

**UPDATED VERSION 10/2**  
OHC Parental Awareness Sermon Review  
**WHEN LUST LURES YOU**  
**Part 8**  
**October 6, 2024**

This week we tackle a sensitive issue: “When Lust Lures You.”

As we’ve announced a few times, this is a PG message. We posted an early sermon on the website as a heads-up for parents. If, however, you missed the announcements and feel uncomfortable with your family hearing a discussion about the perils of pornography, that is certainly understandable. At any point, if you feel you would like to slip out, feel free to do so. Let’s pray.

prayer

Your Bible contains a story that would make producers of reality tv blush. Amnon, the son of King David, is the chief character. In this account, Amnon fell in lust with his half sister Tamar. He could no more resist her than a deer can refuse corn. His testosterone-driven desire consumed his life. Amnon became so obsessed with Tamar that he became ill. (2 Sam. 13:2 NLT).

Jonadab didn't help matters. Jonadab was Amnon's friend and a very crafty man. (2 Sam. 13:2 NKJV). He asked for an explanation of Amnon's sadness/sickness. Amnon disclosed his nepotistic desires for Tamar. And Jonadab concocted a plan: *Pretend you are ill. Lie on your bed until your father, King David, comes to check on you and, when he does, make this request.* "Have my sister Tamar come and prepare some supper for me here where I can watch her, and she can feed me." (2 Samuel 13:5 MSG).

Amnon liked the plan and executed it. David, never smelling the skunk, sent the half-sister to the debased brother. Tamar obliged and brought food. Amnon dismissed his servants, leaving the two alone. Feigning weakness, he asked her to feed him with her own hands. And as she did, he grabbed her:

"Come to bed with me, my darling sister." "No, my brother!" she cried. "Don't be foolish! Don't do this to me! You know what a serious crime it is to do such a thing in Israel. Where could I go in my shame? And you would be called one of the greatest fools in Israel. Please, just speak to the king about it, and he will let you marry me." But Amnon wouldn't listen to her, and since he was

stronger than she was, he raped her. Then suddenly Amnon's love turned to hate, and he hated her even more than he had loved her.  
"Get out of here!" he snarled at her. (2 Samuel 13:11-15 NLT).

She begged not to be dismissed; explaining that his rejection would leave her stigmatized in the eyes of her culture. But he was cold-hearted. He called for his valet. "Get rid of this woman. Get her out of my sight! And lock the door after her." The valet threw her out. (2 Samuel 13:17 MSG)

Tamar tore her garments, declaring both remorse and impurity. Her father David learned of the atrocity and did nothing. Absalom, Tamar's full brother, made up for David's passivity and murdered Amnon.

Does this event have any redeemable feature? Lust. Lies. Rape. Murder. What in the world do we do with such a story?

I suggest that we learn from it. Amnon's lust was a fire that broke his stepsister, tainted the legacy of his father and resulted in his own bitter, bloody demise.

It's a good thing this is a story from long, long ago, right? A travesty from a primitive era. If only that were the case. When it comes to deviant sexual behavior, one might wonder if we've budged an inch. Emergency room visits due to sexual assault increased ten-fold between 2006 to 2019.<sup>1</sup> According to the CDC 50% of women and 30% of men have experienced sexual violence.<sup>2</sup> The bronze age of Amnon and the modern day of our culture are plagued by the age-old snare of lust.

It destroyed Tamar. It's destroying many men and women today. Marriages are dying. Young people are suffering. Women are traumatized. Relationships are ruined. All because of this four-letter word. Lust.

Let's begin with the **definition of lust**.

To lust is to crave what does not belong to you.

For example, do not [lust after] other gods. (Ex. 34:15 NLT) or look with lust at a young woman or neighbor's wife (Job 31:1,9 NLT).

Lust and love are not synonyms. Romance is healthy. You were made for intimacy. You were wired for physical pleasure. God wired

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.nbcnews.com/health/sexual-health/sexual-assault-emergency-visits-increased-rcna53171>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.charliehealth.com/post/sexual-assault-statistics>

you to connect deeply, enjoyably and nakedly to a person of the opposite sex under the canopy of a covenant. It's not your fault that you perk up when you see an attractive person. Ever since Adam saw Eve and said, "Flesh of my flesh and bone of my bones...", the power of attraction has been a part of life.

Ogle at your spouse to your heart's content. Flirt. Smooch. take joy and pleasure in the wife of your youth. Let her breasts be your satisfaction, and let her embrace intoxicate you at all times. (Pr. 5:19 TPT) What the wise man said to husbands could also be said to wives. Delight in one another!

There is a difference, however, between healthy romance and lust. Lust is a longing for satisfaction *outside* of a covenant relationship. When Jesus said, Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28 NKJV), the word translated is *epithumos*. *thumos* can mean desire or appetite. The prefix *epi* means "to add to" signifying that something is being added to a healthy relationship.

Let's be clear on the definition of lust. And let's be equally clear on the:

## **Dissemination of lust**

Our generation has a smoking gun on this issue- pornography.

The stats are stunning.

Today, three in five U.S. adults view pornography and half of those who use porn say that no one knows.<sup>3</sup> Just over half of practicing Christians indicate frequent use of porn- 22% viewing it weekly, 15% daily.<sup>4</sup>

Of Christian men ages 18-30, 77% say they watch porn at least monthly. Within this group 36% say they watch it daily. In the larger group of all ages, two-thirds of men watch porn at least monthly. Thirty-seven percent access porn multiple times a week. Among Christian women, ages 18-30, 34% say they watch it at least monthly.<sup>5</sup>

Never in the history of the world has it been so easy to look twice where a person has no business looking once. Gone are the days of centerfolds and furtive glances at magazines in the corners of convenient stores. Anyone with unfiltered internet is a click away- less than 3

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<sup>3</sup> Beyond the Porn Phenomenon A Barna Report produced in partnership with Pure Desire Ministries 2024 pg. 13

<sup>4</sup> Beyond... pg. 40

<sup>5</sup> Proven Men Porn Survey (conducted by Barna Group in 2014) see Healing Church pg. 28

seconds- from images that were inaccessible and unimaginable a few decades ago.

The swamp of smut is wide and deep. In the U.S. the top three porn sites receive more web traffic than Netflix, Pinterest, Amazon, LinkedIn and TikTok combined.<sup>6</sup>

One of the largest virtual porn sites has 2,273 pages, hosting over half a million HD videos free content. Today's porn is a poisonous brew of dehumanizing, aggressive deceit. It elevates brutality, control and, in many cases, cruelty. It lies about God's good gift of sexual intimacy. The message? Have sex with any person, in any place, at any time- no consequence.

The wise man asked, Can a man carry fire next to his chest and clothes and not be burned? (Prov. 6:27). Can a person view click after click, page after page, image after image of violent, deviant, degrading immorality and not be infected? The answer is no. Let's discuss the:

### **Devastation of lust**

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<sup>6</sup> Beyond .... Pg 21

One man who struggled with pornography described the gravitational pull like this: I am a napkin against a vacuum cleaner. He couldn't get out.

*Lust is never satisfied.* Your brain contains a reward center which consists of two pleasure systems, one that excites and the other that satisfies. The first system enables us to go after things and is fueled by dopamine. The second creates a feeling of satisfaction and happiness. It rewards us with the secretion of endorphins.

Porn hyperactivates both systems. However, the *wanting* is stronger than the *satisfying*. Users get caught in a cycle of wanting, then unmatched satisfaction, then wanting more, then unmatched satisfaction.<sup>7</sup> In time, what once satisfies now fails to do so. The person, wanting more pleasure, turns to more porn or more violent and fetishized porn in pursuit of a bigger dopamine burst.<sup>8</sup>

Not only is the addiction intensified, but *the view of the opposite sex is also distorted.*

In reference to men who use porn, Dr. William Struthers writes:

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<sup>7</sup> Harmful Effects of Pornography Fight the New Drug 1.1

<sup>8</sup> Angres, D. H., and Bettinardi-Angres, K. "The Disease of Addiction: Origins, Treatment, and Recovery." Disease-a-Month 54 (2008): 696–721 (see Fight the New Drug 1.25



“All women become potential porn stars in the minds of these men. They have unknowingly created a neurological circuit that imprisons their ability to see women rightly [...]” William Struthers<sup>9</sup>

Repetitive use of porn, in other words, distorts our view of the opposite sex. Remember Amnon? He saw Tamar as a tool, not a person. He should have begged for her forgiveness. Instead, he kicked her out to pasture. Lust led to pain.

It still does. Porn users blame their behavior on the appearance of a spouse or demand that a spouse behave like a porn star. Consequently, spouses of porn users battle PTSD-level feelings of betrayal and inadequacy.

Don't think for a second that lust has no consequences.

And don't think for a second that the consequences won't lead to collapse. Secret sin never remains secret. It just doesn't. It finds its way out. The maxim deserves repeating, “Sin will always take you further than you wanted to go, keep you longer than you wanted to stay and

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<sup>9</sup> Struthers, William, Wired for Intimacy: How Pornography Hijacks the Male Brain, (New South Wales: Read How You Want Publishing, 2010)

cost you more than you wanted to pay.” Envision the worst possible outcome of infidelity and be assured, Satan is plotting to deliver it.

So, what can a person do? If this battle is your battle, how can you win it?

### **Deliverance from lust**

Go to God. You can't fix you. Quit trying. Move from self-reliance to God reliance. Come to the belief that a divine power can and wants to help you.

One of the greatest toys is an Etch-a-sketch. Twist the two nobs and watch a figure appear. The genius of the device is not in the crating, but in the shaking. Just shake the toy and you get a fresh start. In God's hands, your heart is an Etch-a-sketch. He can do what you cannot do, he can wipe away the past.

Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. (Isaiah 1:18 NKJV.

The Lord can change sins from scarlet or crimson to snow or wool, which is something that is impossible for us to do on our own.

Yield yourself to God. Take seriously this command.

Do not offer the parts of your body to serve sin, as things to be used in doing evil. Instead offer yourselves to God as people who have died and now live. Offer the parts of your body to God to be used in doing good. (Rom. 6:13 NCV)

Make this your morning ritual: *God I offer to you the parts of my body. Surrender them, one by one. I give you my brain. I give you my eyes. I offer my mouth.* Each member of your body, surrender it to Him. And, for the sake of this discussion, offer to God your sexual organs. *They belong to you, Lord. Cause me to use them for your glory.*

Running toward God is the easiest way to run from sin. Meditate on Him. Ponder heaven. Memorize verses. Write Psalms. Listen to Christian music. Focus less on, “I won’t think about sex” and more on “I will think about God.” In running toward God, you are running from sin...and the run is much more enjoyable.

Be honest with yourself.

You can’t stop when you want to.

Take drastic measures. Just because she dresses to lure, you don't have to look. Just because he flirts, you don't have to listen. You can't keep a bird from flying over your roof, but you can screen them out of your chimney.

Put the "two second rule" into effect. The next time you see more than you should in a picture on a person you have two ticks of the clock to come to your senses and shift your gaze.

Just because you have a lustful thought, you don't have to think it. People harvest only what they plant. (Gal. 6:7 NCV). So select your seeds carefully.

By the way, parents don't give your kids unfettered internet access. Check their email and their phones regularly. Be careful about where you let them spend the night – especially if there is an older sibling in the house. If they say, *Don't you trust me?* You say, *I don't even trust me!*

Get serious. Get drastic.

Get with the right people. Go to a trusted "other" and ask for help. A counselor, a doctor, a pastor, a friend, a group- you choose. Come out

of the shadows and ask for help. You're not the first to fight the war.

Someone can help you.

We have links on our church website to great resources like Covenant Eyes, Be Broken Ministries, and our Regeneration discipleship program. You can go to today's sermon notes on the app, visit [oakhills.church/care](http://oakhills.church/care) to find those or scan the QR in your seat holder.

Seek the influence of good people. Avoid the influence of bad people.

Suppose I come to you with two apples. One is fresh and pure, the other old and rotten. What will happen if I leave these two apples side by side in a sack? Do you think the good apple will restore the goodness of the rotten one? If you do, you don't know apples.

Are you rubbing up against a rotten apple? If so, change friends. Don't return e-mails. Spend absolutely no time with that man or woman in public or private. Those people in those chat rooms? To them you are nothing but quarry. They mean you harm. Amnon was a fool to listen to Abinadab.

Are you being a fool?

I don't know how to say this tactfully, so I won't try: Don't listen to stupid people. When it comes to sexuality, everyone is stupid but God. What happens in Vegas never stays in Vegas. So, don't go to Vegas. Don't think you can stop when you want. Don't think your thoughts have no consequences. Don't think you can lust and not get hurt or hurt someone else.

At the same time, don't underestimate God's love and grace. For those who know this snare, please hear this word. You have not out-sinned God's grace. You cannot outrun his love. He cherishes you and is ready to help you.

Nineteen-fifty-four was the year the famous "miracle mile" was run in Vancouver, B.C. For the first time, two milers ran under four minutes in the same race. John Landy led the entire way, but coming off the final turn toward the finish line, he made a fatal mistake. He looked over his shoulder to see who was behind him. That's when Roger Bannister passed him on the other side and beat him to the wire.<sup>10</sup>

Looking back can be costly.

Satan wants you to obsess over past failures. Yet, the grace of Christ invites you to move forward. When you become a follower of

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<sup>10</sup> Fee, Gordon p. 155

Jesus, you enter into a new life. His blood will make our consciences pure from useless acts so we may serve the living God. (Heb. 9:14 NCV)

The Apostle Paul had a wicked past. He killed Christians.

The Apostle Peter had a stain on his record. He denied Jesus.

The disciples of Christ abandoned their Lord. They left him to carry his cross alone.

What would have happened if they had lived in the past? Had they chosen to remain mired in the mud of shame we would not have their gospels, their influence, their teachings.

What about you?

Lust is a weed that thrives in shadows but dies in sunlight. For that reason, it is time for you to move forward.

Confess your struggle to God. Tell him all about it. He will hear and he will help. Help will come through a circle of good friends. Reach out.

Get smart. Make some changes. It's time for a new start. It's time to come home.

When Vice-President Hubert Humphrey died in 1976, hundreds of people from across the world attended his funeral. All were welcome, but one – former President Richard Nixon, who just two years earlier

had resigned after dragging the nation through the humiliation of Watergate. As he entered, eyes turned away and conversations paused. Nixon could feel the ostracism.

Jimmy Carter, the sitting US President, then walked into the room. Carter was from a different political party than Nixon, which makes his response toward Nixon even more poignant. Carter noticed Nixon standing all alone. He immediately changed course, walked over to Nixon, and warmly embraced him. Loudly enough for those standing nearby to hear, he said, “Welcome home, Mr. President! Welcome home!”

The incident was reported by Newsweek magazine, which wrote: “If there was a turning point in Nixon’s long ordeal in the wilderness, it was that moment and that gesture of love and compassion.”

Perhaps it is time for you to hear the voice of Christ saying the same? Perhaps it is time for you to receive the healing of Christ? Turn away from lust. Turn in the direction of your Lord. Be assured that he will say to you those precious words: “Welcome home.”