LUST

Generally speaking whenever the subject of “lust” is introduced the vast majority of people immediately think of a heightened sexual desire. The etymological reality is that, while it may well be a heightened desire, this sin is not necessarily related to sexual relations (overt) or sexual fantasies (covert) such as pornography. People can lust for power; they can lust for control over others, they can lust after expensive items, and they can lust after self -recognition and promotion. Once again, at the root of this sin is pride, but in the world today it often grows out of narcissism: “I need what I need because I say so.” Sadly, what is problematic is that lust objectifies the “other.”

People today in order to meet their needs see the persons or things after which they lust as simply existing for the purpose of satisfying their own needs. In a tangential way gossip is a form of lust, where the information about a person is taken over by someone who wishes to repeat information that may or may not be true without the victim of the judgment being present. It allows the person who is gossiping to have the power of judgment and also the power of gaining a power base made up of others who believe the gossip without checking out the source. It is often an act of cowardice since the gossiper would not say what they do to others if the person about whom they were gossiping were present. The same is true of pornography. The object of one’s lust is simply that - a depersonalized object that I have accessed in order to meet my sexual desires through fantasy.

Modern technology has taken people from “Adult Book Stores” where they could be observed purchasing magazines to the Internet where they are not observed. This flight or fantasy is often rationalized by those on the way to sexual addictions as “much better than an aggressive sexual act” and yet the sin is imbedded in the mind and in the consciousness of the person who is filled with lust. It takes up space inside of them, and it leaves less room for healthy interactions with real people, and the development of loving relationships rather than lustful relationships.

When lust takes up residence in a person there is less room for Jesus. God has given us the gift of “desire” but the temptation is for us to misuse the gift of desiring and loving God, desiring love and life, and desiring what is essential for our “Daily Bread” into possessing, holding onto, acquiring, and controlling people and objects. In this control of others, we gain a status of superiority and they become a part of our disordered system, whereby they exist to meet our needs, and we determine what our needs are. In the end part of the disordered behavior involves confusing “needs” and “wants.” We are good at defining and acting on our wants, but all too often it has nothing to do with our needs.