

# THE VICE OF LUST

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The secret sin that corrodes the soul from within is lust.

*The vice of lust is a disposition of immoderate or immoral sexual desire.*

God's design is for a husband and wife to frequently share their love through sexual intimacy in a way that is self-giving and respectful—attaching pleasure to the act so its desire creates more love, union, and life.

Lust, then, is not rooted in the desire for sexual pleasure, but in the disordered desire for it—without love, marriage, or dignity, but as an unresisted escape of indulgence by way of impure thoughts, eyes, and actions—eroding one's character, spiritual life, and relationships.

“Abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul” (1 Peter 2:11); stand against lust with the virtues of chastity, self-control, and foresight.

Be chaste. Save sexual pleasure for your spouse alone.

Practice self-control. Bounce your eyes and mind from lustful sights and thoughts so as not to allow the temptation of lust to gain traction and lead to sin.

Use foresight. The devil knows when you are vulnerable and will attack in those moments; avoid situations where the grips of lust can more easily grab hold.

Above all, let your love for Christ exceed your love for lust.

Lust is difficult to defeat, but by the virtues herein and Spirit within, you can defeat it. If you fail, be sorrowful, but don't lose hope, or the devil wins—repent and return to the path of purity.

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*Combat envy with the virtues of kindness, contentment, gratitude, and hope.*

**Be chaste.** Save sexual pleasure for your spouse alone.

**Practice self-control.** Bounce your eyes and mind from lustful sights and thoughts so as not to allow the temptation of lust to gain traction and lead to sin.

**Use foresight** The devil knows when you are vulnerable and will attack in those moments; avoid situations where the grips of lust can more easily grab hold.

**Above all,** let your love for Christ exceed your love for lust.



## RELATED SCRIPTURE



“Beloved, I urge you as aliens and exiles to abstain from the desires of the flesh that wage war against the soul.” — *1 Peter 2:11 (NRSV-CE)*

“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” — *Matthew 5:28 (NRSV-CE)*

“For all that is in the world—the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches—comes not from the Father but from the world.” — *1 John 2:16 (NRSV-CE)*

“Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the degrading of their bodies among themselves, because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever!” — *Romans 1:24-25 (NRSV-CE)*

“But your lust for women was your downfall.” — *Sirach 47:19 (GNT)*

“Don't be tempted by their beauty; don't be trapped by their flirting eyes.” — *Proverbs 6:25 (GNT)*

“I am afraid that the next time I come my God will humiliate me in your presence, and I shall weep over many who sinned in the past and have not repented of the immoral things they have done—their lust and their sexual sins.” — *2 Corinthians 12:21 (GNT)*

“...the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trial, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgment—especially those who indulge their flesh in depraved lust, and who despise authority.” — *2 Peter 2:9-10 (NRSV-CE)*

“Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers—none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.” — *1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (NRSV-CE)*



“To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.” — *Romans 8:6 (NRSV-CE)*

“Sin must no longer rule in your mortal bodies, so that you obey the desires of your natural self.” — *Romans 6:12 (GNT)*

“You were taught to put away your former way of life, your old self, corrupt and deluded by its lusts.” — *Ephesians 4:22 (NRSV-CE)*

“Put to death, therefore, whatever in you is earthly: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed (which is idolatry).” — *Colossians 3:5 (NRSV-CE)*

“Shun youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.” — *2 Timothy 2:22 (NRSV-CE)*

“Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself.” — *1 Corinthians 6:18 (NRSV-CE)*

“For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you know how to control your own body in holiness and honor, not with lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God; that no one wrong or exploit a brother or sister in this matter, because the Lord is an avenger in all these things, just as we have already told you beforehand and solemnly warned you. For God did not call us to impurity but in holiness. Therefore whoever rejects this rejects not human authority but God, who also gives his Holy Spirit to you.” — *1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 (NRSV-CE)*

“Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.” — *Hebrews 13:4 (NRSV-CE)*

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” — *Exodus 20:17 (NRSV-CE)*

“You shall not commit adultery.” — *Exodus 20:14 (NRSV-CE)*



“Instead, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.” — *Romans 13:14 (NRSV-CE)*

“Thus he has given us, through these things, his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, and may become participants of the divine nature.” — *2 Peter 1:4 (NRSV-CE)*

“No testing has overtaken you that is not common to everyone. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tested beyond your strength, but with the testing he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to endure it.” — *1 Corinthians 10:13 (NRSV-CE)*

“You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes.” — *Numbers 15:39 (NRSV-CE)*

“But we are tempted when we are drawn away and trapped by our own evil desires. Then our evil desires conceive and give birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” — *James 1:14-15 (GNT)*

“Let neither gluttony nor lust overcome me, and do not give me over to shameless passion.” — *Sirach 23:6 (NRSV-CE)*

“Don’t be controlled by your lust; keep your passions in check.” — *Sirach 18:30 (GNT)*

“Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.” — *Galatians 5:16 (NRSV-CE)*

“I have made a solemn promise never to look with lust at a woman.” — *Job 31:1 (GNT)*

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness!” — *Matthew 6:22-23 (NRSV-CE)*



## RELATED QUOTES



“Inordinate love of the flesh is cruelty, because under the appearance of pleasing the body we kill the soul.” — *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*

“Seeing women when you go out is not forbidden, but it is sinful to desire them or to wish them to desire you, for it is not by tough or passionate feeling alone but by one’s gaze also that lustful desires mutually arise. And do not say that your hearts are pure if there is immodesty of the eye, because the unchaste eye carries the message of an impure heart. And when such hearts disclose their unchaste desires in a mutual gaze, even without saying a word, then it is that chastity suddenly goes out of their life, even though their bodies remain unsullied by unchaste acts.” — *St. Augustine*

“Imagination is a God-given gift; but if it is fed dirt by the eye, it will be dirty. All sin, not least sexual sin, begins with the imagination. Therefore what feeds the imagination is of maximum importance in the pursuit of kingdom righteousness.” — *D.A. Carson*

“Imagination is the hotbed where this sin is too often hatched. Guard your thoughts, and there will be little fear about your actions.” — *J.C. Ryle*

“When you have indulged a lust, your wing drops off; you become lame, abandoned by a fantasy...People fancy they are enjoying themselves, but they are really tearing out their wings for the sake of an illusion.” — *Rumi*

“No one is immune to temptation. Not even a hero. Not even a nobody. Not even people like you and me. Lust is never very far away. And just when you least expect it, there it is again.” — *Charles R. Swindoll*

“When sexual desire rises Satan shifts his missile carriers into high gear. The rise of sexual desire does not mean victory for Satan, but does mean vulnerability to Satan.” — *John Piper*

“We must not give a sexual image or impulse more than five seconds before we mount a violent counterattack with the mind. I mean that! Five seconds. In the first two seconds we shout,



"NO! Get out of my head!" In the next two seconds we cry out: "O God, in the name of Jesus, help me. Save me now. I am yours." Good beginning. But then the real battle begins. This is a mind war. The absolute necessity is to get the image and the impulse out of our mind. How? Get a counter-image into the mind. Fight. Push. Strike. Don't ease up. It must be an image that is so powerful that the other image cannot survive. There are lust-destroying images and thoughts." — *John Piper*

"In temptations against chastity, the spiritual masters advise us, not so much to contend with the bad thought, as to turn the mind to some spiritual, or, at least, indifferent object. It is useful to combat other bad thoughts face to face, but not thoughts of impurity." — *St. Alphonsus Liguori*

"When you have sought the company of a sensual satisfaction, what loneliness afterward!" — *St. Josemaria Escriva*

"Lust is a poor, weak, whimpering, whispering thing compared with that richness and energy of desire which will arise when lust has been killed." — *C. S. Lewis*

"Deep within yourself, listen to your conscience, which calls you to be pure...a home is not warmed by the fire of pleasure, which burns quickly like a pile of withered grass. Passing encounters are only a caricature of love; they injure hearts and mock God's plan." — *St. John Paul II*

"No conflict is so severe as his who labors to subdue himself." — *St. Thomas a Kempis*

"I count him braver who overcomes his desires than him who conquers his enemies; for the hardest victory is over self." — *Aristotle*

"Let's ask God to help us to self-control for one who lacks it, lacks his grace." — *Rumi*

"Only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love." — *St. John Paul II*

"The desire of love is to give. The desire of lust is to get." — *Unknown*



“Lust is the devil's counterfeit for love. There is nothing more beautiful on earth than a pure love and there is nothing so blighting as lust.” — *Dwight L. Moody*

“To be pure, to remain pure, can only come at a price, the price of knowing God and loving him enough to do his will. He will always give us the strength we need to keep purity as something as beautiful for him.” — *St. Mother Teresa*

“The good Lord is more eager to pardon a repentant sinner than a mother [is] to rescue her child from the fire.” — *St. John Vianney*

“When you decide firmly to lead a clean life, chastity will not be a burden on you: it will be a crown of triumph.” — *Josemaria Escriva*

“Pure chastity is beauty to our souls, grace to our bodies, and peace to our desires.” — *Solon*

“Chastity, like piety, is a uniform grace.” — *Samuel Richardson*

“A clean heart is a free heart. A free heart can love Christ with an undivided love in chastity, convinced that nothing and nobody will separate it from his love. Purity, chastity, and virginity created a special beauty in Mary that attracted God's attention. He showed his great love for the world by giving Jesus to her.” — *St. Mother Teresa*

“Chastity, or cleanness of heart, holds a glorious and distinguished place among the virtues, because she, alone, enables man to see God; hence Truth itself said, 'Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.'” — *St. Augustine*



## REFLECTION



**Q.** The vice of lust is a disposition of immoderate or immoral sexual desire. God's design is for a husband and wife to frequently share their love through sexual intimacy in a way that is self-giving and respectful—attaching pleasure to the act so its desire creates more love, union, and life. Lust, then, is not rooted in the desire for sexual pleasure, but in the disordered desire for it—without love, marriage, or dignity, but as an unresisted escape of indulgence by way of impure thoughts, eyes, and actions. Reflecting on your life, in what ways do you (or have you) struggled with lust? (*please explain*)

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**Q.** What can you do in your life to practice the virtue of chastity (to save all sexual pleasure for your spouse and spouse alone)?

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Q. What can you do in your life to develop the virtue of self-control (bouncing your eyes and mind from lustful sights and thoughts so as not to allow the temptation of lust to gain traction and lead to sin, not even for a second)?

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Q. What can you do in your life to grow in the virtue of foresight (to think ahead and avoid situations where the grips of lust can more easily grab hold)?

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Q. Did any of the related Scriptures or quotes stand out to you (*please elaborate*)?

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Q. Any other thoughts you'd like to share?

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