

## **Stronghold: Lust**

### **Reflect**

Desire and sexual intimacy are part of the good gift God would have for us in marriage. But, due to the age-old problem of sin at work in the world and our lives, the desire we are to have for our spouse can get turned into lust for others and purely self-seeking gratification. Sin at work in us causes other people in our hearts to cease being image bearers of God whom we are to respect and love sacrificially, and instead become objects for our own enjoyment and use. Jesus reminds us that human sexuality is a gift from God and he calls us to live a life of intimacy and love that reflects God's will for us. Jesus encourages us to resist the temptation of lust that can deteriorate and destroy our hearts and relationships and to embrace the way of love that God has revealed to us in Christ, which is faithfulness and joy toward God and each other.

### **Read Your Bible**

1 John 2:15-17

Matthew 5:27-30

### **Apply God's Word to Your Life:**

1. Read Matthew 5:27-30. How is looking at someone with lust like committing adultery?
2. It is believed Jesus used hyperbole (exaggerated statements not meant to be taken literally) in verses 29-30 when talking about the dangerous consequences of lust. Why do you think that is?
3. Read 1 John 2:15-17. Why is having love for the world in direct conflict with loving the Father?
4. Where do you see lust being promoted and encouraged in the world?
5. What makes the temptation of lust so hard to fight?
6. Where do you see lust at work in your life?
7. Where do you see faithfulness and joy in the Lord at work in your life?

### **Reflecting on the text:**

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

### **Pray**

Heavenly Father, you are faithful and good. You continually give us good gifts and your grace. We confess that we often reject those gifts and grace to follow the way of the world and our own hearts' desire. Through your Son, you call us to turn from the lust of the flesh and to turn back toward you. By your grace may we hear your call and return to You and Your way in faithfulness and joy. Amen.