

INTRODUCTION.

- A. From <https://www.cgg.org> .
- B. Inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings, and decorations of all sorts (*AClarke*). Covetousness (*MHenry*).
- C. That which is designed merely to gratify the sight. This would include, of course, costly clothes, jewels, gorgeous furniture, splendid palaces, pleasure-grounds, etc. (*ABarnes*).
- D. **1John 2:15-17**
*Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.*

OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

- A. **Genesis 3:6**
*When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.*
 - 1. The text says that it was “a delight to the eyes.” Meaning it looked good on the outside.
 - 2. Sin looks better than what it is, takes you farther than you want to go, keeps you longer than you want to stay, and makes you pay a whole lot more than you thought you would.
- B. **Exodus 20:17.**
“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”
 - 1. One has to look upon something with the wrong intention to follow it with covetousness.
 - 2. This behavior violates the 10th Commandment.
 - 3. See Col. 3:2; Phil. 2:4; 4:8; 2Cor. 4:18
- C. **Deuteronomy 5:21.**
“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”
 - 1. See 1Tim. 6:8.; Col. 3:5.
- D. **2Samuel 11:2-4.**
Now when evening came David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king’s house, and from the roof he saw a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful in appearance. 3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, “Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?” 4 David sent messengers and took her, and when she came to him, he lay with her; and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness, she returned to her house.
 - 1. Notice David’s error of staying home in 2Sam. 11:1. He remained at ease in Zion, where the temptation of the lust of the eyes overwhelmed him.
 - 2. David was bored, not doing what he should, and it got him into trouble.
 - 3. In this connection, it should be noted that David already had a harem of at least twenty women, who, it seems, should have been fully capable of gratifying David's sexual lust; but no! That is not the way lust operates. Gratifying the appetites of the flesh only intensifies them and strengthens their power to overwhelm men in sin. [JBC]

NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

A. **Matthew 5:27-30.**

“You have heard that it was said, ‘YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY’; **28** but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. **29** If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. **30** If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

1. Thus, Christ made the lustful thought as sinful as the overt act. In the light of this, who is innocent? In this commandment, just as in the case of the Fifth Commandment, Jesus was more concerned with antecedents than with overt sins. Adultery proceeds from impure thinking; and in this passage Christ's law appears far higher and more discerning than the Decalogue.
2. This would include pornography.
3. The vivid comparison of actually amputating a body part, emphasizes that Christians should strive, at whatever cost, to avoid lustful thoughts.

B. **Mark 7:20-23.**

And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. **21** For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, **22** deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. **23** All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

1. This truth appeared dramatic enough on the occasion when Jesus uttered it, but it was not a new thing at all, having been emphatically taught in the OT. The "heart" is mentioned no less than 74 times in the Book of Proverbs alone where it is set forth as the fountain source of all that comes out of life. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).
2. Sensuality or “the evil eye” is an attitude that looks upon the good fortunes of others with envy, hatred, as if they could cast an evil spell upon them if they had the power.

C. **Luke 12:15-20**

Then He said to them, “Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not *even* when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” **16** And He told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man was very productive. **17** And he began reasoning to himself, saying, ‘What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?’ **18** Then he said, ‘This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. **19** And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years *to come*; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.’” **20** But God said to him, ‘You fool! This *very* night your soul is required of you; and *now* who will own what you have prepared?’

1. This is a warning against covetousness (which begins with the lust of the eyes).
2. First, let it be observed that when blessings were multiplied upon this man, it only served to increase his covetousness. "Experience teaches that earthly losses are remedies for covetousness, while increases in worldly goods only arouse and provoke it."
3. How pitifully brief is the span of life; how suddenly does the sun of life sink into the void; how quickly does the hope of mortal life decline! And, in the light of all this, which every man certainly knows, how obtuse must he be accounted who vainly imagines that he is assured of many years of pleasure, ease, and prosperity!

D. **Romans 7:7**

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, “YOU SHALL NOT COVET.”

1. See 2Pet. 2:14.

2. The human heart is the primary cause of violating God's law; but, in the sense of multiplying violations, the law itself is an ally of sin. Thus it is true that "through the commandment," as a secondary cause, all manner of violations are multiplied. Human nature being what it is, the very existence of law, given a rebellious heart in people, becomes the occasion of sin "abounding."
3. By keeping one's eyes where they should be, one can avoid a lot of sin and temptation.

E. Romans 12:1-2

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. **2** And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

1. Instead of giving into temptation, Christians are to be a living sacrifice.
2. Instead of craving that which we see, Christians are to renew their minds unto godliness.
3. May our eyes be in the perfect law of liberty (Jas. 1:25).
4. The world is very much with Christians, who, though not of the world, are nevertheless still in it and subject to its fashions and allurements, unless these shall be rejected; and that rejection is the thing commanded here.
5. The world spoken of here are the natural habits, desires, and value judgments of the natural man, the natural man being man apart from the loving guidance of his Maker. The Christian must adopt an utterly different set of value-judgments, based upon an utterly new and higher concept of life, and thus encompassing a view of the eternal things, rather than merely those of earth and time.

F. 2Timothy 2:4

No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.

1. All Christians inevitably find themselves, in a sense, entangled with the affairs of the present life; and, therefore, most students are willing to accept such limitations on the meaning here as were supposed by Wesley, "any more than is unavoidable," and Lipscomb, "It is not secular employment that is forbidden, but entanglement with it."
2. As we look at life around us, many things seem promising, but our eyes are to be fixed on Jesus first and foremost (Heb. 12:1,2).

G. James 1:12-15

Blessed is a man who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which *the Lord* has promised to those who love Him. **13** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. **14** But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. **15** Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

1. "When he has been tested" is included in the meaning here, and with the additional thought of "when he has stood the test."
2. What is promised here, of course, is eternal life. "The crown of life" mentioned by James here cannot be anything other than the "crown of righteousness" mentioned by Paul in 2Tim. 4:8, and which in no sense is awarded in the present existence, but which will be bestowed "at that day" by the Lord Jesus Christ upon all them that have loved his appearing. The clauses which tie the two passages together are: "the Lord promised to them that love him," and "to them that have loved his appearing."

NEXT LESSON:

Scriptures Explaining the Lust of the Flesh

