

Returning to the Altar
(Sexual Purity and Marriage Commitment)
(January 6, 2018)

- The objectives of Jesus' teaching (Matthew 5:3-12):
 - ✓ Be "poor in spirit" (v. 3).
 - ✓ Be one who "mourns" (v. 4).
 - ✓ Be "meek" (v. 5).
 - ✓ Be hungry for "righteousness" (v. 6).
 - ✓ Be "merciful" (v. 7).
 - ✓ Be "pure in heart" (v. 8).
 - ✓ Be "peacemakers" (v. 9).
 - ✓ Be ready to be "persecuted" (v. 10-12).

What is lust of the heart? When does temptation become sin? (Matthew 5:27-30)

- The first stage of temptation is lustful thoughts.
 - ✓ Thoughts usually flow in a liquid form, and can easily move from good to bad, or wrong to right.
 - ✓ Thoughts are our first level of protecting our heart (2 Corinthians 10:3-5).
 - ✓ Do not empower negative thoughts by giving them too much guilt and shame value.
 - Worship and self-talk are probably our best responses to negative thoughts or dreams.
 - ✓ Jesus was tempted just as we are (Hebrews 4:15-16).
 - James' guidance: Submit to God and rebuke the devil (James 4:7).
- The second stage of temptation is at the emotional level.
 - ✓ Emotional temptation:
 - We feel a drawing.
 - There's an enticement which preoccupies us.
 - It often includes a physical drawing or pull.

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- ✓ Excerpt: *The Anatomy of Seduction* by Jack Hayford
- ✓ This is where we take decisive action.
 - Metaphorically:
 - “Pluck out” the eye
 - “Cut off” the hand
- The third stage of temptation is at the heart level.
 - ✓ He “has already committed adultery...in his heart.”
 - ✓ This level requires repentance and dealing with the sin directly.
 - ✓ We own the intentions of our heart and we respond with the tongue—speaking truth and repentance (Proverbs 16:1-3 NET).

Are there legitimate reasons for divorce?

What is illicit sexual activity? (Matthew 5:31-32)

- Defining: “sexual immorality”:
 - ✓ Gk. “porneia” = ongoingly giving place to lustful imaginations and habits; spiritual “harlotry”
 - ✓ Article: “When Is It Right to Leave a Marriage?” by Lee Grady
- The meaning of Marriage Commitment:
 1. I consider your needs at least as important as my own.
 2. I give value to you as an individual.
 3. I will do what I can to avoid harming you.
 4. I will not desert you when times are hard.