

# The Battle Against Sexual Immorality and Pornography

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“Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles (reading from the ESV), to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.” There are passions of flesh that wage war, that means that they are passions that would seek to wage war and destroy your soul. We have dealt with pride, we have dealt with worldliness, and tonight we are going to start, probably three messages, this being the first on sexual sin. And tonight we are going to start, probably three messages, this being the first on sexual sin. Now I'll tell you this, the very nature of the subject that I want to start dealing with tonight, I don't know the background of the visitors, I know what you folks are a custom to hearing that are part of the church. I don't have any intention tonight to try to awe you with provocative language, but I want to tell you this is that I want to be dead honest with you, and to do that I don't know, I don't know what churches you go to, I don't what kind of pastors you have, but sexual sin is the real deal. Sexual immorality, sexual temptation, it is huge in our day and it's not a subject that we want to stay quiet about. It wages war, in fact among young people, this one takes people down. These passions wage war against your soul and they mean to undue you. I mean, I know I'm personifying them, I am making them out as enemy that has arms, and legs, and thinks. That's the way the Bible says, that's the way the Bible speaks about them, that's the way Peter speaking about it is actually a passion. I realize the passions that are within us but they seek to destroy, they are against your soul. They do battle against your soul, something that wars against your soul means to destroy your soul. These are soul-destroying passions and if they get you, you die! You die in your sin, you go to hell, that is just real as that Scripture.

We're going to look at a number of these. So I want to speak to you honestly tonight, not graphically but honestly. Our series comes from this text in 1 Peter 2:11. The verses I want to deal with more specifically tonight comes from 1 Thessalonians 4, so if you would turn there. I just want these verses to speak to us. ; “For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality; that each one of you know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one transgress and wrong his brother in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger of all these things, as we told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us for impurity, but in holiness. Therefore whoever disregards this, disregards not man but God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you.” Now you can see it, the words that I want to deal with tonight are found right there at the beginning in verse 5, “not in the passion of lust like the Gentiles who do not know God.” The passion of lust, Peter say's, passions of the flesh wage war against us. Here is one of these passions of the flesh; the passion of lust. Now just these verses, 3 through 8. I want you to help me define what the passion of the lust... What is the passion of lust, based on these verses?

Tell me, as we seek to establish a definition, you tell me what is true of passion, the passion of lust based on these verses. Lust, what's true of sexual lust? The passion of lust,

based on... what's Paul say here? What's he telling the Thessalonians? What's true of it? If we're seeking a definition? Uncontrolled, there's a thing. See, he sets this passion of lust, which he accuses the gentiles of being guilty of, over against control. So it's losing control in a sexual way. Basically, control has the idea of keeping myself in bounds, keeping myself constrained, keeping myself from overstepping. Or he actually uses the word transgress. To transgress means to step over, there's a boundary there, control keeps me within the boundary, I lose control, I go out of it. What else does it tell us? That you don't know God. You don't know God. Let me tell you, this "world gone crazy after sex." This is one of the key characteristics of the lost world. This is an evidence that you don't know God. Now listen if that surprises you, it should not, if you know your Bibles. Paul says in 1 Corinthians in Chapter 6, and verse 9, he says "don't be deceived." And the first thing he deals with is fornicators, adulterers, sexual immoral, homosexuals, impure, they don't not inherit the kingdom of heaven. You know why he says "don't be deceived," we got spiritual people running over the place that think, "We'll I go to church, I own a Bible." All that time their Bible they own is telling them, if you're involved in sexual immorality, you will not inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. What else does it tell us that is true about the passion of lust? It's being out of control. It disregards God. It's a disregard of God. Can I tell you what the real issue is?

Those who are given to the passion of lust have no regard for God. That's basically it. What else is something that is true there? The Lord will avenge. Anything else? Defraud a brother. Definitely a sin against others. Let me tell you two words that nobody has thrown out yet. Holiness and honor and the passion of lust is contrary to both.

Honor when a young man or a young woman, doesn't matter if they are young or older but I'll tell you this, when sexual passions are given over to, it is a complete dishonoring, it's no regard, as we've already heard, there's no regard for God, but there is total dishonor. Listen ladies, you know what a man's saying to you who wants to have sex with you but does not want to marry you? He's saying "I want to use your own body for my own gratification, but I don't want you. I don't want all of you. I don't want a commitment with you. I just want to gratify myself with you. It's not really you I want." And you can't get around that reality. A man who will not make a covenant commitment to you, but wants pleasure with you, he doesn't love you, he dishonors you. His motives are totally impure and dishonorable. He doesn't really want you. He will tell you he does. But then ladies, you dishonor yourselves, because you're willing to give him your body for the sake of that pleasure in the hopes of satisfying your own emotional desires, your own desire to be loved, your own desire for affection, and you just cheapen that whole thing. And the thing is he'll tell you anything that he thinks you want to hear to get you to where you're going to be willing to go that way, it's totally dishonorable. It's totally the opposite of holiness.

Holiness is a people set apart. It is God setting apart a people. Jesus setting apart a people. A people of His own who are dedicated to good and to good works, to purity, to being set apart for Him. So it's dishonorable, it is a disregard for God. I'll tell you, this is right where it's at. People who give way to their sexual lusts, they totally disregard God. And you know, don't think, boy there is such a prevalent thinking, "Well the Lord knows I love her." Or, "The Lord knows we're in love." "The Lord knows we mean to get married." Have you never read Ephesians chapter 5 or Colossians chapter 3? It says for these things the wrath of God is coming. This is not a thing He's pleased with. He designed marriage to be a picture of His Son

and His Son's relationship to the church and when you defile it, it is such a thing that brings wrath from Him that He will destroy you. That's why Paul is saying He is an avenger.

What does avenger mean? It means He's gonna bring punishment. He does not take kindly to it. He does not say, "Oh well, I understand ladies that you're seeking affection" or "I understand men that you guys need an outlet." That's not what He says. It's a lack of control, it's a disregard for God, it is a dishonoring... of our bodies. Brethren, it's a serious thing. It is a serious thing. And I'll tell you this, it is not just the act. Now hear me very well, and listen, I want you all to hear me.

Because what I'm about to say, some of you are no doubt gonna misunderstand and misinterpret but I wanna show you that what I'm saying comes straight from the Bible. Jesus said it. So I don't want anyone going out here today saying, "well, I don't believe what that guy believes... and I don't know why we came to this study." Look I'm not here to set any agenda of my own. I want you to hear what the Lord says. The Lord says in Matthew Chapter 5, and if you have your Bibles, you should look at this. This is serious stuff. Matthew Chapter 5 verse 28. You see, brethren, when I say that this is a disregard for God, and Paul says people who are given to these passions like this know not God, he's not just saying, well, you see the Gentiles know not God and this characterizes their life and so when do this, you're just acting like them. He's saying if you do this and you're given to this, you are one of them. That's why He is saying God is an avenger. He's coming for you. This is serious and Jesus said it's not only the act, now listen to this. Matthew 5:28, "I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." Ok so what? Everybody does that. I mean I talk to all these professing Christians around me and I know they struggle with it and so we all struggle with it. After all: Oh wretched man that I am and the things I wanna do I don't do and I just can't find myself doing them and the evil don't wanna do I find myself doing. And I look around and I see all these folks around me and they struggle with the same thing so certainly it must be ok with all of us. So certainly it must be ok with all of us. Have you ever read Jesus said, few there be that find it the broad way is the religious way just because you may sit in a church where you have a bunch of other people, that fail and fall to the same thing doesn't make you safe. You're only safe when you're in a category where Jesus says you're safe. And Jesus does not say if that's true in your life you're safe. Listen, numbers don't bring safety truth brings safety what God says in His word is where you wanna stand you'll easily go to hell with the crowd if you think numbers bring safety Jesus said, many are gonna say to me in that day Lord, Lord and He's gonna say I never knew you So don't trust in the numbers when Jesus Himself says many THE CROWDS FOLKS in that day are going to find out Jesus never knew them Listen, let me tell you this.

Where you are with sexual passions has literally everything to say about whether your Christianity is true or not. Jesus says you've committed adultery in your heart if you've only had lustful thoughts, lustful intents. Now listen to what He says right after He's talking about a man using his eyes to look at a woman and lust. And then He says immediately, "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." Let me tell you what Jesus is saying, and you can't twist these words to mean anything else. If you are involved in sexual sin, Internet pornography, illicit sexual immorality, Jesus says you cut it off or you will go to hell, this is life

and death. You say, wait WAIT A SECOND, what is this? I thought we were saved by faith? Oh you better believe we are, but if your faith is such a faith that does not produce the kind of hand cutting off, eye gouging out, foot cutting off Christianity then it is NOT a faith that will save you. No way, no how. That's what Jesus is saying in all this. Listen to this... If your right eye caused you to sin then tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you if you lose one of your members than for your whole body be thrown in hell. If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. And of course, He's speaking illustratively here He's saying that thing in your life that causes you to stumble You need to get rid of it, forsake it, repent of it, cut it off no matter how radical it is You need to get rid of it, and if your faith is not capable of that It is not a faith that is going to save you Listen...have you never read, James says the demons believe but there not saved. Faith that does not produce an all out battle against sexual immorality is a faith that will not save you and I have that on the authority of the word of God.

I haven't come here tonight to set forth my own opinions in this matter. This is exactly what Jesus says Jesus says heaven and hell are at stake. Listen, if you've got the kind of faith that allows you to go on looking at Internet pornography, being involved in masturbation, and all sorts of sexually illicit things. If we've got any young men, young ladies here living in sexual immorality and you're claiming to be a Christian, you need to go back to the beginning. You need to start all over, you need to repent from the beginning, you need to turn from it, you need to cry out to Christ to save you from your wickedness, save you from your sin, save you. Heaven and hell are at stake. Isn't that exactly what Peter's telling us? These things wage war against the soul. Heaven and hell are at stake. And unless your faith is able to take you through this battle. A battle saving faith, is sin killing faith. Saving faith, is lust killing faith. Saving faith is warring faith, make no mistake about it. Let's not mince words, this is what Scripture says. These things wage war against your soul. In other words, if you cave to them, if you give place to them, if you don't fight, gouge out, cut off, do battle, all out battle; Not in your own power. If by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. That comes right out of Romans 8:13. Life and death, you will live, if by the spirit you put these to death.

I want to be honest with you, I don't want there to be anybody here, any young people here, any older people here; You're involved, in sexual immorality, and it may just be up here. Your mind is full of perversity, you think sexually illicit, profane thoughts, unholy thoughts. Your eyes are where they ought not to be all the time. You have struggles and you can't overcome. Listen, Paul said this, Romans 6:14 He said "Sin shall not have dominion over you." If you're under grace, not under the law, if you've truly been saved by grace, sin will no longer have dominion.

Let me tell you this, sinners, I mean wicked ones full of all sorts of sexual immorality, all sorts of perversity. They can come to Christ and find full and abundant pardon. It is called justification, the sinner comes with a horrible guilty record and God washes that record clean by faith. But let me tell you something, if your idea about being saved stops there, you've got it wrong, because wherever God comes in and justifies a guilty sinner, pardons them by the blood of Christ and the work of atonement that Christ did on that cross. He will also break the dominion of sin, this is the greatest outward manifestation to whether you've truly been justified. Here's the thing, I can't see your spiritual record, I don't know if it's clean. You don't see mine, I don't know if you're forgiven. It's not stamped on my forehead or on yours. See this is what the

Bible says, DON'T BE DECEIVED. MANY ARE DECEIVED, what are they deceived about? You got people all over the place, "Well I believe, I said the sinner's prayer". "I walked the aisle, I went to the altar, I had that experience at camp one time". "I did this, I did that, I read my Bible, I went to church". And the Bible the whole time is saying, If your life is not radically transformed Where the power of sin is broken, DON'T BE DECEIVED. The reality of a clean record is not there if there is no indication of a transformed heart.

Unless your approach to sex has at some point become radically changed; unless your uncleanness and impurity at some point, I mean practically speaking has not radically been altered, and the power of sin broken, don't be deceived. Look, legal reckoning has not taken place unless practically your life has been transformed by the power of God. So evident in Scripture, listen to this, Roman 8:13 says this, "If you live according to the flesh, you will die." You say, what does it mean to live according to the flesh? Well in Galatians 5:19 Paul says "The works of the flesh are evident." What's the first one in the list? Sexual immorality What's the second one? Impurity. Third one, sensuality I mean the first three hit right at the heart of this And he says this, "If you live according to that, you will die" But somebody is going to come along and say, "Yeah but I was saved by faith". "What are you saying now if I fall into this sexual sin I lose my salvation?" No, that's not what I am saying at all, I'm saying your salvation was never real in the beginning. I'm saying it wasn't true, I'm saying whatever you thought it was no biblical salvation.

Listen many people come to Jesus on judgment day and say, "Lord, Lord, didn't we do this, didn't we do that?" Then He says "I never knew you, you workers of lawlessness" or "workers of iniquity" You see if the power of lawlessness and the power of iniquity was never broken in your life, it's the greatest testimony that Jesus never knew you If you live according to the flesh, YOU WILL DIE, but if by the Spirit, Oh not in your own strength, but in the power of the cross, the power of the Spirit of God unleashed by faith in Christ. If by that supernatural transforming, regenerating, bringing from death to life kind of power, If by that power you put these things to death, listen, I'm not saying this, I'm not saying the first day you truly believe

That there is never a struggle, never a temptation and never a battle. Listen when it says they wage war against you, it means is From the first day to the last on this earth, you are in all out battle against it. You are gouging, you are killing, you are waging war, you are putting to death by the power of the Spirit. It's all out battle: Look, some people misunderstand and they say "Oh so when you become a Christian, basically sin no longer has dominion..." "In other words, it all just stops." No, when it says it doesn't have dominion, It means it won't dominate you, It doesn't mean it won't wage war against you. And you will have to fight for everything your worth, in the power of the Spirit. No, it will be all out, will we fall? There will be days you fall, but it's war. And you will gain ground, you may come upon the battlefield and you may fall, But you're going to take the field, you're going to move forward, you're going to advance. That sin cannot dominate you, you will move forward. There's no such thing as saving faith, true faith, God given faith, real get me to heaven faith. That does not wage an all out battle against the passion of lust. Listen, In the power of the cross there is power to overcome.

There is; It is not a hopeless battle. But if you're in chains, you've just never been able to break away, No matter what has happened you just find yourself a slave, Slaves of sin, are not

slaves of Christ. Call upon the Lord while he may be found. There is power there. There is sin killing power to be cured.

Folks what I'm saying is this, This battle is not optional. There are a lot of folks today that basically think this, "Well hey, All I've got to do is believe and I'm in" "As far as my sanctification, well that's kinda optional" "You know the more good I do, the more reward I'll get" "But after all, I was saved by faith" "So yeah I'm still sleeping with my boyfriend but..." "YOU CAN'T JUDGE ME, judge not lest ye be judged" Oh no, Jesus can judge you, and God is the avenger And He will avenge against you And when he says that those that are given to the passions of lust know not God, When Jesus says, it's better you gouge out an eye than you land yourself in hell They can say that, they are in the place to judge that, and that's exactly what they say You don't want to play games here, you don't want to play any games. This battle is not optional, Listen... Mark it down, there is no faith that saves from God's wrath If it does not save you from the power of sexual immorality. Mark it down. The sexually immoral know not God. Listen, Listen to me very carefully here, because this is the heart of the matter.

The sexually immoral know not God, that's what Paul says there in 1 Thessalonians 4, did he not? Did you guys see that? They know not God. You say, "Well, I know about God." No that's not what it says. It doesn't say that they don't know about God. It says they don't know God, there is a big difference. Jesus said in Matthew 7, when they said Lord, Lord, LORD, LORD He said "I never knew you." Jesus knew all about them because he calls them lawless. He knew all about them, he didn't know them. You say, "What's the difference?" Oh to know about somebody is to know facts To know in the biblical sense, Adam knew Eve and she conceived, very intimate. When Jesus knows somebody, remember Ephesians 5; When He knows somebody, that's His bride, that's His church, that's His body. Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the Church He knows the church intimately. They know not God, it means they have no intimacy. They disregard Him, they dishonor Him, they don't know Him. Those of you who know your Bibles.

In Matthew 13:44 you know what you have a picture of there? A man who's walking through a field and he finds a treasure so valuable That he goes and sells all that he has that he might have that treasure. Can I tell you what this knowing is all about? It's when a man comes to know that he has discovered a treasure. That is worth more than anything else, and he doesn't disregard it, he knows He's convinced, I want this more than anything else. See when a guy comes along and he's willing to dishonor a young lady. Disregard God, he has never found... It is one of the greatest indications he's never found Christ to be more valuable than anything else. You know what happens to a person who finds Christ and knows... I mean he sees and knows what he's found. For real, he will go and sell all, including his sexual immorality. He will say I want that more than I want that girl. I want that more than sexual pleasure. I want that. Listen, there is a big difference between the passion of lust, and sexual desire.

Sexual desire channeled into the marriage bed is honorable. We're talking about that which is immoral. And a man will set aside all that disregards Christ when he finds Christ to be more beautiful. Listen, this is the heart of the matter, When a man or a woman, when they find Christ, when they see in Him glory and beauty, when they say yes, I want that more than anything else. And I don't want to do anything that grieves Him. I don't want anything that separates. Yes, I have sexual desire, but my desire for Him is more. And so, I'm going to stay

controlled, Lord, help me to stay controlled. I don't want to dishonor You, and I don't want to do anything that breaks my fellowship with You. I have found you to be altogether lovely and my heart wants You, it yearns for You, it calls to You. I want to go hard after God, I want to find You, I want to meet with You. I want to live my life for You, I want, I want, You are my all. And I am willing to sell all to have you.

When it says, they know not God, it means they have never come there. If your Christianity has not made you fall in love with Jesus Christ, you don't know Him, and He doesn't know You. That doesn't mean things are hopeless. That just means, what you have is not the real things. Ah, when a man finds Christ to be the treasure of all treasures, he will not hold onto anything else. Listen, when somebody falls in love with Christ, the fear of hell is a very real fear and Jesus appeals to it. It's better for you to amputate, than to wind up in hell. But when you come to know Christ, and know Him intimately and to fall in love with Him. The greatest grief is not the terror of hell, the greatest grief becomes offending the One you love - falling out of fellowship with Christ, having Him withdraw, having Him not smiling on you anymore. Offending Him. Ah brethren, how many of us once God saved us, we stumbled into some sexual immorality, and the greatest grief was not: "Oh no, I'm going to go to hell." The tears ran because we knew we offended the Lord. After everything he's done for us on that cross, after everything He has endured Son of God was acquainted with grief and affliction on my behalf and here I went and did this. We hang our head in sorrow because of His great love for us. And the fact that we would count His love as such a cheap thing and do this. Oh if you know Christ, I mean if you deeply know Christ, you know God, you love God, you have found the glory of God just shines in the face of Jesus Christ and you've once looked at that and said, "Yes, yes, that's what I want."

It's not a light matter, sitting down in-front of a computer and masturbate in front of pornography. It's hard for a man to do that, when he's thinking, how can I go into the secret place tonight and commune with Christ. He won't be there after I've done this. It doesn't become a light matter. I'm telling you this is the real deal. And if the faith doesn't produce this, it's not worth having.

It's all out battle, all out battle, because of the One we love. All out battle, because we no longer disregard God, we have regard for Him. We have regard for His laws, we have regard for the way He's made us. We have regard for sex. It's good within the confines of the marriage bed. And outside of that it's defiled. Total perversion of how God designed it to be. This is our first visit to this subject, and I think this is the heart of the matter.