

7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)

Lesson Plan: Lust/Divorce (Matthew 5:27-32)

Learning Goals: Students should be able to define the concepts of adultery and lust. They should be able to discuss the dangers of objectifying another human being, created in the image of God. *(This lesson will deal with sensitive subject matter.)*

Opening Question: No question. Start with a warning. Today, we will be talking about some mature material today. I expect you to treat with respect. If you can't do that, I will send you out of the room and you can go talk to Dr. Norman about why you couldn't handle yourself.

Prayer

What is the purpose of sexuality?

- procreation - creating children
- pleasures and delights of physical love (God is the creator of sex and made it good - it is not shameful or dirty when expressed according to God's guidelines)

Redefining "Adultery" (*Antithesis*)

- You have heard it was said . . .
 - adultery was defined in Jesus' day as having sexual relations with someone other than one's spouse, in particular, with some else's spouse
- But I tell you . . .
 - The fruit is adultery, but the seed is lust (to lust is to already commit adultery in our heart)
 - Definition of "lust": a sexual desire that dishonors its object and disregards God.

What does it mean to "dishonor its object"?

- Lust turns a person (created in the image of God) into an object.
- We are created for deep, intimate, mutual relationships, lust bypasses the relationship to say, "I appreciate you (your beauty/attractiveness) for what you can do for me."
- We were created to enjoy sexuality in the covenant relationship of marriage.
- "Therefore, to say to another person, I want you to satisfy my sexual desire, but I do not want you as a covenant partner in marriage basically means: I want to use your body for my pleasure, but as a whole person I don't want you. And that is dishonoring and therefore lustful. Lust is sexual desire minus a commitment to honor the other person." (John Piper)

What does it mean to "disregard God"?

- God is holy and righteous.
- Marriage is a picture/reflection of God's covenant relationship with humanity.
- We are called to reflect God's holiness. "The root issue in lust is regard for God. Holiness is living in supreme regard for a holy God."

Sexual sin has consequences.

- Ask: What are some of the consequences of sexual sin? (physical, emotional, spiritual)
- Joining yourself to another person bonds you to them. You can never be un-bonded to them.
- Reality of Sexually Transmitted Diseases, Pregnancy
- Low self-esteem, lack of worth, cheapening of love, loss of purity/innocence (can't get it back - you have it one time in your life), desensitized, virginity is a gift you only get to give away once.
- Jesus says that those who are sexually immoral will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

So What? What do we do?

1. Practice modesty - we don't flaunt our sexuality (either in the way we dress, the way we speak, the way we joke, the way we "play," or in any other way). Sexuality is sacred and therefore is to be protected.
2. Take responsibility for our own thoughts and actions (what we look at, think about, and do). You have to protect your eyes and your heart. You can't "un-see" things or images that you put in your head. They can and will haunt you over time and damage relationships down the road.
3. Purity is a direction, not a destination. You are pursuing purity or going away from it. It's not about a line in the sand. Purity is not about asking, "How far can I go and still be ok?"
(*Illustration: travel west on I-40. Doesn't matter how fast you go, you will eventually get there.*)
4. Remember that you're family. The person you are dating/lusting after is your brother/sister in Christ. They are also someone's future spouse (and it might not be yours). How do you want someone to treat your future spouse?
5. Confess when we fall short. Find an accountability partner, pastor, parent, friend. Be honest when you make a mistake and set up boundaries to keep you from making it again.

What about divorce? (*Antithesis*)

- You have heard it was said . . . do not divorce
 - In Jesus' day, divorce was pretty easy to come by - a husband could divorce his wife because she was displeasing to him. All he had to do was to give her a certificate of divorce.
 - In today's society, it's basically no different. In fact, it's even easier. You don't have to have a reason to get divorced. We live in a disposable culture where relationships are tossed aside for very little reasons.
- But I tell you . . .
 - Divorce is NEVER God's plan.
(*I am fully aware that there are many of you who have been affected by divorce. I sit here in front of you today as a child of divorce. I understand. I am not sitting here in judgment of my parents or yours. However, this is not God's plan.*)
 - For this reason, we should enter into marriage VERY carefully and thoughtfully. Marriage is a covenant before God.
(*If you have a history of divorce in your family, you have the chance to break that cycle.*)
 - There are some instances where it might be permissible, but it is never God's plan (for breaking the marital covenant - sexual infidelity, an unbeliever walking away, abuse [physical, emotional, psychological], etc.)
 - If we come to this text looking for a reason to justify divorce, we have completely missed Jesus' point.
 - Marriage is a covenant - one that reflects God's covenant with his people (See Genesis 12: 15)

Lesson Summary /Review:

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Lust
- Adultery
- Finish this statement, “You have heard it was said you shall not commit adultery, but I tell you . . .”
- Finish this statement, “You have heard it was said you give a certificate of divorce, but I tell you . . .”
- What does it mean that purity is a direction, not a destination?
- Explain the following statement: “Lust turns a person into an object.”