



SUNDAY, OCTOBER 27

SERMON ON THE MOUNT

FLIPPING THE SCRIPT | MATTHEW 5:27-32

We all live by a script. We live out the ideals that are subtly championed in the novels we read, the shows we binge, the podcasts we listen to, the advertisements in our feeds, the billboards we pass on the way to work, and Instagram. There are few areas where the biblical script is more radically different from our culture than the way we think about sex.

It is easy for us to dismiss the biblical script as ancient and outdated. While we politely nod at the biblical ideal, our ideas about sex are far more shaped by the world we live in than they are by Scripture.

Before we even tackle the subject. Let's begin with a foundational affirmation. God's ways are better. Even when we don't know what God is up to, we can be confident that he is working for our good and that he knows how to give good gifts to his children. Paul reminds us that when we offer ourselves to God, we will always find his will is good, perfect, and pleasing.

Whatever apocalyptic sexual experience we pursue apart from God will not begin to compare with what God has in store for us. That is equally true for those who are married and those who are single. Honoring God with our sexuality is far richer than anything we experience apart from him.

The biblical script for sexuality begins in the heart, calls for radical commitment, and results in a single devotion.

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IT BEGINS IN THE HEART (vv. 27-28)

²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ⁱ ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

1. Why do you think Jesus is more concerned with the heart of adultery than the act of adultery?
2. What are some of the cultural scripts we encounter that may lead to a fantasy life that is contrary to God's ideal?

IT CALLS FOR RADICAL COMMITMENT (vv. 29-30)

²⁹ If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

1. How is Jesus' attitude toward sin radically different from ours?
2. Neither one of the actions Jesus calls for is a definitive cure for an overactive fantasy life. What are some decisive steps we might take to protect our hearts from an unhealthy attitude toward sex?
3. While no one who is authentically in Christ need fear the fires of hell, what else is at stake when we fail to guard our hearts?

IT LEADS TO A SINGULAR DEVOTION (vv. 31-32)

³¹ "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ⁿ ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

1. How would you describe God's ideal for marriage?
2. When we talk about "a singular devotion" we are referring to a singular devotion to Christ that results in a singular devotion to one another. How should our devotion to Christ impact our marriages?
3. How is divorce a contradiction to God's commitment to us?
4. The Bible views marriage as a covenant relationship that is shaped by God's commitment to us. How should God's faithfulness shape our response to the difficulties we may experience in marriage?
5. How should devotion to Christ impact singleness?