

A preacher, an elder, a deacon, a preacher's wife, a kids class teacher. What do they all have in common? Well, for one, I know them all by name. They are or have been respected men and women of faith. But also, the preacher committed adultery with a female member, the elder abandoned his wife for another woman, the deacon was arrested for solicitation, the preacher's wife cheated on her husband with a member, the woman teaching the classes, had a relationship with a parent from that church. What they all have in common is: Immorality. I could easily do 5 or 10 more, just from recent history. Now, most of these have repented and turned back to God, to DESTROY is the Devil's work and damage was done.

(btw – in terms of lust and pornography – let's add two more – one lost job, another his wife). "Destroy."

Let me tell you what they all had in common with you. They knew Christ, they were baptized, they attended sound churches, they know every verse on sexual sin, they had vowed not to do such harmful things...they share that in common with you and me. And yet, the Devil was able to influence them to

1) re-ask answered questions 2) believe things that aren't true 3) pursue something more to their hurt. This frightens me. Do I know the Bible any more than they? Do I have more faith or believe in Jesus more strongly? Am I stronger than they were? Likely: NO. So how can this be stopped? Prevented?

Firstly, let's change the narrative on sexual sin. It isn't this awful thing that only a few people do and only a small percentage of us are really susceptible to – **Immorality: Everybody's Problem**. This won't be our ultimate title, but it is the place we will begin. A recognition that nearly none of us are except from lust, wrongly castings of the eye, or immorality activities.

Galatians 5:13 – the flesh is always looking for an opportunity. **5:16** – our spiritual walk is our defense.

5:17 – but the fight will rage on to the end. **5:19** – and look: the first three things fighting us: sexual sin.

This is not to be taken lightly or for granted by anyone. I was teaching a class on marriage in an auditorium and said, "Raise your hand if you believe it is possible that you could ever be unfaithful to your spouse." ONE hand went up in the back. An elder! He said, "It can happen to any of us if we don't prepare ourselves to do what is right." Was he right? YES!

Okay, here's what I'm NOT going to do tonight. I'm not going to proof text you for 30 minutes, verse after verse, showing you that all forms of lust and immoral conduct is WRONG, DANGEROUS and will cost you your soul. The people in my opening knew that and so do you. Instead, let's talk about WHY things like this happen to good people. What's really going on here?

My Flesh – It starts with this BOX, right here. Not unlike David when he saw Bathsheeba so long ago, immoral desire has a way of shutting out everything and everyone else – except for MY FLESH and what it wants. The border on this box can be thick and exclusive. We can each and all get to this point. And when we do, and no one else matters or enters in to the next thing we do, ANYTHING is possible.

I John 1:15-17 – Don't love it. Keep perspective. But know this, inside this box are three very strong ideas – FLESH, EYE, PRIDE. And oh how they want to cut the world away to take us over.

What is the secret to pulling the eye away from the Straw and seeing more, understanding more, having the wisdom to apply all the knowledge I've been learning in Bible study???

Well, if Immorality is all about you ... then Morality is all about everybody else.

1. The Devil - We talked about this at great length this morning so we will only briefly mention it tonight, but where temptation is, the devil is always in plan. He sets this culture in motion to try and get you to see only yourself and do immoral things. He knows hell is reserved for him and his demons AND ...

Revelation 21:8 – these people also. When you commit sexual sin – you serve the Devil's desires and you lower yourself to a place that pushes you in the direction of where he is – lost and set for torment.

2. The Lord – Yes, God is always in the room. You can't do something in the flesh, for your flesh, and it not be seen by God, or emotionally affect your Father. Sin hurts him. When someone leaves the faith and goes to selfish immoral sin, it's like driving nails in His Son's hands again while He watches. It hurts.

I Cor. 6:18-20 – Immorality, in eye, mind and certainly body is a direct insult to God. We are His temple. Your body, your person, is where God dwells – His spirit, His love, His plan, you are where His glory resides on this earth. And to have that filled with evil desires and even to be tainted with sexual sin...

Well, you think Christ was angry when they desecrated the Jewish temple...

So, for His sake, with full view of Him in the room, if we have been lured to serve the flesh with immoral sin, cleanse His temple, give Him a home. And never forget that He resides there with you.

--- I used to think this was enough – know that temptation is of the devil and ALWAYS recognize God is in the room and you will do well... well, that is not enough. You see, we make deals or barter with God. “Yes, pornography again tonight God, but you know it’s less frequent now and you know how terrible I feel.” As if our little monologue to God was the way out. We don’t SEE God’s face. We don’t HEAR God’s response to our hollow words.... At least, not then. So, we need to add some tangible reality to this: ---

3. My Family – All immorality excludes the affect upon and the consequences for the family. It pushed them aside, ALMOST as if we are sure that they will not find out or have to deal with others knowing.

Ephesians 5:22, 25; 6:1, 4 – Sounds good, doesn’t it. Thoughtful even. Immorality forgets all of this. It doesn’t think about the humiliation, pain, mental and physical consequences that come out of pornography addiction, fornication and adultery... FOR THEM.

Story: little boy at ballpark with dirty magazine... got from dad’s truck. So many are hurting in the privacy of their marriage and some by the whole community knowing... SEE YOUR FAMILY.

And what about your church family – who we are to be for each other? How much we need a people of faith who will fight for what is right? How many churches have been decimated by adultery and fornication?

4. The Other Person – There is always another person. What? Yes. It may be the person you are imagining in your head. It may be the person or people you are watching on a computer screen. And certainly if it is a physical relationship, there is another person involved. Typically we find them useful to serve our flesh, and may even love them. But do we really? Have we gotten out of our Flesh Box to see what’s really in this for that person?

Matthew 19:9 (see addition) / **Matthew 5:32** – Both in many manuscripts bring the other person in. Because of this act, you are an adulterer. But look into the eyes of who you are with – they are living in sin by this action. Hebrews 13:3 – God will judge me AND the person I am with. Defilement is pinned to us both. Is my sin worth that? To expound a bit – think about even if it isn’t a physical relationship – have you thought about the other? - Lust for someone you know – is that honorable or respectful to them to think that way? And if they suspected or you told them about it – either they would be mortified or interested! Both destructive outcomes! - Pornography – who are these people – stories tell us of broken people who are being used and abused and drug addicted and destroying their lives... to entertain you? What about sadness and a sense of responsibility with them?

5. Their Family – Oh yeah, the person you are with, though you both may be willing, and you may have forgotten about your family... that person has one too. What about them? What would they think of what you are doing? How would it effect those people, or their relationship with you?

I Thessalonians 4:3-7 – “defraud” – “to deprive him of his rights!” -- A man has a right to protect the integrity of his daughter – fornication defrauds him. A man has a right to have his own wife – adultery defrauds him. It hurts him, it takes from a family what God gave them. Sexual sin does this to our family and to the other’s. (Story – Uncle who lost his life in pursuit of another’s wife)

This can help with lust and pornography – those people are not objects – they are daughters, mothers, sons and fathers – and their family counts on them if they are good and mourns for them if they are behaving sinfully. I feel for them, and do not want to contribute to that.

6. My Soul – It takes selflessness of the flesh to give time and attention to the soul. Greed in the flesh, often associated with money or immorality, ignores the needs of the soul to serve that carnal desires of the flesh. The Bible has TONS to say, from Jesus and others about judgment day, eternity and our souls.

Luke 12:3-21 – “You fool! This very night your souls is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?” --- Deacons, respected, godly... died of a heart attack during an affair. Are you better than him? Do you know more? Well, he knew much, but he served his flesh and forgot his soul and ... that very night...

Conclusion: **Galatians 5:16-17** – they oppose one another. When one wins, the others loses. It is literally, every day, from lust to any other sin, as easy as BLACK AND WHITE. (black boxes / white boxes)