



# BATTLING LUST

## GRACE CHURCH MEN'S MEETING

4<sup>th</sup> February 2009

### A. INTRODUCTION

**Joshua Harris**

*"I've come to believe that lust may be the defining struggle for this generation."*

**1 Corinthians 10:12-13**

*Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

### B. THE ORIGINS OF LUST

- What is Lust?
- Definition of Lust: "Lust is craving sexually what God has forbidden."

**John Piper**

*"Lust is sexual desire minus honour and holiness."*

- Lust is craving, desiring, pursuing and grabbing hold of something God has said "NO" to.
- Lust = NOT: Merely a matter of conduct...

BUT: A matter of the heart!

**Matthew 5:27-30**

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 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. 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.*

**Mark 7:14-23**

*And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."*

**C. THE STRATEGIES OF LUST****a. Lust Seeks to Both Idolise & Trivialise Sex**

- Sex is no big deal?
  
- Sex IS a BIG deal!
  - Hebrews 13:4
  
- Life is to be lived in the pursuit of sexual pleasures?
  
- The false god of Sex
  
- MUST put sex in it's proper place...

**Ephesians 5:3**

*But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.*

**b. Lust Devises a Custom-Made Plan to Destroy Each of Us**

- Lust is not “One size fits all!”
- Custom-made temptations just for you!
- Specific attacks require specific defence.
- Identify your “Lust Triggers” (See Appendix 1)

**c. Lust Ensnares with False Promises of Satisfaction.**

- Lust and its empty lies

**Ephesians 4:19 (NIV)**

*Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

- The only way to count the “Lies of Lust” is with God’s powerful Word.

**John Piper**

*“We must fight fire with fire. The fire of lust’s pleasures must be fought with the fire of God’s pleasures. If we try to fight the fire of lust with prohibitions and threats alone - even the terrible warnings of Jesus - we will fail. We must fight it with the massive promise of superior happiness. We must swallow up the little flicker of lust’s pleasure in the conflagration of holy satisfaction.”*

- Don't go into battle with out your weapons!

**Ephesians 6:16-18**

*In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication.*

**Hebrews 4:12**

*For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

*All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.*

- What are the specific lies your sinful desires tell you?

**d. Lust Picks Off Stragglers.**

- Lone rangers are DEAD rangers!
- Share specific, appropriate details, triggers, etc.

**D. PRACTICAL STEPS TO OVERCOMING LUST**

**a. Make No Provision for the Flesh - BE RADICAL!**

**Romans 13:14**

*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.*

**Joshua Harris**

*“When I think of ‘making provision’, I picture my wife packing lunch for each member of our family on a day trip. Do you make provision for lust? In small, daily choices, are you actually caring for and feeding your weaknesses and lust triggers? In times when I’m tempted, I’ll say to myself, “Don’t pack a lunch for lust!” I must not pamper or provide even a little snack for the lust of my heart to feed on.”*

**Richard Baxter**

*“Keep as far as you can from those temptations that feed and strengthen the sins which you would overcome. Lay siege to your sins and starve them out, by keeping away the food and fuel which is their maintenance and life.”*

- Matt 5:27-30
  
- Must be willing to take dramatic & radical action.
  - Are there things in your home that need throwing away?
  - Are there habits you need to end decisively today?
  - Do you need to cancel your gym membership?
  - Is there something you need to cut out of your life right away?
  - Do you need to cancel your Sky subscription?
  - Do you need to stop buying newspapers?
  - Do you need to get an internet filter?
  
- Start with one thing! Victory is in the little battles. Flee temptation.

**Thomas Watson**

*“It is dangerous to procrastinate repentance, because the longer any go on in sin, the harder they will find the work of repentance. Delay strengthens sin and hardens the heart. It is hard to remove sin once it has become rooted.”*

**b. Walk in the Light with One Another**

**c. Sow to the Spirit**

**Galatians 6:7-9**

*Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.*

**John Stott**

*“To ‘sow to the flesh’ is to pander to it, to cosset, cuddle and stroke it, instead of crucifying it. The seeds we sow are largely thoughts and deeds. Every time we allow our mind to harbour a grudge, nurse a grievance, entertain an impure fantasy, or wallow in self-pity, we are sowing to the flesh. Every time we linger in bad company whose insidious influence we know we cannot resist, every time we lie in bed when we ought to be up praying, every time we view pornographic material, every time we take a risk that strains our self-control, every self-righteous rebuke, we are sowing, sowing, sowing to the flesh. Some Christians sow to the flesh every day and wonder why they do not reap holiness. Holiness is a harvest; whether we reap it or not depends almost entirely on what and where we sow.”*

# APPENDIX 1

## “LUST TRIGGERS”

Drawn from Chapter 4 of “Sex is not the Problem, Lust is” by Joshua Harris

“Lust springs from our own sinful hearts - we can lust without any outside influences. But I’ve found that certain seemingly insignificant sinful compromises can build up in my system. My bigger outbreaks of sin are usually triggered by smaller sins that I wasn’t diligent in guarding against.” -- Joshua Harris

### TIME:

Are you more susceptible to lust at certain times and moments of the day?

- i) When you wake up/go to bed?
- ii) At the end of work, when you’re tired and tempted to feel sorry for yourself?
- iii) Weekends, when your lazily sleeping in and are less disciplined?

### TEMPTING LOCATIONS:

Are there certain places where you’re more tempted by lust?

- i) The mall?
- ii) A bookshop where you go into the wrong sections?
- iii) A part of town where you get more chance of seeing immodestly dressed women?

### TELEVISION:

Do you watch TV “actively” or “passively”?

i.e. remote control in hand ready to switch off anything inappropriate (including adverts!)

Do you watch TV alone (after dark, after your wife has gone to bed)?

### NEWSPAPERS, BOOKS & MAGAZINES:

Are you careful about what you read?

Even if there are no photos, our lust can be fed by gossip of celebrities, love lives, articles painting fornication in an appealing light?

### INTERNET:

Are you flirting with lust on-line?

Even if not “porn” - are the websites you visit featuring images or content that might excite lust’s sinful desire in your heart?

Do you go on-line alone late at night?

Where is your computer positioned?

### LETTERBOX

Do you receive catalogues with sensuous and/or provocative clothing in it?

## **ACT ON WHAT YOU KNOW...**

Take a few minutes to formulate your own custom-made plan for fighting lust:

1. List your own top three lust triggers. How can you avoid them?
2. What time of day or week are you most tempted by lust? What can you do to prepare for those times?
3. Which locations are the most tempting for you? How can you limit your time in those places?
4. What five little battles do you need to be fighting more faithfully? Describe in detail what it looks like for you to fight - and win - these battles.

## APPENDIX 2

# “LUST’S LIES & THE TRUTH OF GOD’S WORD”

Drawn from Chapter 9 of “Sex is not the Problem, Lust is” by Joshua Harris

Consider the times you’ve been tempted by these lies, and let the truth of the Bible transform your perspective.

**Lie: Lust is no big deal.**

**Truth:**

“For lust is a shameful sin, a crime that should be punished. It is a devastating fire that destroys to hell. It would wipe out everything I own” (Job 31:11–12, NLT).

**Lie: A little sinful fantasizing won’t hurt.**

**Truth:**

“To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace (Romans 8:6, ESV).

“Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life” (Galatians 6:7–8, ESV).

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to gratify its desires” (Romans 13:14, ESV).

**Lie: Taking radical action against sin isn’t necessary.**

**Truth:**

“If your right eye causes you to sin, 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. And if your right hand causes you to sin, 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” (Matthew 5:29–30).

“Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (2 Timothy 2:22).

**Lie: God won’t mind a little compromise...**

**Truth:**

“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming” (Colossians 3:5–6).

“But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God’s holy people” (Ephesians 5:3).

**Lie: It’s my body. I can do what I want with it.**

**Truth:**

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body” (1 Corinthians 6:18–20).

**Lie: I can't control my sex drive.**

**Truth:**

"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you" (1Thessalonians 4:3–6).

**Lie: Looking at a few pornographic pictures won't affect me.**

**Truth:**

"Do not lust in your heart after her beauty or let her captivate you with her eyes, for the prostitute reduces you to a loaf of bread, and the adulteress preys upon your very life. Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? (Proverbs 6:25–27)

"I will set before my eyes no vile thing" (Psalm 101:3).

**Lie: I won't experience any consequences for indulging in my lust.**

**Truth:**

"So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12)

"...the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son" (Hebrews 12:6).

"...after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death" (James 1:15).

**Lie: People get away with adultery.**

**Truth:**

"For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, and her speech is smoother than oil; but in the end she is bitter as gall, sharp as a double-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps lead straight to the grave" (Proverbs 5:3–5).

"Keep to a path far from her, do not go near the door of her house, lest you give your best strength to others and your years to one who is cruel, lest strangers feast on your wealth and your toil enrich another man's house. At the end of your life you will groan, when your flesh and body are spent" (Proverbs 5:8–11).

**Lie: God is keeping something good from me.**

**Truth:**

"Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O LORD Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you" (Psalm 84:10–12).

**Lie: The pleasure lust promises is better and more real than God's pleasure.**

**Truth:**

"You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand" (Psalm 16:11).

**Lie: Fulfilling my lust will satisfy me.**

**Truth:**

“I say to myself, ‘The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him.’ The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD” (Lamentations 3:25–26).

“The fear of the LORD leads to life, and whoever has it rests satisfied...” (Proverbs 19:23, ESV).

**Lie: Too much purity will keep me from seeing and enjoying beauty.**

**Truth:**

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God” (Matthew 5:8).

“For the Lord is righteous; he loves righteous deeds; the upright shall behold his face” (Psalm 11:7).

“Your eyes will behold the king in his beauty; they will see a land that stretches afar” (Isaiah 33:17).