

The Heart

Definition of the Heart. Contemporary people generally consider the head with its brain to be the center and director of human activity. However, the Bible speaks of the heart as the center; “it is the wellspring of life.” (Proverbs 4:23; cf. Luke 6:45). When the Bible speaks of the “heart,” it is not referring to our physical organ that pumps blood throughout our body. Rather, the “heart” as used in the Bible is spiritual language that encompasses the totality of one’s intellect, emotion and volition (see Mark 7:20-23); sometimes it seems almost to be a synonym of the human spirit.

(1) The heart is a knowledge faculty; people know things in their heart (Deuteronomy 8:5), pray in their heart (1 Samuel 1:12-13), meditate in their heart (Psalm 19:14), hide God’s word in their heart (Psalm 119:11), devise plans in their heart (Psalm 140:2), keep words within their heart (Proverbs 4:21), think in their heart (Mark 2:8), doubt in their heart (Mark 11:23), ponder in their heart (Luke 2:19), believe in their heart (Romans 10:9), and sing in their heart (Ephesians 5:19). All of these actions of the heart are primarily issues involving the inner knowing.

Proverbs 4:23

“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”

(2) The heart is also a center of feeling. The Bible speaks about the glad heart (Exodus 4:14), the loving heart (Deuteronomy 6:5), the fearful heart (Joshua 5:1), the courageous heart (Psalm 27:14), the repentant heart (Psalm 51:17), the anxious heart (Proverbs 12:25), the angry heart (Proverbs 19:3), the revived heart (Isaiah 57:15), the anguished heart (Jeremiah 4:19, Romans 9:2), the delighted heart (Jeremiah 15:16), the grieving heart (Lamentations 2:18), the humble heart (Matthew 11:29), the excited or burning heart (Luke 24:32) and the troubled heart (John 14:1). All of these actions of the heart primarily involve inner feeling.

(3) Finally, the heart is the center of the volitional activity. We read in Scripture about the hardened heart that refuses to do what God commands (Exodus 4:21), the heart that is yielded to God (Joshua 24:23), the heart that intends to do something (2 Chronicles 6:7), the heart that desires to receive from the Lord (Psalm 21:1-2), the heart that is turned toward God’s statutes (Psalm 119:36), and the heart that wants to do something (Romans 10:1). All of these activities take place in the human will.

The Nature of the Heart Apart from God. When Adam and Eve chose to follow the serpent’s temptation to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, their decision drastically affected the human heart—it became tainted with evil. At present, therefore, according to Jeremiah’s testimony, “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jeremiah 17:9). Jesus confirmed Jeremiah’s diagnosis when he said that what makes a person unclean before God is not the failure to follow some ceremonial law, but the willingness to listen to wicked inclinations lodged in one’s heart such as “evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly” (Mark 7:21-22). Jesus taught about the seriousness of sin in the heart when he said that the sin of anger is tantamount to murder (Matthew 5:21-22) and the sin of lust is just as sinful as actual adultery (Matthew 5:27-28, see Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:28).

Regeneration

In John 3:1-8, Jesus discusses a foundational doctrine of the Christian faith: spiritual birth, or regeneration. Without the new birth one cannot see the kingdom of God, and receive eternal life and salvation through Jesus Christ. The following are important facts concerning the new birth.

(1) Regeneration is a re-creating of spiritual life in the human heart (Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23-24) by God the Holy Spirit (John 3:6, Titus 3:5). Through this process eternal life from God himself is imparted to the believer's heart (John 3:16, 2 Peter 1:4, 1 John 5:11), and he or she becomes a child of God (John 1:12, Romans 8:16-17, Galatians 3:26) and a new creation in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:9-10). He or she no longer conforms to this world (Romans 12:2) but is now "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

(2) Regeneration is necessary because all people, prior to turning to Christ, are in their inherent natures sinners who are spiritually dead, and who are incapable of obeying and pleasing God (Psalm 51:5, Jeremiah 17:9,

John 3:3

"In reply Jesus declared, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again.'"

Romans 8:7-8, 1 Corinthians 2:14, Ephesians 2:3).

(3) Regeneration comes to those who repent of sin, turn to God (Matthew 3:2), and put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation (John 1:12).

(4) Regeneration involves a transition from an old life of sin to a new life of loving obedience to Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17, Galatians 6:15, Ephesians 4:23-24, Colossians 3:10). Those who are truly born again are set free from sin's bondage (John 8:36,

Romans 6:14-23) and receive a spiritual desire and disposition to love God and follow the leading of the Spirit (Romans 8:13-14). They live righteous lives (1 John 2:29), love other believers (1 John 4:7), avoid a life of sin (1 John 3:9, 5:18) and do not love the world (1 John 2:15-16).

(5) Those born of God cannot make sin a habitual practice in their lives (1 John 3:9). As a believer, one's desires are changed so as to love God sincerely and endeavor from the heart to please God and to avoid evil (1 John 1:5-7). This is accomplished only through the grace given to believers by Christ (1 John 2:3-11, 15-17, 24-29, 3:6-24, 4:7-8, 20, 5:1), through a sustained relationship with Christ (John 15:4) and through a dependence on the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:2-14).

(6) Those who continue living in immorality and giving themselves to the world's lifestyle, no matter what they profess with their lips, demonstrate that they are still unregenerate children of Satan (1 John 3:6-10).

(7) Just as one can be born of the Spirit by receiving the life of God, he or she can choose to break relationship with Christ and thereby die spiritually because of ungodly choices and unrighteous living. Scripture affirms, "If you live according to the sinful nature, you will die." (Romans 8:13). Thus, sin and the refusal to follow the Holy Spirit extinguish the life of God in the believer's soul and cause spiritual death and exclusion from God's kingdom (Matthew 12:31-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21, Hebrews 6:4-6, 1 John 5:16).

(8) The new birth cannot be equated with physical birth, for God's relationship with the believer is a matter of spirit rather than flesh (John 3:6). Therefore, while the physical tie of a father and child can never be annulled, the father and child relationship that God desires with us is voluntary and not indissoluble during our probationary time on earth (Romans 8:13). That relationship remains conditional and based on our faith in Christ throughout our earthly existence, a faith demonstrated by lives of sincere love and obedience (Romans 8:12-14, 2 Timothy 2:12).

Hearts that are committed to doing evil run the grave risk of becoming hardened. Those who persistently refuse to listen to God's Word and to obey what he commands, and instead follow the wicked desires of their heart, will find that God will eventually harden their hearts so that they lose all sensitivity to his Word and to the desires of the Holy Spirit (see Exodus 7:3, Hebrews 3:8). The primary example of this in the Bible is Pharaoh's heart at the time of the exodus (see Exodus 7:3, 13, 22-23; 8:15, 32; 9:12; 10:1; 11:10; 14:17). Paul saw the same general principle operative in the Roman empire (cf. Romans 1:24, 26, 28) and predicted that it would also occur during the days of the antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:11-12). The writer of Hebrews filled his letter with warnings to believers not to harden their hearts (eg., Hebrews 3:8-12). Anyone who continues to reject God's word will eventually have a hardened heart.

The Regenerated Heart. God's answer to the sinfulness of the human heart is *regeneration*, which comes to all who repent of their sins, turn to God, and place a personal faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

(1) Regeneration is a matter of the heart. Those who repent from their heart of all sin and confess in their heart that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9) are born again and receive a new heart from God (cf. Psalm 51:10, Ezekiel 11:19).

(2) Within the hearts of those who experience spiritual birth, God creates a desire to love him and to obey him. Repeatedly God emphasized to his people the necessity of a love that comes from the heart (see Deuteronomy 4:29, 6:6). Such love for and devotion to God cannot be separated from obedience to his Word (cf. Psalm 119:34, 69, 112). Jesus taught that love for God with the whole heart and love for one's neighbor summarize God's entire law. (Matthew 22:37-40).

(3) Love from the heart is the essential ingredient in obedience. All too often God's people tried to substitute obedience to mere outward religious forms (such as feast days, offerings and sacrifices) for genuine love from the heart (see Isaiah 1:10-17 Amos 5:21-26; Micah 6:6-8; see Deuteronomy 10:12). Outward observance without an inner desire to serve God is hypocritical religion and is severely condemned by our Lord (see Matthew 23:13-28; see Luke 21:1-4).

(4) Many other spiritual activities take place in the hearts of regenerated believers. They praise God with their heart (Psalm 9:1), meditate in their heart (Psalm 19:14), cry out to God from the heart (Psalm 84:2), seek God with all their heart (Psalm 119:2, 10), hide God's word in their heart (Psalm 119:11; see Deuteronomy 6:6), trust in the Lord with all their heart (Proverbs 3:5), experience God's love poured out into their heart (Romans 5:5) and sing to God in their heart (Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16).

The Christian's Relationship to the World

The term "world" (Greek *kosmos*) often refers to the vast system of this age that Satan promotes and that exists independent of God. It consists not only in the obviously evil, immoral and sinful lifestyle and values of the world, but also refers to the spirit of rebellion against or indifference to God and his revelation that exists within all human enterprises not under Christ's lordship. In this age Satan uses the world's ideas, morality, philosophies, psychology, desires, governments, culture, education, science, art, medicine, music, economic systems, entertainment, fashions, mass media, religions, sports, agriculture, etc., to oppose God, his people, his Word, and his righteous standards (Matthew 16:26; 1 Corinthians 2:12; 3:19; Titus 2:12; 1 John 2:15-16). For example, Satan will use the medical profession to promote the killing of unborn babies, agriculture to produce life-destroying drugs such as alcohol and narcotics, educational systems to promote ungodly and humanistic philosophy, fashion industry to break down modesty, and the entertainment media to undermine Biblical moral standards and values. Believers must be aware that behind all human enterprises there is a spirit or power that moves against God and his Word, some to a lesser degree, some to a greater degree. Finally, the "world" also includes all man-made religious systems and all unbiblical, worldly, or lukewarm "Christian" organizations and churches.

1 John 2:15-16

"Do not love the world or anything in the world.. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For everything in the world—the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does—comes not from the Father but from the world."

(1) Satan (see Matthew 4:10) is the god of the present world system (see John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11, 2 Corinthians 4:4, 1 John 5:19). Along with a host of subordinate evil spirits, he controls it (Daniel 10:13, Luke 4:5-7, Ephesians 6:12-13)

(2) Satan has organized the world into political, cultural, economic and religious systems that are innately hostile toward God and his people (John 7:7, John 15:18, James 4:4, 1 John 2:16, 18) and that refuse to submit to his truth, which exposes its evil (John 7:7).

(3) The world and the true church are two distinct groups of people. The world is under Satan's dominion (see John 12:31); the church belongs exclusively to God (Ephesians 5:23-24, Revelation 21:2). Thus, believers must separate themselves from the world, i.e. the spirit of this age.

(4) In the world believers are aliens and strangers (Hebrews 11:13, 1 Peter 2:11). (a) They are the called-out-ones from

the world (John 15:19), who are exhorted to no longer conform to the world (see Romans 12:2) or love the world (1 John 2:15), to overcome the world (1 John 5:4), hate the world's evil (see Hebrews 1:9), die to the world (Galatians 6:14) and be delivered from the world (Colossians 1:13-14). (b) Loving the world (1 John 2:15) defiles our fellowship with God, is spiritual adultery and leads to spiritual destruction. It is impossible to love the world and the Father at the same time (Matthew 6:24, Luke 16:13, see James 4:4). To love the world means to be in an intimate fellowship with and devoted to its values, interest, ways, and pleasures; it means taking pleasure in or enjoying what is offensive and opposed to God (see Luke 23:35). Note, of course, that the terms "world" and "earth" are not synonymous; God does not forbid a love or appreciation for the created earth, i.e., nature, mountains, forests, and the like.

(5) According to 1 John 2:16, three aspects of the sinful world create open hostility to God: (a) “The cravings of sinful man”: this includes impure desires and running after sinful pleasures and sensual gratification (1 Corinthians 6:18, Philippians 3:19; James 1:14). (b) “The lust of his eyes”: this refers to coveting or lusting after things that are attractive to the eye but forbidden by God, including the desire to read about or watch that which gives sinful pleasure (Exodus 20:17, Romans 7:7). In the present modern age this includes the desire to entertain oneself by viewing pornography, violence, ungodly conduct, nudity or immorality on stage, cinema, television, videos, internet or magazines (Genesis 3:6, Joshua 7:21, 2 Samuel 11:2, Matthew 5:28). (c) “The boasting of what he has and does”: This refers to subtle pride and arrogance that often arises with wealth or material blessings, positions of power, promotions, personal achievements or honor, and self-sufficient independence. It is the spirit that seeks to exalt, glorify or promote oneself in life (James 4:16). It is the opposite of submission to God and his Word, and a humble trusting of God in all our ways.

(6) Believers must not be yoked with those who participate in the world’s evil system (see Matthew 9:11, 2 Corinthians 6:14), must expose evil (John 7:7, Ephesians 5:11) must be light and salt to the world (Matthew 5:13-14), must love unbelievers (John 3:16) and must attempt to win unbelievers to Christ (Mark 16:15, Jude 22-23).

(7) From the world the true Christian may experience trouble (John 16:2-3), hatred (John 15:19), persecution (Matthew 5:10-12) and suffering (Romans 8:22-23, 1 Peter 2:19-21). By the various forms of temptations and enticements of the world, Satan makes an unceasing effort to destroy the life of God in the true believer (2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Peter 5:8).

(8) The world system is temporary and will be destroyed by God (Daniel 2:34-35, 44, 1 Corinthians 7:31, 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10, 2 Peter 3:10, Revelation 18:2). Even now it is in the process of passing away (1 John 2:17).

The Acts of the Sinful Nature and the Fruit of the Spirit

No passage in the Bible draws a clearer contrast between the lifestyle of the Spirit-filled believer and that of the person controlled by the sinful human nature than Galatians 5:15-26. Paul not only discusses general lifestyle differences by emphasizing that the Spirit and the sinful nature are at war with each other, but he also includes a specific list of both the acts of the sinful nature and the fruit of the Spirit.

The Acts of the Sinful Nature. “Sinful nature” (Greek *sarx*) is a term for the human nature with its corrupt desires. The sinful nature remains within Christians after their conversion and is their deadly enemy (Romans 8:6-8, 13, Galatians 5:17, 21). Those who practice the acts of the sinful nature cannot inherit God’s kingdom

Galatians 5:22-23

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.”

(Galatians 5:21). Therefore this sinful nature must be resisted and put to death continually through the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:4-14, see Galatians 5:17). The acts of the sinful nature (Galatians 5:19-21) include:

(1) “Sexual immorality” (Greek *porneia*), i.e., sexual activity or intercourse outside the marriage union. The word *pornography* comes from the root *porneia*; this sexual immorality comprehensively may include taking pleasure in pornographic pictures, films or writings (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:31-32, 19:9, Acts 15:20, 29, Acts 21:25, 1 Corinthians 5:1);

(2) “Impurity” (Greek *akatharsia*), i.e., sexual sins, evil deeds and vices, including thoughts and desires of the heart (Ephesians 5:3, Colossians 3:5);

(3) “Debauchery” (Greek *aselgeia*), i.e., sensuality, following one’s passions and desires to the point of having no shame or public decency (2 Corinthians 12:21, Ephesians 5:19);

(4) “Idolatry” (Greek *eidololatria*), i.e., worship of spirits, persons or graven images, trust in any person, institution or thing as having equal or greater authority than God and his Word (Colossians 3:5);

(5) “Witchcraft” (Greek *pharmakeia*), i.e., sorcery, spiritism, black magic, worship of demons and use of drugs to produce “spiritual” experiences (Exodus 7:11, 22, 8:18, Revelation 9:21, 18:23);

(6) “Hatred” (Greek *echthra*), i.e., intense, hostile intentions and acts, extreme dislike or enmity;

(7) “Discord” (Greek *eris*), i.e., quarreling, antagonism, a struggle for superiority (Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 1:11, 3:3);

(8) “Jealousy” (Greek *zelos*), i.e., resentfulness, envy of another’s success (Romans 13:13, 1 Corinthians 3:3);

(9) “Fits of rage” (Greek *thumos*), i.e., explosive anger that flames into violent words or deeds (Colossians 3:8);

(10) “Selfish ambition” (Greek *eritheia*), i.e., unrighteously seeking power or position (2 Corinthians 12:20, Philippians 1:16-17);

(11) “Dissentions” (Greek *dichostasia*), i.e., introducing divisive teachings not supported by God’s Word (Romans 16:17);

(12) “Factions” (Greek *hairesis*), i.e., division within the congregation into exclusive groups or cliques that destroy the unity of the church (1 Corinthians 11:19);

(13) “Envy” (Greek *phthonos*), i.e., resentful dislike of another person who has something that one desires;

(14) “Drunkenness” (Greek *methe*), i.e., impairing one’s mental or physical control by alcoholic drink.

(15) “Orgies” (Greek *komos*), i.e., excessive feasting and revelry, a party spirit involving alcohol, drugs, sex, or the like.

Paul’s final comment about the acts of the sinful nature is stern and forceful: any so-called Christians who engage in these types of activities shut themselves out of the kingdom of God, i.e., they do not possess eternal salvation (Galatians 5:2, see 1 Corinthians 6:9).

The Fruit of the Spirit. Contrasted to the acts of the sinful nature is a single-minded lifestyle called “the fruit of the Spirit.” This is produced in God’s children as they allow the Spirit to so direct and influence their lives so that they destroy sin’s power, especially the acts of the sinful nature, and walk in fellowship with God (see Romans 8:5-14, 8:14, 2 Corinthians 6:6, Ephesians 4:2-3, 5:9, Colossians 3:12-15, 2 Peter 1:4-9). The fruit of the Spirit includes:

(1) “Love” (Greek *agape*), i.e., a caring for and seeking the highest good another person without motive of personal gain (Romans 5:5, 1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5:2, Colossians 3:14);

(2) “Joy” (Greek *chara*), i.e., the feeling of gladness based on the love, grace, blessings, promises, and nearness of God that belong to those who believe in Christ (Psalm 119:16, 2 Corinthians 6:10, 12:9, 1 Peter 1:8, Philippians 1:14);

(3) “Peace” (Greek *eirene*), i.e., the rest of heart and mind based on the knowledge that all is well between the believer and his or her heavenly father, resulting in freedom from the turmoil of anxiety (Romans 15:33, Philippians 4:7, 1 Thessalonians 5:23, Hebrews 13:20);

(4) “Patience” (Greek *makrothumia*), i.e., endurance, long-suffering, being slow to anger or despair (Ephesians 4:2, 2 Timothy 3:10, Hebrews 12:1);

(5) “Kindness” (Greek *chrestotes*), i.e., not wanting to hurt anyone or cause them pain (Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:12, 1 Peter 2:3);

(6) “Goodness” (Greek *agathosune*), i.e., zeal for truth and righteousness and a hatred of evil; it can be expressed in acts of kindness (Luke 7:37-50) or in rebuking and correcting evil (Matthew 21:12-13);

(7) “Faithfulness” (Greek *pistis*), i.e., firm and unswerving loyalty to a person to whom one is united by promise, commitment, trust, and honesty (Matthew 23:23, Romans 3:3, 1 Timothy 6:12, 2 Timothy 2:2, 4:7, Titus 2:10);

(8) “Gentleness” (Greek *prautes*), i.e., restraint coupled with strength and courage, it describes a person who can be angry when anger is needed and humbly submissive when submission is needed (2 Timothy 2:25, 1 Peter 3:15, for gentleness in Jesus, compare Matthew 11:29 with Matthew 23 and Mark 3:5, in Paul, compare 2 Corinthians 10:1 with 10:4-6 and Galatians 1:9, in Moses, compare Numbers 12:3 with Exodus 32:19-20);

(9) “Self-control” (Greek *egkrateia*), i.e., mastering one’s own desires and passions, including faithfulness to one’s marriage vows, also purity (1 Corinthians 7:9, 9:25, Titus 1:8, 2:5).

Paul’s final comment about the fruit of the Spirit indicates that there are no restrictions to the lifestyle indicated here. Christians can—in fact, must—practice these virtues over and over again; they will never discover a law prohibiting them from living according to these principles.

Standards of Sexual Morality

Believers are called in Christ to be morally and sexually pure (2 Corinthians 11:2, Titus 2:5, 1 Peter 3:2) The word “pure” (Greek *hagnos* or *amiantos*) means to be free from all taint of that which is lewd. It suggests refraining from all acts and thoughts that incite desire not in accordance with one’s virginity before marriage or one’s marriage covenant after marriage. It stresses restraint and avoidance of all sexual stimulation or activity that would defile one’s purity before God. It includes controlling one’s own body “in a way that is holy and honorable” (1 Thessalonians 4:4), and not in “passionate lust” (4:5). This scriptural instruction is for both those who are single and those who are married. With regard to sexual morality and purity, the Bible teaches the following:

(1) Sexual intimacy is reserved for the marriage relationship and is approved and blessed by God only in that state (See Genesis 2:24, Song of Solomon 2:7, and 4:12). Through marriage the husband and wife become one flesh according to God’s will. The physical and emotional pleasures resulting from a faithful marriage relationship are ordained by God and held in honor by him.

Hebrews 13:4

“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

(2) Adultery, sexual intercourse before marriage, forbidden sensual activity, homosexuality, and degrading passions are considered grave sins in God’s sight, since they are a transgression of God’s moral law (see Exodus 20:14) and a defiling of the marriage relationship. Such sins not only are condemned in Scripture (see Proverbs 5:3) but also place one outside God’s kingdom (Romans 1:24-32, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21).

(3) Sexual impurity includes not only forbidden intercourse or consummated acts, but also involves any act of sexual gratification with another person other than one’s marriage partner, achieved by uncovering or exploring the nakedness of that person. The contemporary teaching that says sexual intimacy among “committed” unmarried youth and adults is acceptable as long as it stops short of full sexual union is teaching contrary to God’s holiness and the Biblical standard of purity. God explicitly prohibits having any kind of “sexual relations with” (literally “uncovering the nakedness of”) anyone who is not a lawful wife or husband (Leviticus 18:6-30, 20:11, 17, 19-21, 18:16).

(4) The believer must exercise self-control with reference to all sexual matters before marriage. To justify premarital intimacy in the name of Christ merely on the ground of a real or a felt love for another flagrantly compromises God’s holy standards with the world’s impure ways and, in effect, justifies immorality. After marriage, sexual intimacy must be confined to one’s marriage partner. The Bible names self-control as one aspect of the Spirit’s fruit, the positive and pure behavior that is in contrast to immoral sexual play, gratification, adultery, and impurity. One’s faith commitment to God’s will with regard to purity will open the way to receiving this gift of self-control through the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-24).

(5) Biblical terms used for sexual immorality, describing the breadth of its evil, are as follows
(a) Sexual immorality (Greek *porneia*) describes a wide variety of sexual activities before or outside of marriage; it is not limited to consummated sexual acts. Any intimate sexual activity or play outside the

marriage relationship, including the touching of the intimate parts of the body or viewing another person's nakedness, is included in this term and is clearly a transgression of God's moral standards for his people (see Leviticus 18:6-30, 20:11-12, 17, 19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:18, 1 Thessalonians 4:3). (b) Debauchery, or sensuality, (Greek *aselgeia*) denotes the absence of clear moral principles, especially disregard of sexual self-control that maintains pure behavior (see 1 Timothy 2:9). It includes the inclination toward indulging in or arousing sinful lust, and thus is a participation in Biblically unjustifiable conduct (Galatians 5:19, Ephesians 4:19, 1 Peter 4:3, 2 Peter 2:2, 18). (c) Exploiting or taking advantage of someone (Greek *pleonekteo*) means to deprive another of the moral purity that God desires for that person in order to satisfy one's own self-centered desires. To arouse in another person sexual desires that cannot be righteously fulfilled is to exploit or take advantage of that person (1 Thessalonians 4:6, Ephesians 4:19). (d) Lust (Greek *epithumia*) is having a sexual desire that if fulfilled would be a violation of God's law and another person's purity (Ephesians 4:19, 22, 1 Peter 4:3, 2 Peter 2:18, Matthew 5:28).