



## Re-Forming Sex, Marriage, and Honesty (Matthew 5:27-37)

### Re-Formed: Sermon on the Mount pt. 4

Pastor Tim Peck

#### THE BIG IDEA

To live as Jesus' disciples, God calls us to re-form our sexuality by stewarding our own bodies, to re-form marriage by treating it as a covenant, and to re-form honesty by being people of truth.

#### OPENING

- The Pharisees built “fences” around God’s commands to avoid morally risky situations. How have you done this in the past? Why are fences inadequate to bring about inner change?

#### DIGGING DEEPER

- According to Pastor Tim, the Bible’s consistent sexual ethic is that sexual activity ought to be reserved for marriage between a husband and wife. Why do you think God’s people have such difficulty living out this ethic?
- Read Galatians 5:16, James 1:14-15, and 2 Timothy 2:22. From these verses, what advice would you give to someone struggling with lust?
- Starting around the third century, the Church started treating married Christians as second-class Christians. Unmarried Christians were viewed as taking their discipleship more seriously than married Christians. Over time, this led to a bias against married Christians and a requirement that pastors and church leaders remain unmarried. Some have suggested that today’s church has reversed this bias. Unmarried Christians are often viewed as second-class Christians. Read Hebrews 13:4 and 1 Corinthians 7:7-8. How can the Church today value both married and unmarried people equally?
- Pastor Tim says Christians should view marriage as a covenant. A covenant is *“a formal agreement...between two parties that establishes a relationship and in which*



*obligations and mutual responsibilities may be enacted.*"<sup>1</sup> What are the obligations and mutual responsibilities in a marriage covenant?<sup>2</sup>

- Jesus' teaching about oaths and vows alludes to the ninth commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (Exodus 20:16). The *Westminster Catechism* (a Reformed teaching tool from 1647) includes the following as sins that are forbidden under the ninth commandment: "*all prejudicing of the truth, and the good name of our neighbors... concealing the truth... speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end... speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, gossiping, whispering, scoffing, reviling; rash, harsh, and partial censuring; misconstruing intentions, words, and actions...*"<sup>3</sup> Why do Christians easily fall into these sins?

## PUTTING IT TO WORK

- Of the three malforming cycles (lust, easy divorce, dishonesty), which have you struggled with most in the past? What has helped you break these cycles?
- Spend time this week in prayer, asking God to help you take responsibility to steward your body well. Pray Romans 12:1 to God each day this week.

## PRAYER REQUESTS

---

<sup>1</sup>Donald McKim, *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (John Knox Press, 2014), 71.

<sup>2</sup>To learn more about the Bible's teaching regarding divorce and remarriage, Pastor Tim recommends David Instone-Brewer's book *Divorce and Remarriage in the Church* (InterVarsity Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup>*Westminster Larger Catechism* Q145 in *ECO Confessional Standards*, p. 106.