

Before we come to our text, I want to start with a short review of the previous 26 verses—[1] in vv3-12 we have what is commonly called the beatitudes—wherein our Savior gives an eightfold description of a kingdom dweller—not steps into the kingdom but marks of those who are in the kingdom—[2] in vv13-16 we have two beautiful imageries of how the church collectively and persons within the church personally are to function—they are salt in the earth and light to the world—they are salt in that they’re to preserve the moral corruption of society and they are light as they expose darkness and reveal the glory of God and the gospel of His Son—[3] from v17-20 our Savior lays the groundwork for the remaining chapter wherein He teaches His relation to the law [to fulfill it] and our relation to the law [we are to do it]—this brings us to the [4] section beginning with v21 through v48—having contrasted the righteousness of His kingdom with that of the scribes and Pharisees (v20)—our Savior now opens up the true nature of the commandments in contrast to the purely external interpretation of the scribes and Pharisees—thus we find six subsections wherein the contrast is found—“you have heard...but I say unto you...”

Thus having two weeks ago considered our Savior’s exposition of the sixth commandment in vv21-27, we come now to the seventh commandment in vv27-30—a passage we will consider both this morning and evening—having clarified the spiritual extent of the commandment (vv27-28)—He then urges us to a radical response (vv29-30)...

- I. A Simple Explanation of the Text
- II. A Practical Application of the Text

I. A Simple Explanation of the Text

1. Just as our Savior did with regards to the sixth commandment in v21, our Savior begins by making reference to traditions taught by the scribes and Pharisees...
2. V27—“you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not commit adultery...”—notice he does not say—You have read in the Scriptures, You shall not commit adultery...”
3. But instead He says—“you have heard that it was said...”—that is—You have heard taught from the scribes and Pharisees...
4. If you remember 2 weeks ago I mentioned, from the time the remnant returned from Babylon the Scripture was locked up in the Hebrew tongue...
5. This was especially true by the first century, as few people were able to speak Hebrew, except the scribes and Pharisees who had the responsibility to teach the Scriptures to the people...
6. Over the centuries the scribes and teachers of the law, had added to the Scripture their own traditions and interpretations...
7. Accordingly, the average Jew of our Savior’s day didn’t have access to the OT Scriptures, as Greek and Aramaic was the common language of the day...
8. Thus they were almost totally dependent upon the teaching of the scribes and Pharisees, who interpreted the law as merely external...
9. “V27—“you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not commit adultery”—that is—you have heard of the teaching of the scribes...
10. You have heard them teach their interpretation of the seventh commandment, as merely forbidding the actual and overt act of adultery...
11. But—v28—“I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart...”
12. Thus our Savior clarifies that the seventh commandment not only forbids the actual act of adultery but even the desire for it in our hearts...
13. Now that the OT moral law taught the inner application of the seventh commandment is exceedingly evident...
14. Let me such two reasons—[a] there is the tenth commandment. Ex.20:17—“you shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife...”

15. The tenth commandment forbids all unlawful desire or lust—it condemns all forms of discontentment and dissatisfaction with our present lot...
16. Notice it specifically forbids coveting our neighbor’s wife—that is—to have unlawful desires for her in any form or fashion...
17. But [b] there is Prov.6:25—“do not lust after her beauty in your heart...”—that is—“the evil and seductress woman...”
18. Here Solomon traces back adultery to the beginnings and stirrings of the heart—thus, sinful lust within the heart was forbidden in the OT just as much as the NT...
19. In fact—I think it’s rather obvious that our Savior likely had Prov.6:25 in mind when clarifying the seventh commandment from the pharisaical misinterpretation...
20. Thus let us forever put away any false notion that our Savior has any controversy with Moses, but is merely teaching the spiritual and original intention of the law...
21. Now it’s important at this point to properly understand what our Savior means by the phrase—“whoever looks at a woman to lust for her...”
22. The Greek word translated “lust” literally means—“to desire or crave”—it can refer to lawful or sinful desires...
23. For example, our Savior said to His disciples in Lk.22:15—“with great desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer...”
24. Here our Savior is said to “intensely desire” to eat the Passover with His beloved people—He had a perfectly pure lust or longing...
25. But in our text it’s obvious that “lust” is used in a negative sense, referring—“to a sinful desire for anything forbidden...”
26. Thus to look upon a woman with an impure desire is a violation of the seventh commandment—to lust for a woman not your wife is the same as heart adultery...
27. Thus our Savior teaches us that the seventh commandment not only addressed [1] marital fidelity, but [2] sexual purity which originates in the heart...
28. Notice [1] marital fidelity—essential to the seventh commandment is the concept of martial faithfulness or loyalty...
29. I think it’s for this reason that in vv30-31 our Savior addresses marriage and divorce and from vv33-37 He deals with oaths and vows...
30. The point being—these three subjects [marital fidelity, marriage, and oath keeping] are all intimately connected...
31. Notice [2] sexual purity—I trust that it’s obvious that the seventh commandment forbids all forms of sexual impurity...
32. Thus a single man lusting for a single woman violates the seventh commandment just as much as a married man lusting for a married woman...
33. Furthermore—any form of sexual deviation is here forbidden—homosexually, self-gratification, and impure thoughts...

II. A Practical Application of the Text

A. An implied exhortation for modest apparel

1. If a sinful desire amounts to adultery—then of necessity—any person who would encourage such lusts is guilty as well...
2. For example—a woman who purposefully dresses so as to attract the eye of a man—is guilty of violating the seventh commandment of God...
3. I’m sure we all agree that we increasingly becoming literally bombarded on every side with lust enticing women...
4. Magazines, billboards, newspaper ads—it seems nobody is content to sell a product without some form of seductive enticement...
5. And my dear friends—every time a woman dresses so as to attract the eye of man—she and those who’ve encouraged her, are guilty of violating the seventh commandment...

6. Matt.18:6-7—“but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes...”
7. Notice [a] offenses are inevitable, v7—“woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come...”—that is—they are unavoidable...
8. Notice [b] offenders are liable—“but woe to that man by whom the offense comes...”—while offenses are inevitable—this does not render them guiltless...
9. Woe to the world because of offenses—that is—cursed is the world because of their enticements and temptings to sin...
10. Pink—“If lustful looking is so grievous a sin, then those who dress and expose themselves with the desire to be looked at and lusted after...are not less but perhaps more guilty. In this matter it is not only too often the case that men sin but women tempt them to do so. How great then must be the guilt of the great majority of modern misses who deliberately seek to arouse the sexual passions of young men. And how much greater still is the guilt of most of their mothers for allowing them to become lascivious temptresses...”

B. The relation of the eyes to sin and temptation

1. Our eyes have been described as the primary gate into the heart—whatever comes through these gates has a direct and powerful influence upon our souls...
2. Gen.3:6—“so when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate...”
3. Notice [1] guard the eyes, Ps.101:3—“I have set nothing wicked before my eyes...”—that is—I will refrain from setting my eyes upon any sinful or tempting object...
4. This has to do with what I watch on TV, view on the computer, or read in magazines—it also has to do with where I go...
5. For example—when you go to Wal-Mart perhaps you purposefully avoid the magazine isle, or else when reading the newspaper, you purposefully set aside all ads...
6. Job 31:1-4—“I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman? 2 For what *is* the allotment of God from above, and the inheritance of the Almighty from on high? 3 *Is* it not destruction for the wicked, and disaster for the workers of iniquity? 4 Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps...”
7. Notice [2] dismiss thoughts—by this I mean whenever our eyes do fall upon a tempting object we must dismiss the thought immediately...
8. For brethren—we must remember that while a tempting object comes into the eye gate it doesn’t become sinful until our desires are engaged...
9. One man said—“While we can not keep birds from flying above, we can keep them from building a nest on our heads...”
10. And so too—while we may not be able to keep our eyes from sinful objects, we can keep our minds from desiring them...

C. The battleground of the heart in pursuing purity

1. Here I want to make a necessary clarification, that while temptation often comes through the eyes, sin doesn’t originate in the eyes but in the heart...
2. Matt.15:19—“for out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, etc...”—sin comes out from the heart not in it...
3. Now this is no way denies what I’ve already said—we must keep our eyes from enticing our hearts—but the point I’m here making—we mustn’t neglect the daily maintenance of our hearts...
4. Ps.119:36-37—“incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness. Turn away my eyes from looking at worthless things, and revive me in your way...”