

“Sex Is Not the Problem (Lust Is)”

Joshua Harris

Kindle Notes by Dave Kraft

I have a simple definition for lust: Lust is craving sexually what God has forbidden. Lust wants to go outside God's guidelines to find satisfaction. In our losing battle against lust we're often misguided in three key areas. We've had... the wrong standard for holiness, the wrong source of power to change, and the wrong motive for fighting our sin. He wants us to eliminate any kind of impurity in our thoughts and actions.

He wants us to dig down into our hearts and uproot sexual greediness, which is always seeking a new sensual thrill. God wants us to despair in our own strength so that we have no other option but to throw ourselves on His grace. Lust is an idolatrous and ultimately insatiable desire that rejects God's rule and seeks satisfaction apart from Him. An important part of standing firm in the gospel and avoiding legalism is understanding the difference between the work Christ accomplished to save us and the work of becoming holy that He enables us to participate in after we've been saved.

Our job is to invite His work, participate with it, and submit more and more of our thoughts, actions, and desires to Him. Do you know precisely where your weak points are? And more important, do you have a specific plan not only for defending yourself, but also for actually taking proactive measures to protect yourself from lust? I want to walk you through the process of identifying the specific ways you struggle with lust so you can create your own “custom-tailored plan” for overcoming lust. Richard Baxter wrote, “Keep as far as you can from those temptations that feed and strengthen the sins which you would overcome. Lay siege to your sins, and starve them out, by keeping away the food and fuel which is their maintenance and life.”

Are you more susceptible to lust at certain moments in your day? Are there certain places where you're more tempted by lust? What steps do you need to take to honor God in the way you watch TV? Are you careful about what you read? Today newspapers and magazines are spiced with content designed to stir up lust. No person is immune to the influence of music with sinful content.

What's in your CD or MP3 player? Is it helping or hindering your fight against lust? I've noticed that by not reading any romances—and fasting and praying—the lust in my mind is really coming under control. Praise God! I still have lapses, but they are much fewer than before.” Are there websites you visit that feature images or content that, though not pornographic, excite sinful desire in your heart? Stop going there. You can obey God with your eyes. You can avert your gaze. You don't have to take a second look or let your eyes linger on someone. List your own top three lust triggers. How can you avoid them? What time of day or week are you most tempted by lust? What can you do to prepare for those times?

Which locations are the most tempting for you? How can you limit your time in those places? What five little battles do you need to be fighting more faithfully? Describe in detail what it looks like for you to fight—and win—these battles.

Is there something God wants you to cut out of your life? Act on what God is showing you. men are tempted by the pleasure lust offers, while women are tempted by the power lust promises. A Christian man seeking to resist lust never reaches a state where he's unaware of a female's body He just learns to actively choose not to stare. My wife, Shannon, puts it well when she says that there's a difference between dressing attractively and dressing to attract.

If you want to experience long-term victory over lust, you must lock arms with other believers, to help you develop a conviction that Scripture is the only weapon that can successfully fight off lust. Having the words of God engraved on your heart is the key to a life of purity Psalm 119:9-11 says, “How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word.... I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.”

Do you know why some Christians make great strides in their walk with God while others are stagnant? Have you ever wondered if there is a godliness gene that some people are born with? Of course there isn't. The difference between the person who grows in holiness and the one who doesn't is not a matter of personality, upbringing, or gifting; the difference is what each has planted into the soil of his or her heart and soul. So holiness isn't a mysterious spiritual state that only an elite few can reach. It's more than an emotion, or a resolution, or an event. Holiness is a harvest. Do you want to grow in holiness? Do you want to see lust's power weaken in your life? Then make personal time with God the first priority of every day. Read your Bible with heartiness of spirit! Be diligent in prayer.