

**Sermon Series: The Seven Deadly Sins— and Their Antidote**  
**Today’s Message: “Be Careful Little Eyes What You See:**  
**Lust”**

**Sunday, February 25, 2024**

**By Pastor Norwood N. “Woody” Hingle III, Ph.D.**

Many years ago, the Superdome had a multi-mega-screen— the “jumbo-tron”. It was dropped down from the center of the ceiling by multiple cables, and the multiple screens made sure that wherever people sat in the Superdome they were sure to get a good view of what was on the screen. It seemed every time I was in the Dome for a Saints game a commercial would come one that would excite the senses. It was a Ruth’s Chris Steakhouse commercial. It showed a gorgeous picture of one of their gorgeous steaks, and when the commercial ended with the man’s voice telling about the restaurant, it seemed the Dome personnel would turn up the volume and a very loud of the steak sizzling would be broadcast. The senses were definitely excited! And now I was amply motivated to satisfy my elated senses to go to the restaurant after the game— regardless of whether we won or not! Of course, the only slight problem was that I could not afford to eat at Ruth’s Chris Statehouse, and that helped to settle me down. I am reminded about how easily our senses are aroused, especially of the sexual sort. Not too long ago a book came out called *Every Man’s Battle* (by Steven Arterburn and Fred Stoeker). This book focused on the consequences of living in a society that provides plenty of opportunity to lust— online pornography, one-night

stand apps, movies and TV shows, and of course the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue. I read a review of this book where it was quoted as saying there were two parts of men's brains that have to do with sexual pleasure—one has to do with exciting pleasure and the other has to do with satisfying pleasure. Just as the Ruth's Chris Steakhouse commercial in the Dome was to excite pleasure in order to lead to satisfying that pleasure, so too do the multiple media outlets and online services. Sex without boundaries is a big industry. And it starts at a very young age. E.g., my first exposure to pornography was when I was in the 6th grade; I went to a friend's house for a sleepover with several other friends, and porn was part of the evening's entertainment; the next morning, when my Mom was driving me home, she asked, "Did you have a good time?", and I answered with an enthusiastic "Yes!", which made her wisely inquire more about my "good time". Thankfully, I never slept over at this home again, and the next year I accepted Christ, through my sister Madolyn's influence, for the first time (I had to renew this commitment when I was 16 after falling away) and this worked to start my path toward purity. It was as though God had picked me up by the hair and brought me out of this dark world into His world of light. I suspect exposure to sex is happening today often at an even earlier age than I had. So, how do we as Christians navigate a world that desperately wants us to lust and fall sexually? Our passage today will give us some insight.

Let me say before going further that I will approach this subject primarily from a male perspective. That perspective is

where I am best equipped and where our text for today is. That is not to say, though, that women don't struggle with lust, because of course they do. But I will venture to say that, from what I understand and have read, women approach sex from a significantly different perspective than men. This difference for me is best summarized in this saying: Men have relationships in order to have sex, while women have sex in order to have a relationship.

**CONTEXT:** King David has had great success politically and militarily. Politically he has taken over from King Saul both the northern and southern kingdoms, uniting them. And he has had great successes against such nations as the Philistines, Moab, and the Arameans of Damascus. God has promised through the prophet Nathan that David's son would reign forever and God would be a father to him.

READ 2 Samuel 11:1-5. "In 2 Samuel 11:1-5, we see that David was ripe for a visitation of grand temptation, because he was idle and he was not careful with his gaze! Thus, his lust lead to action. Cf. Matthew 5:27-30; 6:22-23." So we see two problems David had here. First, instead of "going to work" and accompanying the troops as they assaulted the Ammonites to the east of Jerusalem, David was idle at home with much time to spare. We have heard the saying, "The idle mind is the devil's workshop", and there is much truth to that. If we are not keeping ourselves busy with what the Lord has us doing, we

become easy prey to Satan and his attempts to destroy us. Spending undirected time on the internet can easily lead to websites that are inappropriate. That was David's problem here— he had plenty of time to waste. Second, he sees Bathsheba in a compromising situation— but that was not his sin, was it? E.g., we can be at a beach, as has happened to me, and glance at someone scantily clad and get an eyeful. The question is, what do we do with it? Do we glance away, or do we gaze? E.g., many years ago there was a mother in our church who struck me as a hands-on mom. One of the ways she showed that is that she taught her young children a song which has great relevance for adults. The song's words were: "be careful little eyes what you see/be careful little eyes what you see/for your Father up above is looking down with love/so be careful little eyes what you see!" It is hard to live out that song today, no matter what our age because our vision is bombarded with images and messages. E.g., a father recently told me that he would have a tough time watching the nightly news with his young children because it would have some very disturbing stories on that he did not see when he was growing up. E.g., when Elena and I survey the different movies on Amazon Prime it can take about 20-30 minutes to find an appropriate movie without a sexual theme— and even then we are not quite sure what we will get! Couple that with the fact that it is often said that men more than women are very easily visually stimulated and the widespread problem men have with pornography in our society, we can see that there is a big problem in our world.

And this leads to the deadly sin of lust. Jesus knew this. And that is why He warned in Matthew 5:27-30 that adultery is not just, in God's sight, the act, but the thought. So if our eye causes us to sin, cast it out. I.e., if something or someone in our lives is causing us to sin, cut it or him or her out of our lives. Or we can easily fall into David's sin of lust, leading to sex, which lead to Bathsheba's pregnancy.

So, what happened to David? The result was a curse on the rest of David's reign.

READ 2 Samuel 12:7-15a. "In 2 Samuel 12:7-15a the prophet Nathan courageously concludes his story with a charge to David: you da man! Fortunately, David sought the antidote to his sin— not defensiveness or excuses, but repentance through a renewed commitment to purity. Thus David was reconciled to God, who was gracious enough to bring a blessing from this ill-gotten marriage: Solomon (12:24-25)! Cf. Psalm 32; 51." How do we know that David was sincere in his repentance? Two ways at least. First, we have no other account in Scripture, which is equal-opportunity on flaws on people's characters, of David's sexually inappropriate behavior. Second, David wrote Psalms 32 and 51, the latter of which we just sang this morning. We also see here the graciousness of our God. According to the Law, David, for his acts of adultery and murder, should have been executed. But his repentance saved him. Of course, there were tragic consequences to David's sin— as we see that his son Absalom rebelled against him and slept openly, publicly with David's wives. But God allowed

something good to come out of something horrible, in that the next son from David and Bathsheba became the king do succeed him. E.g., I am reminded of Coach Bill McCartney, the head football coach of the University of Colorado in the late 1980s and early 1990s, where he won a shared national title in 1990; he had become a Christian and he told his wife that about 20 years earlier he had had an affair, and this news shook her so she contemplated suicide, but God provided healing in their marriage, and God used him to help start the Promise Keepers movement of raising up men to be godly. While there are consequences to our sin, God can still provide redemption and healing.

“How can we pursue purity that honors Jesus while living in a world that mocks purity?” I suggest three pieces of advice as the antidote to lust: (1) don’t put impure images before our eyes, because our eyes are a gateway to our heart and thus our actions— such as movies and internet sites; e.g., I recall a Christian friend of mine when I was in graduate school told me that he wanted to see the new “erotica” film Madonna had done, and I said I had read about it and wanted nothing to do with it, and I thought it was foolish for him to want to put that before his eyes and warned him against it, but he thought he would be fine, that it would not affect him, which is just what I think Satan wants us to believe; (2) repent before the Lord when we lust, and have accountability when necessary, either with our spouse or someone else; e.g., I know of someone who has an addiction to porn, and he has to go regularly to Sex Addicts

Anonymous meetings for accountability; (3) sex is a gift only to be “opened” in marriage between a man and a woman— so if you are married, make sure you nurture your marriage and sex life and 1 Corinthians 7 is a great help here; and if you are not married and want to be, ask the Lord for a spouse who is a committed Christian. As lagniappe, I will throw in one more piece of advice that undergirds and empowers all of this: follow the DATE method of Christian maturity— Daily quiet times, attend church and small groups, all the Holy Spirit to transform you and me, and *euangelion*, or share the good news with others.