

Lesson 2

Part 1: Adultery in the Heart

In verses 21-26, Jesus addresses the need for Christ's followers to restrain our sinful passions, now He looks to our sinful appetites and the law against all uncleanness, "Thou shall not commit adultery." (Deuteronomy 5:18)

Read Matthew 5:27-28.

1. What was taught to "those of old" in verse 27?

2. What did Jesus have to say in contrast to this teaching? (v. 28)

3. What motive for looking is to blame when it comes to this act of adultery?

The Greek word for *lust* means to look upon with sexual desire.

4. According to Jesus, where does this act of adultery take place?

5. Look up the following verses and record what you learn about the heart of man and its relationship to God.

The reality of man's heart (Genesis 8:21) _____

How God is found (Deuteronomy 4:29) _____

What God requires of His people (Deuteronomy 10:12) _____

Why God led His people into the wilderness (Deuteronomy 8:2) _____

What God looks at when He considers man (1 Samuel 16:7) _____

The heart is the true essence of a man. It is the place from which all his emotions, passions, and thoughts come from. The outer man can put on an act, but the inner man is the true representation of that man. Therefore, it is critical as followers of Jesus Christ, that we prepare our hearts to seek the Lord in all things.

6. Rehoboam was King Solomon's son, why did Rehoboam do evil? (2 Chronicles 12:14)

The Hebrew word for *prepare* means to direct one's face towards that which God had ordered aright for the people. It's being purposeful in what you fill your mind with, what you read, what you watch, and what you direct your mind to think about.

7. In 2 Chronicles 25, Amaziah becomes king of Judah (the southern territory of Israel), how is his reign described in verse 2?

8. What did Amaziah's unloyal heart lead him to do? (v. 14)

The Hebrew word for *loyal* means a mind at peace with keeping covenant relation, hence complete, perfect.

Rehoboam did evil in the sight of the Lord because he did not prepare or direct his heart to seek the Lord's will. Amaziah fell into idolatry because he was just going through the motions, and eventually his actions gave way to what his heart desired.

9. With all of this in mind, why do you think Jesus reached beyond the physical sin of adultery to point out the emotional sin of the heart?

If we are to have victory over sin, we must deal with the appetites and desires of our hearts.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

- James 1:14-15

Read Matthew 5:28-30.

In these verses, Jesus uses two examples to drive home the importance of restraining our desires and appetites.

10. Use the chart below to break down Jesus' examples.

Member (Body Part)	Causes you to...	Suggested Action	Reason Why You Should Take this Action

After lust is conceived, the mind dwells on it, waiting for an opportunity to act upon it. A wayward eye or hand can act as an active inlet.

11. Read the following verses and record how the sin in each scenario was conceived.

Genesis 39:7 _____

2 Samuel 11:2 _____

12. Read Job 31:7. This verse indicates that our hearts, often, follow after what?

13. What action did Job take to help prevent this from happening in his own life?
(Job 31:1)

As women, we may tend to think of lust as a sin more common among men. We, however, would do good to remember this – a man's eyes may cause a man to sin, but it is the devil who lays the trap to welcome the sin. If we are not conscientious in the way we choose to dress, then we are no less guilty.

Just as our eyes need to be restrained, so too, will our other senses. We must govern, not only what we see, but what we listen to, what we talk about, what we put in our mouths, and what we allow ourselves to touch.

14. Read the following verses and record what you learn regarding the seriousness of sin.

Isaiah 59:1-2

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Hebrews 3:12-13

1 Peter 3:18

15. Read the following verses and record what you learn about the importance of obedience.

1 Samuel 15:22

John 14:21

1 John 2:15-17

Through Him, we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from faith for his name's sake.

- Romans 1:5 NIV

16. According to the above verse, where does obedience come from?

17. According to Romans 10:17, where does faith come from?

18. Read the following verses and record more about how we can be successful when it comes to obedience.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Romans 12:1-2

Galatians 5:24

Jesus took sin very seriously; so, we should take sin very seriously. Because of Him, our sins are forgiven. Praise Jesus! Moving forward, we set our hearts, minds, and eyes on Him, being careful to restrain our fleshly passions and appetites.

19. Write down how you plan to take a more active role in restraining your heart and mind for better obedience to God.

Part 2: Jesus' Words on Divorce

Jesus continues with the theme of adultery. In these remaining verses, He adds the issue of divorce.

Read Matthew 5:31-32.

Statistics show the rate of divorce is about 50% of all marriages. Therefore, half of you working on this lesson have experienced divorce in some form, be it in your marriage or your parent's marriage.

Jesus' words seem harsh and unfair. If these two verses were left isolated, they could bring incredible shame or guilt. These verses could also cause confusion. We must look at the whole counsel of God.

Let's begin by breaking apart these two verses. We must look closely at what Jesus is saying.

20. Look at the first word of verse 31. What do you think Jesus is saying by starting with “furthermore”?

21. Next look at the quote Jesus makes in verse 31 and write it down.

Jesus prefaces this quote with, “It has been said.”

22. Look at the first word of verse 32. What do you think Jesus means with the word “But”?

23. In verse 32, what is the only condition for divorce to be allowed?

24. Without this condition, what does divorce cause?

25. Before we get into other Scriptures on the subject of divorce, write down your initial thoughts on Matthew 5:31-32. Write down any questions you have about these verses.

Jesus begins verse 31 with, "...It has been said ..."; let's go back to the Old Testament to see what Jesus is referring to.

26. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4. Summarize the conditions for divorce during the time of Moses.

The verses in Deuteronomy make it seem that divorce was okay during this time. As long as the conditions were met, a certificate of divorce could be issued. However, Jesus sheds some light on the reason for this "allowance." Read Mark 10:2-5.

27. What was the intent of the Pharisees? (v. 2)

28. What was the reason Jesus gave for this "allowance"? (v. 5)

The Strong's definition of *hardness of heart* is: destitution of spiritual perception. To simplify, it is a weak person. Moses permitted the certificate of divorce because they were spiritually weak.

29. Look up Mark 16:14. What is hardness of heart associated with?

Continue reading Mark 10:6-9.

30. What is the transition word (conjunction) at the start of verse 6? _____

31. What was God's original intent for man and wife?

32. What is man **not** to do? (v. 9) _____

Continue reading Mark 10:10-12.

33. Summarize what Jesus told His disciples and how this parallels Matthew 5:32.

The Bible has more Scripture on the subject of divorce and the allowance for it.

34. Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. What are the commands/conditions for marriage according to these verses?

Continue reading 1 Corinthians 7:12-16

35. If a husband/wife is not a believer, is this reason for divorce? When should a believing husband/wife stay and when are they free to go?

36. What could be the beautiful outcome of remaining in a difficult marriage? (v. 16)

If you are divorced and remarried or divorced and unmarried for reasons other than sexual immorality, please know there is no place in Scripture telling us that divorce is an unforgivable sin. Nor is adultery an unforgivable sin. We have a gracious and loving God. We must simply confess our sin.

If we confess our sins, He is **faithful and just** to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- 1 John 1:9

... and then we must walk in newness of life.

37. Look up Philippians 3:13-14. Summarize how to walk in newness of life.

Let us finish the lesson looking at God's original and wonderful plan for marriage.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

- Genesis 2:24

Genesis 2:24 is a beautiful picture of marriage as God intended. The two becoming one.

38. Read Ephesians 5:22-31. What is the specific responsibility of the husband? (v. 25)

39. What is the specific responsibility of the wife? (v. 22) Also see 1 Peter 3:1.

40. Next, summarize God's design for marriage.

41. Look up Hebrews 13:4 and record the first part of the verse.

Marriage is God's plan and He asks specific things from us. While they are contrary to our culture, they are good. God's ways are always best. Submitting to God as wives submit to their own husbands creates an order in the home, often resulting in a lasting marriage.

Today, if you are married, choose to remain married in obedience to the Lord. Divorce is never an option when we apply God's word to marriage!

If you desire to know more, talk with your small group leader about further study in God's plan for marriage.

42. Read Matthew 5:5. How does this Beatitude apply to a stable marriage?

43. Read Matthew 5:7. How does this Beatitude apply to one who has been divorced?

44. Summarize what you have learned about marriage and divorce. Then close your time in prayer.
