

## THE BIG IDEA: A divided heart leads to a compromised life

### The Take-Off

How many of us have dreaded a job or a task so much that we put it off way longer than we should have?

You know - that one closet that you've stuffed so much into that you're almost afraid to open it?

Then, when you've finally gotten so sick of it that you can't take it any longer, you "blnge clean" it and refuse to stop until it's done? You barely stop for food or bathroom breaks. You just power through and tackle in a day what you've been putting off for a year!

That's kind of what we're going to do today. We could take 5 verses and split them into a couple of weeks, but since the topic is something that most of us would rather continue to put off for another decade or 2, I say we're better off just jumping in there and getting dirty because, statistically speaking, we've got a lot to clean up in this closet. Turn to [Matthew 5:27-32 \(NIV\)](#) and join me as we begin to crack open the door.

Be careful, all kinds of stuff could come out. Let's read.

### 1. The heart is the heart of the matter

- a. Unlike last week, the basic commands that Jesus starts with actually apply to a number of us in the room
- b. That means it's a little harder, right? That's why we tend to keep this closet shut tight.
- c. When Jesus talked about not murdering, we all felt pretty good.
- d. When He talks about adultery and divorce, it hits a little closer to home.
- e. So, before we get started here, remember 2 verses:
  - [Romans 8:1 \(NIV\)](#) / there isn't condemnation in Christ
  - [2 Timothy 3:16-17 \(NIV\)](#) / there is correction in Christ
- f. The goal today isn't to beat anyone up over the past, but instead to learn how we can keep from repeating the past
- g. To do that, we've got to get to the heart of the matter - and that's the heart
- h. **The heart is the heart of the matter** and God has always been after the heart
- i. Remember Jesus calling us to a righteousness that exceeds the Pharisees - one of the heart - inward
- j. Last week we read about a deeper call that dealt with the anger in our heart
- k. God wants us to have heart transformation more than behavior modification!
- l. Why? Matthew 5:8 / He wants us to see Him!
- m. Pure hearts will. Divided hearts won't.
- n. God speaks a lot about undivided hearts:
  - [Psalm 86:11 \(NIV\)](#) / divided heart lives in awe of God
  - [Ezekiel 11:19-21 \(NIV\)](#) / undivided heart follows - divided heart does not
  - [2 Cor. 11:1-4 \(NIV\)](#) / false teaching calls us away from undivided devotion (phrase in the NLT)
- o. You can really see the progression that happens when our hearts get divided and that's why Jesus is focusing so hard on the heart here in our passage
- p. It's because **a divided heart leads to a compromised life**
- q. Instead of focusing on adultery and divorce as the unforgivable sins (which many Christians do), Jesus is saying that they are the SYMPTOMS of a divided heart.
- r. A divided heart separates: external from internal, worship from work - it compartmentalizes life
- s. Speaking about adultery and divorce, Jesus shows us how this looks:
- t. A divided heart sees sex as only physical (*search for the series [SexEd](#)*)
  - Sex isn't just physical. If it was, prostitution would be the world's most popular profession.
  - A divided heart will see it as only physical ("I don't love her! I love you!")
  - Anybody who has lived through adultery knows that it is way deeper than that.
- u. A divided heart sees marriage as only transactional (*search for the series [Wait, What?](#)*)
  - If we buy this lie than we'll see marriage as a "happiness contract" instead of a "holiness covenant"
- v. The issue is the progressive nature of sin and it ALWAYS starts in the heart
- w. [James 1:14-15 \(NIV\)](#) / desire-sin-death
- x. Gazing (vv. 28-29 - look) turns to grazing (v. 30 - act) and soon the fire's blazing (v. 32 - ruined)
- y. That's why Jesus wants us to get to the heart of the matter

## 2. Nothing matters more than guarding the heart

- a. **Proverbs 4:23 (NIV)** / above ALL else, guard your heart
- b. “Guard” meant to watch, preserve, keep, it carried the idea of keeping watch over a vineyard (to keep out the foxes that ruin it / Song of Solomon 2:15)
- c. **Nothing matters more than guarding your heart**, and here are 3 practical suggestions to help:
- d. ONE: Guard your heart by controlling your eyes
  - Remember that it all started with the eyes (“looks with lust”)
  - **Job 31:1 (NIV)** / Make a covenant with your eyes
  - The best time to stop sinning is before you start
  - Take an inventory of what you’re watching
  - Prov. 4:25 / Look straight ahead, fix your gaze
- e. TWO: Trust overcomes lust
  - **Prov. 3:5-6 (NIV)** / trust God with ALL your heart (there’s that undivided heart again!)
  - Do I trust that God is with me?
  - Do I trust that God knows what I need (even more than I do)?
  - Do I trust that what I need is greater than what I want?
  - Lust looks for greener pastures; trust looks for to God to water the pastures we have
- f. THREE: Simple truth doesn’t mean simple solutions
  - Healing and recovering from this type of compromise is harder than we want and longer than we’d like
  - But the truth and the solutions still point us to Jesus
  - **Psalms 147:3 (NIV)** / He is the ONLY ONE who can truly mend a fractured heart

### The Landing

So let me close this morning speaking some healing words over you:

- There can be a lot of shame attached to past failures in these areas. The cross eradicates shame.
- It’s easy to feel like a victim in these areas. The resurrection empowers us as victors.
- God can love us in every situation we’re in without loving every situation we’re in.

This morning, in light of the goodness and the graciousness of God that leads us to repentance, I would simply encourage you to bring your broken heart to the only One Who can make it whole again.

Here is my heart, Lord. Take it, heal it, and then help me to guard it. In Your name, Jesus. Amen.