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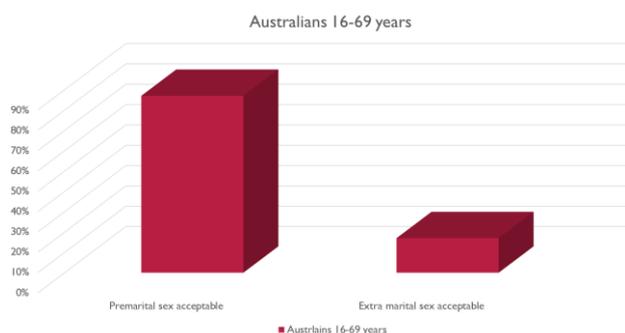
Welcome back to another edition of our studies on the Sermon on the Mount dealing with important issues in life. We have dealt with the beatitudes, going through all eight beatitudes and now are just going to see, Jesus is going to teach us how we apply those beatitudes in life and today we're going to be dealing with a very important area of life and that's sexuality.

So we're going to look at Matthew 5 verses 27 to 31. So we're going to be reading from Matthew 5v verses 27 onwards.

*27 You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

So we've come to the topic of sexuality. We've come to the topic of lust. Something that is so intimately familiar with all of us, because we are all created as sexual beings. We've got different attitudes in life. We've got the Victorian era attitude where sex was highly talked about. I remember Queen Victoria, when her daughter wanted to get married and ask her about sex one night, she just said, you know, just lie down close your eyes and think of England. And from that extreme, you come to today where you actually have films like 50 Shades of Grey and other films which are so explicitly talking about sex.

Society's attitudes towards sex will differ with time. They progress with time. If you look at this study from 1972 to 2012, you can find that the drift of society is towards a more permissive attitude towards adult premarital sex, as well as homosexual sex at the same-sex level. Now as far as teenage sexist concern or extramarital affairs, society has been consistently negative on that. The next data is a second Australian study of health and relationships and attitudes towards sex looking at Australians aged 16 to 69, and you can find that



Premarital sex is uniformly acceptable at over 90% of adults who were actually surveyed, whereas extramarital sex was not a favorite at all. We find that religion has a large part to play with sexuality. Here's a study of 10 different countries which was published in 2012, looking at the probability of reporting premarital sex. And you can find the probability of reporting this is the least in Muslims than followed by Hindus, traditional people and Christians. Unfortunately, the probability of recording premarital sex is also quite high. The biblical sexual ethic is always been one man, one woman in a covenantal relationship, and it stems all the way from Genesis chapter 2, verse 24. Remember when God first created a woman and he describes the exclusive relationship between man and woman versus 24.

*Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

And this describes their relationship sexual as well as psychological, is emotional, all together as one. And they were not ashamed. However, when you come to the fall of man in Genesis chapter 3 and subsequently in 1-Corinthians chapter 6, Paul deals with sexual immorality amongst the new church in Corinth and the new church in Corinth have a very laissez-faire attitude towards sex because they're brought up in a secular manner where you actually have temple prostitutions. In the city of Corinth, there was a temple called the acropolis, which is the highest mountain above Corinth. And there they actually have 1000 temple priestesses who offered sexual services.

So the people in church were tempted and Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 6 verses 12 to 13.

*All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful for me," but I will not be dominated by anything. 13 "Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food"—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.*

So therefore he's saying that sex is not just an appetite to be satisfied. Sex is more, it has a special meaning. It is actually made to glorify God. So, you can have two kinds of sexual relationships that we can see in general. One is a consumer sexual relationship and the other one is a covenantal sexual relationship.

On the consumer side, the consumer sexual relationship is contingent on the provision of goods and services. I mean, you provide sex in exchange for something. When you're in a covenant relationship, the sex is actually unconditional. Number two, it is the consumer provides sex at a good price, but this may need to be upgraded from time to time. For the covenantal relationship, the sex is performance independent. It doesn't matter how it is, it is independent, is dependent on a commitment, a covenant. So therefore the performance is not dependent. Covenant is not dependent on the performance. Number three, my needs are going to be more important than my relationship because I entered the sexual relationship to satisfy my sexual needs. So therefore my needs are more important than my relationship in a consumer relationship. Whereas in a covenantal relationship, is my needs are less important than the relationship. So therefore the relationship is paramount, relationship is the one that governs the sexual relationship. Number four, in a consumer sexual relationship you adjust to me or I leave. Whereas the covenantal relationships is I will adjust to you because I have made a promise and that actually provides you the security for which the relationship have actually is.

So even though you are a Christian couple, you can still come into the marital relationship or any

relationship with these two kinds of attitudes. For example, if you actually have one partner having a consumer attitude towards sex and the other partner having a covenantal attitude towards sex, then what you will find is there'll be exploitation. One will exploit the other. When you have a couple where there is a both believe that this is a covenant, then you actually provide security. So you can be yourself. Otherwise, you are always having to market yourself. If you are deeply committed to the person, despite your feelings, your feelings will go deeper, just like a parent child relationship. You have your freedom to be yourself. Imagine a parent child relationship, you are so invested and you give and give to your child and often you don't get very much back, but yet you are committed and the commitment actually brings you a deeper feeling, which grows all the time.

So the place of sex, if it is a consumer good. You basically go into it, because it makes me feel good about myself. It's intrinsically selfish. I'm taking, I'm not giving. And so this is the attitude of Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6:13, food is meant for the stomach and stomach is for the food. It is a consumer good. It makes me feel good about myself. That is a wrong attitude towards sex.

CS Lewis has a great quote on this concept called sexual integrity. He writes,

*The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside of marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union...the sexual union from all kinds of other union which were intended to go a long with it to make up the total union. To have physical union without having whole life union is a lack of integrity*

Years ago, they actually had a very good movie, actually made Julia Roberts famous. It was called Pretty Woman. That was a story of a rich man who came into Beverly Hills and hired the services of a prostitute. The character was acted by Julia Roberts and they had physical relationships. He actually hired her for a while, I don't know whether it was a whole week or a whole month, but she was exclusively his, and he could do whatever he wanted with her except she drew the line at kissing because she felt that kissing meant she was giving all of herself rather than just her body. So that actually tells you even among secular ideas in Hollywood that sex is more than just physical, it is also emotional and psychological.

Now what is the place of sex within the marriage. The place of sex within marriage is that it is a covenant renewal ceremony. And when you actually have sex, it's actually an apparatus that actually brings you closer together. If you have sex inside a covenant then the sex becomes a covenant renewal ceremony. Like the Lord Supper as it were, it becomes a commitment apparatus because you are giving yourself over and over again, deepening, solidifying and it's nurturing. I belong completely exclusively to you and I am acting it out and I am giving you my body as a token of I'm giving you my whole life. I'm open to you physically as a token to how I opened myself to you in every other way. And when you do this, it becomes nurturing and deepening. However, in consumer sex, you are holding onto yourself. I'm taking not giving, I'm receiving and not giving. You damage your own ability to be a commitment apparatus when you have sex within that kind of framework in your mind.

Remember John White, famous psychiatrist who wrote the book, called the fight. He writes about this,

*The bodily exposure that arouse and accompanies sex can be profoundly symbolic and powerfully healing if it is the concrete sign of what is happening in the whole relationship so it only makes sense that the sexual relationship be confined to marriage for mutual disclosure and tender acceptance is*

*not the activity of the moment but the fabric of a life time's weaving. Each time sex is physical disclosure without being complete personal disclosure and commitment some of its life giving and healing nature is destroyed.*

So in the secular world, sex is a consumer good where you actually give each other goods and services. If that's the case, why should you actually enter a covenant? So we can see the trend through Western countries and even our own countries, people tend to live together because living together and trying things out wouldn't it be better? But the data from all studies show that cohabiting prior to marriage actually associates will less happiness and more negativity in subsequent marriage if they do get married. The whole problem is exiting is hard, it is like Brexit. It is easy to get together, but exiting is very hard.

There is an example, somebody wrote about this in a relationship where they cohabited and they split. It is as hard as changing from iPhone to Android. How someone describes changing hand phones,

*But sadly now I'm feeling a bit stuck with Apple. I'd like to check out other smartphone platforms, but doing so is going to require some work on my part. Like many who have been sucked into Apple's clutches, it was innocent in the beginning. . . . Initially, I didn't realize the commitment I was making. I didn't think about the fact that I was locking myself into a platform for the rest of my life. But with each new product I bought from Apple, the deeper I fell into the Borg. And now I feel like it would be painful to break up with Apple. Not because I love the products or company so much, but because it would be a huge pain in the butt to transfer all my stuff to a new platform.*

So it is, you know, cohabiting together is not so simple because of the breakup. Here is a testimony from a lady called Jennifer, actually written in the New York Times on the downside of cohabiting before marriage and she writes,

*"I felt like I was on this multiyear, never-ending audition to be his wife," she said. "We had all this furniture. We had our dogs and all the same friends. It just made it really, really difficult to break up. Then it was like we got married because we were living together once we got into our 30s."*

So that's the huge problem with living together before you get married. When you live together before you get married, you actually treat the other party like a commodity. The standard for you to get somebody to cohabit with actually at entry level actually lower than for a spouse and inertia tends to box a person into a poor relationship and you actually have a greater chance of divorce and all about the opportunity cause. Wasted years because you live together for so long and then you break up, which is actually, dating is actually quicker.

So in cohabitation, sex is actually marketing. Sex outside the covenant, like living together, does not prepare you for sex within a covenant. Learning to live together as consumers is not the same as learning to live together as covenanters.

Next we're going to be looking at the challenge of lust, which is what this passage is about. Just to start off, Jimmy Carter, the US president was a devout Baptist from Georgia, actually confess many years ago. He said, I've looked at many women with lust. I have committed adultery in my heart many times. God knows I will do this and forgives me.

Actually, he misunderstands that any kind of sexual desire is terrible and you're going to be going to

hell. Now temptation and lust has been with us from time in Memorial, even in times of AD 79, and times just beyond where Jesus lived in the ruins Pompeii, which was destroyed by the volcano. You can see graffiti and all the graffiti was sexual in nature. Today, we don't have graffiti, today we have porn and Pornhub, the world's largest porn site has 33 billion visits in 2018 alone. 70% of them were men who visited this site and 30% believe it or not were women. 68% of Christian men and 50% pastors regularly view pornography. And the worst thing is that 11 to 17 year old boys are reported being as greatest users.

Now lust is the biggest downfall off Christians as well. And there was a study done by Howard Hendricks and it showed there are about four factors that are very important in the breakup of marriages and infidelity or adultery within Christian marriages. There were four things and the first thing was there is no personal accountability, which means they don't have a group where they could actually share with especially men. There's no time of personal prayer, Bible study or reading and more than 80% of the man spent significant time with another woman especially in counseling and number four, all of these men had been convinced that this sort of fall would never happen to them.

So these are four characteristics that are actually warnings to Christian men as well. Now, the word which Jesus used here 'Lust' is actually in the Greek translated as 'epithumias'. Epi is towards. Thumas is desire or strong desire or passion. That word is actually neutral. It is not necessarily bad. It could be used to describe beautiful food. Look at this cupcake, beautiful food, and you're salivating. You've got a natural and legitimate desire because you want to eat the cupcake, and this is fulfilled in such a way that God is honored because God gave you that cupcake as it were.

If you look at epithumias used in various other passages. Luke 22 verse 15.

*Luke 22: 15 And he said to them, "I have earnestly **desired** to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God."*

It is Jesus using the word epithumias, earnestly desire to eat this Passover. Now Philippians 1:23.

*Phil 1: 23 I am hard pressed between the two. My **desire** is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better.*

So therefore you can actually have epithumias which is desire, which can be natural and normal. So if you go back to Genesis chapter 2 for the first love song. It was actually done when the man and woman were naked and it was done in the presence of God. If you look at Genesis 2:22

*And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. 25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

Here we actually have a love song where two brought together for the first time, completely naked in the presence of God and their desire was Holy because God had made them in such a way. Look at Proverbs 5:15

*Drink water from your own cistern, flowing water from your own well. 16 Should your springs be*

*scattered abroad, streams of water in the streets? 17 Let them be for yourself alone, and not for strangers with you. 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.*

So this describes the ecstasy involved in sex with the person, which you are in a covenant.

Look at Song of Solomon chapter 7 verse 7,

*Your stature is like a palm tree, and your breasts are like its clusters. 8 I say I will climb the palm tree and lay hold of its fruit. Oh may your breasts be like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your breath like apples, 9 and your mouth like the best wine.*

So this is describing the sexual process. So the thing, remember, you must brush your teeth and not have a bad breath. So Jesus was not talking about sexual desire within the covenant. He was talking about sexual desire outside the covenant.

*You have heard that it was said, You shall not commit adultery.'*

So topic is actually adultery, which is having sex with somebody else who is not your covenantal wife

*28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with **lustful** intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

So it is actually the sexual desire that stimulated by another person for which you desire to have sex with a person who is actually not your wife. The theologian, D.A. Carson describes this as such.

*This is not a prohibition of the normal attraction which exists between men and women, but of the deep-seated lust which consumes and devours, which in imagination attacks and rapes, which mentally contemplates and commits adultery.*

So it's the intent. It is not the normal attraction that exists between men and women, which is quite automatic. If you see a beautiful woman, obviously you got appreciate all that, but it's a deep-seated lust that actually you start to undress her with your mind and you actually want to have sex with somebody who was not your partner. So the nature of lust is like greed for money. They have a lot of similarities. In both cases, you have to have it for yourself, it's selfishness. It's also addictive. People will work hard for money, people will do whatever it takes to get the girl. It is like greed, you fantasize about what you will do when you get the money or what when you get the girl and you're looking to the girl or the money to give you the deep affirmation that only God can give you. So, in a sense, it is actually idolatry.

Pornography with masturbation is actually giving not yourself to the other person but using images of lust in order to satisfy yourself, but all sex outside of marriage is using sex selfishly. Then what about young women? They often feel that they have to bargain and give sex in order for relational stability or to have love, or they can't be a whole person or be happy person to be well developed unless they're married to a particular person or with a particular sweetheart, they say, I cannot live without you. To say that you cannot live without another person is to say that that other person is your idol.

## Now, how are we supposed to deal with lust?

Well, Jesus describes it.

*29 If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.*

Now here's a picture of Gahanna. Gahanna is a local rubbish tip, just outside Jerusalem, it's a place of perpetual burning of rubbish with smoke and fire. It's a place that describes unquenchable thirst, unfulfilled longing and in a sense going to hell is like having unsatisfactorily sex, because we're built to fully know and fully be satisfied with Jesus Christ as our Lord. God will fill your deepest desires. When you lose God, you have this unfulfilled longing and deep unquenchable thirst as if you're in hell. Sex holds out the promise for affirmation and satisfaction. And yet when you actually have sex outside the marriage, it's something like the real thing, but it's not, it keeps you hungry and thirsty. It destroys your freedom and you are out there, you know, like a man who is basically marooned out on a life raft, an ocean full of salt water, you are thirsty, you want to drink but you can't drink, you know, why it's salt water and the more salt water you drink, the more thirsty you get. That is a picture of what lust is. Now D.A. Carson describes this passage quite well. He says, now if my right eye causes me to sin, so I'll just pluck it out, but what happens with your left eye? Your left eye will also see your neighbor's wife, but to pluck that out, even you plucked it out, you actually will have mental images of your neighbor's wife and what will you do then, pluck out your brain. So basically what Jesus is saying is that, it is not literally to pluck out your right hand and right eye, it is basically to deal drastically with this problem of lust. We are not to flirt with it, pamper with it or nibble around it. We have to hate it, we have to cut it out, we have to dig it out. We have to put it to death. It is a very serious problem.

So lust, especially pornography is not harmless. Some people think it's harmless. It doesn't affect your relationship. It's a bit of fun on the internet. There was a publication by Mark Regnerus and Jeremy Uecker, looking at premarital sex in America. Look at how young Americans meet, mate and think about marrying and actually three conclusions they found from that book, which is published and he said, first of all, it affects every body's relationship because you've got crushingly unrealistic expectation on the physical appearance of your partner and sexual performance. So you you're actually taking your partner out whether in real life, your partner or your girlfriend, and you're expecting that person to perform like a porn star in a blue movie.

Secondly, men will have diminished tolerance for difficulties of real relationships. So when you are actually stuck on porn, when you actually get married or have a relationship with a real woman, you can have diminished tolerance for the difficulties in a real relationship because you don't have an in depth relationship with a woman in the porn site. In a real woman, in a real world, there are difficulties. So men will have diminished tolerance for that/

Thirdly, all women I increasingly made to accommodate to images and behavior in the porn.

So, these are the problems that you actually have with pornography. Now pornography has also been shown in scientific studies to affect the brain. It shrinks the area of brain called the striatum, which is a reward center. So in the reward center shrinks, you actually need more and more stimulus in order to feel the high. Number two, it erodes your prefrontal cortex. This is a part of

your brain that actually causes you to have impulsivity and poor control like a child and basically the more porn that you actually watch, the more impulsive and poor control you'll have. It also stimulates you and causes high levels of dopamine. And when you go back to your normal life with the normal levels of dopamine, it actually will trigger depressive illness, lower quality of life and poor mental health.

Oscar Wilde was a world famous Irish poet and playwright. Towards the end of 1880s and 1890s and he was so famous women threw themselves at him and he couldn't have any woman that he desired. He lived the life of sensuality and total sexual abandon. And this is what he writes on his life.

*The gods had given me almost everything. But I let myself be lured into long spells of senseless and sensual ease. ... Tired of being on the heights I deliberately went to the depths in search for new sensation. What the paradox was to me in the sphere of thought, perversity became to me in the sphere of passion. I grew careless of the lives of others.*

*I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I forgot that every little action of the common day makes or unmakes character, and that therefore what one has done in the secret chamber, one has some day to cry aloud from the house-top. I ceased to be lord over myself. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it*

Here is a man who had every sexual desire fulfilled. And his testimony was that he has ceased to be in control of his life. He was no longer the captain of his soul, and the worst part was he was not aware of it. These are the consequences of sex outside marriage.

Sex outside marriage, even serial monogamy, which is basically one partner at a time actually hurts women more than men. Research has shown that women are more likely to express sexual regret and for women sex is largely unwanted apart from an emotional connection and so they're more likely than men to experience diminish emotional health because of their past sex relationship. The more life partners a woman has, the more likely she is going to be depressed and show signs of poor emotional health and she doesn't realize this. She believes that sex will spur greater commitment from a partner, but in the end, in reality, sex destabilizes those very relationships she wants producing uncertainty, insecurity and even less commitment. So that's a problem with sex outside of marriage.

So let me conclude this session of Gamma by bringing you a story from John chapter 4, remember the woman whom Jesus met at the well. She was a Samaritan woman and when she was getting water from the well, Jesus said to her,

*John 4:13 Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, 14 but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." 15 The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that **I will not be thirsty** or have to come here to draw water."*

The funny thing right after that, you know what Jesus did.

*John 4: 16 Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." 17 The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; 18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true."*

Now the question is why Jesus, this woman wants eternal life. This woman wants not to be thirsty forever. Why is suddenly Jesus talking about her messed up sexual life? The reason why she is doing that, she has not only a physical thirst because she has a spiritual thirst. Her spiritual thirst is that she wants to be satisfied, and she thinks her satisfaction in life is actually to be satisfied by men. She has had five men and she has never been satisfied with five men. They have actually divorced her or she's divorced them. And what Jesus is saying, Jesus is addressing her deepest need. Her deepest need is a connection by God, which she has actually settled for counterfeit satisfaction and that counterfeit satisfaction is actually satisfaction in sexual relationships outside of marriage. Jesus is saying to her, I can satisfy your deepest needs. And she says, give me this one water. And that day that woman found her deepest longings fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Marriage is governed by Ephesians chapter 5.

*Ephesians 5: 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

So here you have a situation where there's no consumer relationship. It's not like I adjust to you and you adjust to me, I go halfway and you go halfway. You know, they are both. The wife submits to the husband as she submits in her obedience to Christ. The husband loves the wife as Christ loved and gave himself for the church. That is the metric that actually describes the relationship. So this can only happen when both husband and wife are totally finding their needs and their thirst and their satisfaction, not in each other but in the Lord, Jesus Christ. And then they'll be able to be filled with the love of Christ. And then they'll be in a position to give to each other without expecting in return that kind of unconditional love that will actually seek to build each other up. Sex in that kind of relationship would be entirely fulfilling and will renew and bind the relationship even closer together. Well, I hope this session has been useful to all of us, and I hope that as we think about this subject, let us continue to pray and guard, because this is one of the greatest areas that will actually bring down our Christian lives if we are not careful. None of us are immune. All of us are vulnerable. Let's take Jesus's words to heart. Thank you.