasting victory over habituated lusts who is not willing to address the self-centeredness that dominates the rest of his life.
 - b. For example, a man seeking victory over pornography must look at how self-centeredness reigns in...
 - 1) His work relationships and ambitions
 - 2) His financial desires and goals
 - 3) His parenting style
 - 4) His church and ministry involvement
 - 5) His sports and hobby activities
 - 6) His entertainment choices and use of leisure time
 - 7) His sexual relationship with his own wife, if he is married
 - 8) His personal fellowship with his Master, Jesus Christ
 - c. God is not interested in helping a man overcome only the area of self-centeredness that is most disturbing to that man at the moment. God wants to address the man's life at its very center.
2. Expand your understanding of how biblical change takes place. You must actively submit to God's program of _____ for your life. If this is a new concept to you or you are confused about what is involved in sanctification, study through *Changed into His Image*.ⁱ

This will mean that you understand how to biblically mortify your flesh, how to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and how to walk in the Spirit so that you begin bearing His fruit instead of manifesting the works of the flesh.
3. Make yourself _____ to your pastor or another mature Christian.ⁱⁱ
 - Being accountable to someone for the disciplines of spiritual growth (daily devotions, church attendance, witnessing activities, prayer life, and so forth) is quite different from being accountable for sinful indulgences and habits (pornography and other sexual sins, theft, deceit, slander, and so forth).
 - Accountability for sinful indulgences and habits needs to be from someone who has spiritual clout in your life such as your parents (if you are still a dependent) or your deacon or pastor—someone who has the authority to begin steps of church discipline if you do not forsake your sin.
4. In the power of God's Spirit, _____ the desires of your body, stay within God's limitations for them, and resist the desires of your mind until they are replaced with godly responses.

CONCLUSION: While each generation may see new manifestations of old lusts, there are no new sins that are not addressed in the _____.

- The canon of _____ was closed when the canon of Scripture was closed.
- *"His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to [eternal] life and godliness [in this life], through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence."* (II Peter 1:3).

ⁱ Jim Berg, *Changed into His Image* (Greenville, SC: BJU Press, 1999).

ⁱⁱ A man struggling with pornography should not make himself accountable to his wife. His spiritual growth is not her responsibility. He is to be her leader spiritually, not vice versa. His accountability should be to his spiritual leader. It is hypocrisy for a man to insist that his family submit to him as their leader when he will not submit to his leader, his pastor. The rebellion toward him, which he sees in his family, most likely mirrors his own rebellion toward his leadership.