



Nuggets 38: Stopping Those Dirty Thoughts

We may feel a momentary attraction at times to persons to whom we have no right. It is even harder for men, who are more immediately and more visually stimulated. Sexual attraction is not a sin. It is part of God's natural creation. The lust Jesus warned us against is not mere attraction but mental intention ("I would if I could"). While temptation is not sin, it will quickly lead us to sin if we don't turn our thoughts elsewhere. We cross a line when we deliberately keep fantasizing about the person, or plan ways to encounter them. Let me share some principles which have helped people keep their minds and hearts clean:

- **Be real. Get it clear in your mind that you can't have it both ways. The only person who overcomes sexual temptation is the person who has made a firm commitment to avoid sexual sin. Knowing that you are not going there makes it easier not to take the first mental steps in that direction.**
- **Don't make yourself more temptable through the wrong kind of fantasies, viewing, music, friendships or dating behavior. Don't send signals by how you dress and behave. The spirit of our culture is not a spirit of purity.**
- **In fighting lust, distraction and substitution are more effective than head-on struggle.**
- **If you do have lustful thoughts, quickly repent, turn it over to God and immediately focus on better things. Covenant with him that you will do that. Long cycles of repentance only keep your mind fixed on the sin and make you depressed, easier to bring down.**
- **Cut off wrong thoughts when they first appear, while they are more manageable.**
- **The more you can think of someone as a person, the less you will think of them just as a body.**
- **The single person can rechannel sexual energy into sports, work, etc.**
- **If married, strengthen and feed your marriage.**
- **It may help to get into some kind of accountability arrangement.**
- **If you are addicted to sexual excitement, you are trying to fill some emptiness in your life the wrong way. Ask God to help you understand the emptiness so you can deal with the root of your struggle. Get trustworthy counsel if necessary.**

Jesus was just as human as we are and he understands when we have this battle. He overcame and set us an example. Jesus is more interested in helping you than in judging you. He gladly forgives you when you repent and his Spirit really will help you develop faithfulness and self-control.

Genesis 1:27; 4:7; 39:1-12; Job 31:1; 2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Corinthians 6:15-20; Matthew 5:27-30; 15:19,20; 1 John 2:15-17; Ephesians 5:3-5; Matthew 22:35-40; 2 Corinthians 10:5; Galatians 5:19-23; Romans 8:13; 2 Timothy 1:7; James 5:16; Psalm 103:8-14; Matthew 11:28-30; 5:6; Hebrews 4:14-16

TO SUBSCRIBE free, email subscribe@shbi.org **TO UNSUBSCRIBE** send a blank email to unsubscribe@shbi.org To communicate with us directly, email nuggets@shbi.org **Past issues** of Nuggets are archived at www.shbi.org/content/nuggets/nuggets.htm (you may add this link to your website).

Copyright 2006 by G.B. Shelburne, III. May be freely reproduced or forwarded for non-commercial purposes provided content is unchanged and this copyright notice is included. These shepherding messages are sent to members and friends of New Beginnings Church (www.nbchurch.com), to students and alumni of South Houston Bible Institute (www.shbi.org), and to other interested persons.

Tuition-free evening classes: www.shbi.org

Distance Learning Bible courses: www.shbi.org/content/distance/distancelearn.htm

To support SHBI's ministry: www.shbi.org/content/finances/finances.htm