

American Decency Association

PO Box 202, Fremont, MI 49412 231-924-4050 www.americandecency.org

Encouraging Christians to guard their hearts

January 2014

When Women Lust

by: Eowyn Stoddard



We all know that men struggle with lust. But what about women? While it's becoming more common to hear of women's struggles with pornography use, many women still perceive that they have the moral high ground over men. Such comparisons don't help because men and women often struggle in different ways.

When a beautiful woman walks in the room or flashes on a screen or billboard, all eyes are transfixed. While men might be thinking about sex, a woman might be thinking, I wonder what it would be like to have such a body? Men want the body, women want the body. They want the body that attracts everyone. Lust can be either a strong feeling of sexual

desire, or a strong desire for something.

We know when a man has sinned as he takes the body he wants through indulging in pornography or visiting a prostitute. But what does it look like for a woman to act out on her lust? She cannot take the body she desires to have, so what does she do? For the most part, her sin remains hidden. Still, there are some tell-tale signs of her sin, which I will describe in the first person because I struggle with this too.

Signs of Struggle

Self-Pity

The first feeling lust produces in a woman is dissatisfaction with her own body. We have compared our body with someone else's and fallen short. ... This leads us to self-pity.

Insecurity

Feeling sorry for ourselves makes us feel insecure. We feel threatened in our own femininity and start worrying about our husband or fiancé or boyfriend finding a new woman more attractive. ... Because I am

struggling with lust, I assume my man must be, so I fear our relationship is threatened anew with every new attractive woman we encounter.

Criticism

We feel the need to put down other women. We rationalize our struggle by leveling the playing field in our own minds. The thinking goes like this: "Well, she may be very sexy, but she probably isn't very intelligent," or, "Her hair is perfect, but I'm sure glad I don't have those legs." We would never say anything cruel, but we think it to make ourselves feel better.

Activism

If none of this makes us feel better, we embark on a never-ending cycle of self-improvement. We feel the need to regain ground because our place at the top has been threatened. This is a form of works-righteousness in which we attempt to prove to ourselves, the world around us, and ultimately even to God that we can change ourselves into our own

[Continued on page 2]

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[Continued on page 2]

[continued from page 1]



image, the perfect one we've created, one we so desperately want to attain. We make new dietary resolutions, new and better workout plans, and buy new clothes and cosmetics so we can look sexier.

Putting God on the Dock

Lusting after some other woman's body is a symptom of deep dissatisfaction with the way we look. It's a matter of pride. We feel we deserve better. When I was a teenager struggling to accept my body and all of its changes, my mother once said to me, "Complaining about your figure is like slapping God in the face!" That really caught my attention. My dissatisfaction with my body was shouting out to God, "You made me wrong!" But as my maker, did he not have the right to make me as he pleased? Does not God look over his creation and pronounce it good? Who was I to contradict him?

Our bodies are important to God, so we need to care for them as good stewards. We need to eat right, exercise regularly, and sleep enough. Nevertheless, the fall affects our bodies so that they age, wrinkle, sag, and eventually die. God knows this process and in his mercy, he sent Jesus to die on the cross to reverse the deadly effects of the fall.

Through the resurrection, God has assured us that he is capable and in the process of making all things new. But interestingly, God is in the business of renewing us from the inside out, not the outside in. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16 NIV). He starts with our hearts because that is where the core problem resides. He sees into the recesses of our hearts, where those dark, lustful, self-destructive thoughts lie, and he chose to plunge into that cavern to shine his light.

When we start seeing our hearts through his redemptive purposes, we will see where the Spirit is initiating change, bringing us to

repentance and giving us new longings. The rest of the effects of the fall will be overcome on the final day, and then we will also receive perfect bodies to go along with our perfected hearts.

Maybe that is why he constantly frustrates us in our striving to renew ourselves from the outside in. He wants us to realize that we are made for something more. To be a self-made woman based on the ideals put forth in women's magazines or comparing ourselves with other women we admire is not God's goal for us. It's far too small! In fact, those magazines can be just as bad for our souls as pornography is for men.

Rather, God changes us into the image of his son, Jesus, the perfect man. He wants us to experience joy in how he intended us to be. He fulfills all his purposes in us. Let's not waste precious time trying to be someone else. Being satisfied in God alone will make you and me an irresistibly attractive woman, inside and out, because his love will shine through us for the world to see.

[Taken from: The Gospel Coalition]

[continued from page 1]



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