

THE OLD PATHS

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“Love Or Lust?”

Jarrod Jacobs

Some cannot tell the difference between love and lust. Sadly, we have raised a society of people who often mistake fulfilling a lust with love. Movies, songs, television shows, and multiple other sources have failed to explain the difference. Mistaking lust for love has always been a problem for the naïve (Prov. 7:7-27). Those who respect the Bible, however, know that the Bible declares that there is a difference between love and lust (I Cor. 13:4-8; Matt. 5:27-28; Jas. 1:14-15).

Lust is dangerous because it can destroy us spiritually as well as physically. Lust is motivated by selfishness, while love is selfless. Notice that it was lust that motivated Shechem to rape Dinah (Gen. 34:2) It was also lust that motivated David to call for Bathsheba (II Sam. 11). Later, Amnon, David’s son, would act foolishly and rape his half-sister Tamar for the same reason (II Sam. 13:1-18). These are just a few examples, but it is clear that these men suffered for their sinful actions. In like manner, we will suffer dire consequences when we allow our lusts to drive our thoughts and our actions.

Remember, the warnings against lust apply equally to women as well as men. Women like Potiphar’s wife (Gen. 39), the woman of Proverbs 7, and others, make it clear that both genders can confuse lust for love! Let us make sure we are not blind to this truth. Job said, *“I made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I think upon a maid?”* (Job 31:1). Let us make the same covenant with our eyes! Job’s covenant was intended to keep him from thinking in a wrong way. We need to protect our thinking as well! Jesus taught us this in Matthew 5:27-28. Lusting can produce adultery “in the heart” even if the physical act has not happened!

On the next page, Dennis Rigstad named several differences between love and lust. Let us read these and appreciate the differences. Please note that his description of love comes directly from I Corinthians 13:4-8.

Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ...” (Jer. 6:16).

LOVE

1. Love is patient.
2. Love is kind.
3. Love does not envy.
4. Love does not boast.
5. Love is not proud.
6. Love is not rude.
7. Love is not self-seeking.
8. Love is not easily angered.
9. Love keeps no record of wrongs.
10. Love does not delight in evil.
11. Love rejoices in the truth.
12. Love always protects.
13. Love always trusts.
14. Love always hopes.
15. Love always perseveres.
16. Love never fails; it is constant, enduring, and faithful to the end.

By: Dennis Rigstad

LUST

1. Lust is impulsive.
2. Lust is cruel, critical and manipulative.
3. Lust seeks more than it earns.
4. Lust builds self at another's expense.
5. Lust is easily threatened.
6. Lust is disrespectful and thoughtless.
7. Lust is demanding and uncaring.
8. Lust is temperamental and retaliates.
9. Lust does not forget offenses.
10. Lust commits wrong to get its own way.
11. Lust encourages lies and covers up misdeeds.
12. Lust takes to gain its own ends; lacks concern for consequences to others.
13. Lust is suspicious and jealous.
14. Lust says one chance and you're out.
15. Lust backs out when it is no longer convenient.
16. Lust is fickle, insecure and unfaithful.

Which characteristic describes us? Have we been guilty of lust and calling it love? Beware! Let us listen to the warnings of God and not confuse love and lust. Lust condemns and kills. Love saves and protects. Lust is ugly, while love is beautiful. Lust is selfish and love is selfless! "*God is love*" (I Jn. 4:8), and when we love, we are imitating Him (I Jn. 4:11-12; Eph. 5:1-2)! Remember, "*the greatest of these is love*" (I Cor. 13:13). Don't be confused about lust and love!

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Nehemiah's Prayer

Joel Raulerson

As soon as we meet Nehemiah, we can see he has a deep trust in God (Neh. 1:1-4). After discovering that Jerusalem is still in ruins after some of his brethren have returned from the city, Nehemiah is immediately distressed. In Nehemiah 1:4, we read Nehemiah's response to the bad news. *"As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven."* The interesting thing about Nehemiah is that he had a way to address the problem. Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king and held some position of trust with King Artaxerxes (Neh. 1:11). Thus, he addressed his problem in the right way. First, by praying and then by addressing the king with his concerns (Neh. 2:3-8).

Some people might have reacted in a negative way when they heard the news of their home being in ruins after all these years. Nehemiah's first reaction could have been to stage some sort of political movement or organize a protest. He could have simply abandoned his job and attempted to justify it as a move to please his God. Nehemiah could have even attempted to get the king drunk (he was the cup-bearer you know) in an attempt to persuade him to pass a law and allow Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem and give aid to his people. While many might have had a "knee-jerk reaction," Nehemiah's first response was to kneel down and pray to God (Neh. 1:4-11).

Nehemiah Knew To Whom He Was Praying.

Many times, when we hear about tragedies, the response may be, "Our thoughts and prayers go out to...." Nehemiah could have easily said this to his returning brethren and gone on with his daily life with little change. This was not some flippant or obligatory remark of, "I'll pray for you." Nehemiah addressed the God he had known and served for most of his life. Nehemiah shows that this is a common thing that he does. Whenever he has an opportunity, he will pray to the God of Heaven with full confidence, expecting God to hear his prayers, respond, and guide him through life.

Nehemiah Did Not Blame God.

When situations arise that are less than desirable, our response can be to blame God for the situation. Again, notice that Nehemiah did not blame God for the state Jerusalem was in. Nehemiah 1:7 says, **"We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses."**

Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way ..." (Jer. 6:16).

Nehemiah was aware that the reason the Jewish people had been taken into captivity was due to the sins of the people. There was no point blaming God, because the weight of sin was on the people, and the only One who could help them was God.

How will we react when we hear bad news? Is our first reaction to pray to God? In a world where many will choose to react to tragedy by blaming God and relying on their own abilities, we need more people like Nehemiah who put their trust in God. Not only should our reaction to bad news be to pray to God, but we also need to make a habit of prayer in our lives (Jas. 5:13; I Thess. 5:17). Will you follow after Nehemiah's example in your prayer life?



Spotlight On A Bible Verse: Romans 16:16

“Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.” Paul ends the book of Romans by reminding the brethren to salute or greet each other with a “holy” kiss. This was widely practiced at this time, and expressed mutual love and respect for one another. Let this verse be a reminder to us that love for the brethren is vital. It needs to be an abiding thing. We all face hardships, but our brethren's love can help us through those times and anticipate better days. How are we doing at encouraging our brethren? In times of controversy, or peace, let us make sure we are showing love for our brethren (Jn. 13:34-35). – Jarrod Jacobs



“I want the truth, give me book, chapter, and verse!”

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