

A Perspective On Lust

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u/RPCJoeMak's [recent post](#) about the definition of porn raises an important question for Christians to consider. I believe, however, that there is an underlying question that must be answered before: *what is lust?*

Perhaps the most important passage in scripture in answering this question is found in Jesus' sermon on the mount:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." □□Matthew□ □5:27-28□ □ESV

Personally, I believe the issue of lust is *extremely* overblown in the modern church based on overlooking the Old Testament context of Matthew 5 and almost entirely ignoring the key word that Jesus uses: *intent*. Intent is important. A man who sees a hot woman and experiences the attending biological excitement can appreciate her beauty/sexiness without making plans in his heart to possess her.

For a parallel example, a man can see his neighbors new sports car in the driveway and admire it, perhaps even imagine what it would be like to drive it, but never in his heart be tempted to *actually* steal his neighbors car to possess it for himself. If, however, he *intends* to steal it, he has already coveted his neighbors car and committed the "theft" in his heart even before actually making the attempt to steal it. That, I believe, is Jesus' point here, not that seeing an attractive woman and being turned on by it is sinful.

Now, this actually goes with the context. Jesus is referencing back to the 10th commandments:

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." □□Exodus□ □20:17□ □ESV□

The word used for lust in Matthew 5 is elsewhere translated as covet, and the word used for woman can mean wife. Contextually, it makes perfect sense: you can't commit adultery with an unmarried woman. Fornication perhaps, but not adultery.

So this critical passage very well could be translated as:

"You have heard that it was said (back in Exodus 20:17), 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at [a married woman] with [covetous] intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart." □□Matthew□ □5:27-28□ □ESV□□

I believe this is more sensible given the context.

So what does it all mean? It means that men can admire beautiful women like they would admire any other work of craftsmanship or art, and in-so-far as they do not desire to gain such a woman through unlawful sinful means, there is no violation of Matthew 5 taking place.

In other words: men can stop killing themselves (sometimes literally) over finding hot women arousing. Rather, they can accept it as God's art, appreciate it, and move on to more important things.

My 2 cents.

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there doesn't seem to be anything here