

Step by Step - Section 9

"My child, do not be filled with lust, for lust leads to fornication, neither foul-speaking neither with uplifted eyes; for of all these things lead to unfaithfulness and are not becoming of a follower of Mshikha."

As we have been doing, it is helpful to pull out the directions, so we may better analyze what it is that's being asked of us.

St. James tells us:

Not to be filled with lust
Not to be foul-speaking
Not to have uplifted eyes

Two of these directives are related: To have uplifted eyes and to be filled with lust. To have uplifted eyes is not a restriction of looking straight ahead. It is specifically about looking at others in an objectifying manner. This doesn't mean a husband or wife cannot be attracted to their spouse or someone who is courting another cannot be attracted to their betrothed and the like. This is about viewing people who come into our environment and looking at them like a piece of meat. Think of a young woman passing a group of young men. If she passes by and they leer at her, this is being with uplifted eyes.

Going from looking at someone in an objectifying manner, to developing lustful thoughts are connected. A person doesn't just wake up to find themselves in bed with a stranger (not unless they have been drinking heavily the night before... God forbid!), a person has to make the effort to seek out someone for a casual fling, so many prudent and virtuous safeguards are virtually thrown out the window, to create a situation where a person "Just happens to find themselves in a compromising position". They know it full well. To think otherwise is only fooling themselves.

We do need to be clear: in relation to the Believer, being filled with lust is not about being sensually or sexually attracted to a spouse, it is about having developed being desirous after others.

A good example in modern terms are those who watch adult or suggestive films or shows with the express purpose of becoming aroused or titillated. This is both looking at someone with upturned eyes and developing lustful thoughts, 2 in 1.

St. James also points to foul speaking as a third component that leads to adultery. Why?

If a person spied a random individual that they wanted to spend the night with, it is pretty unlikely that they are going to go over to that person and start swearing like a sailor at that person.

So, how can foul speaking lead to adultery? The phrase "foul speech" does not

necessarily limit itself to using swear words. Just like a person doesn't just wake up and find themselves having compromised themselves with another, a person doesn't end up going home with another person, if they don't develop some kind of dialog first.

What kind of dialog? They are not talking about gardening or sports or world history or politics, no, the subject matter finds itself in the area of intimate or suggestive talk. Talk that would facilitate spending intimate time with a stranger.

In order to head down this road, that person has to bypass so many virtuous, moral and ethical principles to get to this point, that to end up in this situation, this person cannot claim to be a victim of circumstance.

We don't even want to talk about how many times people blame intoxicants for their indiscretions, they don't make the situation any better, but the individual choose their environment. They choose their poison and they choose to let loose their inhibitions, so many stages of "allowing" take place for a person to let themselves give themselves into a casual sexual liaison or an adulterous affair.

There are far too many people who call themselves believer and see themselves as disciples of Messiah, who have destroyed relationships through unfaithfulness. People believe if they are discreet that no one will know what they have done. They forget that God sees them clearly and Messiah does not want followers who act wantonly and them play mind games and rationalize their bad behaviour.

What to take from this: I don't have the right to view others as objects. I wouldn't want others to treat me in this fashion. I have no cause to treat others in this manner. I don't need to look for sensual distraction outside my committed relationship. If I have no relationship, I have no need to seek meaningless liaisons for sensual gratification. I have no reason to speak to others in lurid or suggestive ways that may lead them to think I am open to sexual indiscretions.

Practice: Review what you watch (films, television, videos). Is there anything you watch precisely for the purpose of arousal? If so, start to change your viewing habits the better suit your spiritual lifestyle.

When you are out in the world, make it a point to avert your eyes, when people you notice yourself staring at. You don't have to be overly obvious, just as they pass, lower your gaze and do not stare at them. It doesn't mean you are being wrong or bad for noticing someone is attractive, if you are single and intend to seriously get to know this person, then by all means. Make their acquaintance! But if it is someone passing that you find pleasing physically, become aware of this thought or feeling and make a point to correct yourself. You wouldn't see a monk or nun leering at someone, so we need to keep this in mind (It doesn't mean celibates are not tempted, just they make it a point not to give into these stray feelings).

When you are in conversations with others, and the conversation gets of an intimate

nature or raunchy, make it a point to either change the topic of conversation, or excuse yourself from that conversation, politely.