



## CITIZENS CHURCH

As It Is | March 7, 2021

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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.

Matthew 5:27-30

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*Break the ice.* How is this passage similar to the one we studied last week? (If you need a refresher, read Matthew 5:21-26 out loud as a group.)

*Discuss the text.* Are you tempted to compartmentalize sin into categories of big and small? For example, abortion, murder, homosexuality, adultery: big. Gossip, anger, lying, impure thoughts, speeding: small. An educated guess as to why we think this way is because it makes *us* feel good about *us*. We think, "I'm not *that* bad" or "At least I haven't done *that*" as we judge and compare ourselves to another person. We desperately need God to correct our thinking about sin and to understand its source.

1. Where do we see sex treated as a consumer good in our culture and lives?
2. What is the importance of the first five words in verse 28?
3. According to Jesus where does sin begin? Why do you think he uses such hyperbole to convince us?
4. What are some damaging effects of lust? (internal: pride, apathy, anger; external: pornography, emotional and/or physical affairs, objectification)
5. Do you *actually* believe if you look in lust at someone that you've committed adultery in your heart? How do Jesus' words help you to better understand the doctrine of sin and your need for grace and forgiveness?

*Close in prayer.* The New Testament sexual ethic is not simply heterosexual monogamy, but it is purity of heart. Christ invites us to be both honest about our sin and serious about fighting sin. How do you typically respond to your sin? Do you minimize, rationalize, blameshift, victimize or repent with godly sorrow? Reflect on these questions and spend the next five minutes in silence to confess any sin in your heart. Christ wants to cleanse you and cover you in his freeing love. Trust in his forgiveness.

*Encourage our church-wide practices.* As a church, we are invited throughout this sermon series to engage in three practices: Morning Prayer, Evening Silence and Wednesday Fast. The practices are a way to become satisfied in God. May you abide in Christ Jesus our Lord and access the presence of God this week. Amen.