

**This is an era of grace,  
not “nice.”**

—Martin Zender

# Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

*“If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love,  
I am a clanging gong” --1 Cor. 13:1-2*



Two out of three isn't bad.

## The fatal twisting of Matthew 5:28



In the Christian religion, it is the males whose sexual delectations are considered pure evil.

another was so that the race would proliferate. There are other reasons, but this one is suitably impressive to stand alone.

Back to this sexual attraction thing. I fear that I have not yet made my point. So forgive me, please, as I now lay out for you the nuts and bolts of it (I hope this will not be too technical): God wanted females to look at males and say, “*Oh, yeah,*” (placing the italics on the “oh”), and He wanted the males to look at the females and say, “*Oh, yeah!!*” —with both words italicized and two exclamation points. This was the perfect design of God. In fact, on the sixth day, God looked this in the face and called it, “good.”

### For God's next trick ...

Then God gave both males and females a conscience and a low tolerance for hassle and responsibility. Why did God do this, and furthermore, why am I telling you? Even though males are attracted to, say, 168 females a day, and females are attracted to, say, 76.5 males a day, 91.9 percent of males and females sidestep their sexual opportunities due to the aforementioned deterrents (hassle and responsibility). It seems wholly unnecessary to point out the following, and yet here I go again: The fact that millions of men and women (including married ones) are *not* having sex with a bunch of different people 100 times a day by no means eliminates the inherent attraction between the sexes, otherwise known as *sexual attraction* (see previous three paragraphs).

All of what I have said so far seems simple and obvious. It is. In fact, it is so simple and obvious that only one thing in the entire universe could possibly screw it up, and that is: RELIGION. Only one thing in the entire universe could possibly screw it up so badly that males and females—who were formerly the best of friends way back there in the Garden of Eden, and possibly as recently as 1959—are now tempted on a daily basis to tear one another's hair out. This thing I speak of is: THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

The Christian religion has declared it to be a sin for any married male to admire the beauty of any other female besides his wife. As far as I can tell (from observing the Christian religion as a bystander), it is just fine for married women to admire good-looking males—married or otherwise. I am not attempting to explain this; I am only stating the fact as I have gleaned it by much observation and overhearing conversations at coffee shops and parlors of beauty. In the Christian religion, it is the

males—and only the males—whose sexual delectations (I am speaking strictly now of the mere act of *admiring* members of the opposite sex) are considered pure evil. It is

the males who are the perverts, never the females. (The females may very well *be* their very own special brand of perverts, but they will never be considered or called such by any polite society—the same society that would not think twice about damning the males.) It is not that the females do not lust (many of them

**“God wanted  
males to look at  
females and say,  
“*Oh, yeah!!*”**

**G**od created *sexual* human beings. Genesis 5:2 backs me up pretty impressively here:

**“Male and female God created them,  
and blessed them ...”**

If you're not a female, then you're a male, and if you're not a male, then you're a female. As far as I know, there is not a third sex. I'm not sure why exactly I am stating this obvious fact, except that it seems important to do so.

God also cleverly made males and females to be attracted to one another. This is called sexual attraction. One of the keys of sexual attraction is that men and women are sexually attracted to one another. There is, between the two sexes, this thing called attraction. (It is important that I keep saying this; thank you for bearing with me.) One of the reasons God made the two sexes to be attracted to one

lust over fluffy, decorative pillows), but that they can lust and not be considered perverts. I don't know how or why this works—it just does. Perhaps it is because it was the males whom Jesus warned concerning lusting. Well? Did he tell any woman, ever, not to lust? No. Women get a free pass. Of course, we all know that Jesus never looked at a Playboy cover in His life (for longer than nine seconds).

Speaking of what Jesus told males concerning lusting, I notice that the Christian religion and its many members and fans are inordinately fond of twisting Scripture toward their own ends. This is certainly the case with Matthew 5:28:

**But I say to you, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. —Mt. 5:28**

I will soon show you how this verse has been twisted more severely than a wet shammy. Before we venture down this disturbing road, let us ask the following question: What possible ends would Satan have for making such a twisting necessary?

Are you surprised that I have brought Satan into the discussion? Don't be. Satan is the mastermind behind all religions. (The Greek word for "religion," *deisidamonia*, means, "DREAD-DEMONISM.") The essence of religion is: Human beings must do many, many distasteful and hard things in order to please God. The other essence of religion is: Human beings are supposed to feel guilty for enjoying life's simple pleasures.

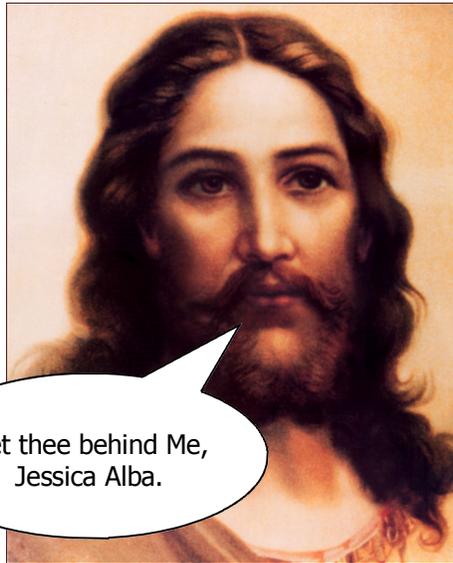
**Oh, no**

Working too hard and eschewing deep pleasure is a deadly combination—which is why Satan thought of it. (In a religion, one must learn to love hard things and hate easy things—what fun.) Satan would love to kill people directly, but torturing them slowly is the best he can do, and the sharpest tool he has for that, is religion.

Satan figured out a long time ago that he can *destroy* marriages using *jealousy*. He also figured out a long time ago how attractive women were, and that men—even married men—could not help gazing fondly at them. Next he realized that many wives despised their husbands for finding other women attractive (see "jealousy"

above), and that they didn't need much of an excuse (especially when encouraged by religious self-righteousness) to condemn their husbands, and even—on occasion—to throw things at them.

Satan also learned a long time ago that misconstruing Bible verses was the best way to get good people to condemn other good people: The first set of good people could justify their condemnation of the second set by telling themselves (and their mothers and best friends, possibly) that they "have a



Get thee behind Me,  
Jessica Alba.

verse for it." Additionally—in the case of wives hating husbands for lingering optically upon the blouses and miniskirts of other females—they could tell themselves that since Jesus was sinless and never looked at a Playboy cover (for longer than nine seconds), He was the perfect person to rob every other male of the pleasure of girl-watching—never mind that none of these other males could ever be as sinless as Jesus—and send them to "hell." In fact, many of these types of wives would gladly send their husbands to hell *personally*, although Jesus could help if He wanted to.

All of this to say that Satan wants to *ruin* marriages, and he uses (or, rather, misuses) Matthew 5:28 toward this diabolical end.

### The verse

Matthew 5:28 has been used (or, rather, misused) by angry wives to punish faithful husbands by putting these husbands into the same category as those husbands who actually climb into the windows of the homes of

other women and put their penises into these women's vaginas.

Jesus said the following:

**But I say to you, that whosoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. —Mt. 5:28**

Please note that there is a crime to this context. What is it? *Adultery*. Let us start here. That the crime in this context is adultery tells us that if a single man were to look upon a single woman with lust in his heart, he could not commit the sin of this famous verse. Correct? How could he, since adultery necessarily involves married people? Already, then, we have discovered a flaw in the common interpretation of this passage: a single man, lusting with his eyes, cannot commit the sin of this passage against a single woman.

What about a married man? A married man who is drawn to a woman's beauty (lust), and who then walks away—*without the intent to steal her from another man*—experiences a normal function of his eyes and hormones, and does NOT sin. A man who lusts after a woman *to commit adultery with her*, however, *has* sinned. In order to commit the brand of sin Jesus referred to, *there must be the intent to steal the woman from another man.*

### What Paul said

Let us consider the apostle Paul's startling pronouncement in 1 Corinthians 7:2:

**Because of prostitutions, let each man have a wife for himself, and each woman have her own husband.**

A man's desire to be joined with a prostitute is, in Paul's mind, a given. In Paul's mind, the problem is not the desire, but rather what a man does with that desire. Paul does not say: "Shame on you for desiring a prostitute." He says, in effect, "Since men can't help lusting after prostitutes, and since being joined to a prostitute would be wrong, then every man ought to have his own wife." Otherwise, he would have said, "Because of prostitutions, let each man confess his sin, repent, and say twenty-five *Hail Marys*."

It is not the desire that concerns Paul, but rather the unclean avenues available to it. Paul wants the desire channeled toward marriage.

# “LUST”

## Who doesn't desire things?



The Greek word for “lust,” used in the New Testament, is *epithumia*. This is the noun form of the word, and it simply means, “desire.” Who doesn't desire things? Do you desire to be with your kids? That's lust. Do you desire breakfast? That's lust. Do you desire money? That's lust.

Do you desire to remove all lust from your life? That, too, is lust.

Thus, lust itself (desire) is morally neutral. It can be bent toward either good or bad purposes.

The verb form of *epithumia* is *epithumeo*. This word means to do the thing, that is, to lust. The verb form appears 16 times in the New Testament, and the noun 39 times. The Concordant version translates the verb, variously, as “lust,” “yearn,” and “covet.” It's the same exact Greek word, mind you; the definition (“desire”) never changes; there are only slight variations in usage. Collaterally, the Concordant Version translates the noun as either, “desire,” “coveting,” “lust,” and “yearning.” Again, same word, same definition, but only slight variations of usage.

Sexual lust—that is, sexual desire—is also morally neutral, that is, it is not of itself a sin. Sexual lust is a natural, daily occurrence in humans of both sexes. It is what one *does* with the sexual lust that determines whether or not it is sin. ■

If adultery consisted of merely looking at a woman—even with desire in the heart to be with her—then every man would be guilty. Why? Because God made men to appreciate female beauty. If men did not appreciate and lust after female beauty—and, in fact, lust for the females themselves—they would never marry.

### I upset millions of women simultaneously

Many women will not like what I am about to say, but it is nonetheless true: Men do not marry primarily so that they can have babies and spend thousands of dollars every year being responsible for other people. They marry because God poured five quarts of testosterone into them and they want desperately to have sex with a woman. Men lust by default. It's what they do with their lust that makes the lust either good (natural) or bad.

### David was doing just fine, until ...

In 2 Samuel 11:2, David saw a beautiful woman bathing. It was Bathsheba. David appreciated Bathsheba's beautiful body. This, itself, was lust. (The word “lust” merely means, “desire.”) There are good lusts and bad. The lust to see beauty is a good lust, in that it is natural. We humans lust to eat; we lust to drink; we lust to sleep; we lust to find beauty in the world; we lust to spend time with our families; we lust for meaningful work; Jesus lusted to eat the Passover with His disciples (see sidebar on page four); the holy spirit lusts against the flesh. These are all good and legitimate lusts.

If David had lusted *only* for the beauty of Bathsheba, then all would have been well. I will go even further: had he only desired the woman herself and yet refrained from her due to the spirit of God within him, then all would have been well.

### Enter a hypothetical pizza person

A person who loves food may lust for (desire) the sight and the smell of pizza. This corresponds to David appreciating the beauty of Bathsheba's naked body. Is it wrong to desire something so delicious as the sight and smell of a hot pizza? No; it is completely natural. David's desire for the beauty of Bathsheba was also completely natural.

Now let's say that a hypothetical pizza person not only lusts for the smell and the sight of the pizza, but for the pizza itself. In this case, there are six huge pizzas sitting inside a glass window. This is the equivalent of Bath-

sheba being *extremely* enticing, and David saying in his mind, “It sure would be an amazing experience—I am betting—to make love to that beautiful, married woman. *In fact, everything in me wants to do it.*”

The potential sin for David was adultery; the potential sin for the pizza person is gluttony.

At this point, have either the King of Israel or the pizza person committed acts of either adultery or gluttony? No. But here is the big question: *Have either of them committed these sins in their minds?*

No.

How has the pizza person committed gluttony in the simple act of desiring the pizzas? At this point, *the spirit of God can yet acti-*



*vate and cause the pizza person to exercise self-control.* After all, if there were never any temptations in life, how could anyone nobly resist them? Without real temptations, the spirit of God has no foil for action.

For David and the pizza person to be guilty of the kind of mental sin Jesus refers to in Matthew 5:28, one key ingredient must be present: *intent*.

### Yes, I said, “intent”

Let us say that the only thing holding back the pizza person from buying the pizzas and consuming them on-site is the presence of

three people from his church, sitting in a nearby booth. If not for these people, the pizza person would surely buy and consume all six pizzas. In this case, then, not only is the desire to eat the six pizzas present, but the intent as well. The only thing lacking is opportunity. Thus, the pizza person has as good as done the deed



and—in Jesus’ estimation—committed gluttony in his heart.

Now, back to David. If David merely admires the beauty of Bathsheba and leaves it at that, he has not committed adultery with her, not even in his heart. If he desires to have her for a wife, *but decides against it when the spirit within convicts him*, he has not committed adultery with her, not even in his heart. It is only when David lusts in his heart to commit adultery with Bathsheba, *and schemes to carry it out*, that he is as good as guilty—as good as if he had actually done the deed. That he actually does do the deed (he eventually has Bathsheba’s husband killed in war so he can have her for his own) proves that the intent—not just the desire—was there all along.

THE DESIRE/LUST TO COMMIT A SIN, IS NOT, SPECIFICALLY, A SIN. IT IS, RATHER, A COMMON INCLINATION OF THE FLESH. WITHOUT INCLINATIONS OF THE FLESH, THERE CAN BE NO OPPORTUNITY FOR THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO RISE UP AND COUNTER WITH AN ACT OF SELF-CONTROL.

### Christ’s temptation was real

Jesus Himself was tempted by Satan. Note: He was actually tempted. Our Lord *thought about carrying out the power trips that Satan dangled before Him*. The *thoughts*, therefore, were not sins, but merely temptations—desires, lusts—to sin. Without temptations to sin, the overcoming power of the holy spirit has no field for exercise. Unless our Lord was *truly* tried, His resistance hardly impresses us. But because He was tried to the point of wavering, the spirit within saves the day and His sinlessness stuns us.

**For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. —Hebrews 4:15**

It is the *act* of adultery that is a sin. The *thought* of adultery is a sin only if the body intends to enact the thought—and to heck with the spirit of God. Otherwise, the thought is merely that—a thought. Even better, it is an opportunity for the exercise of God’s spirit.

*Looking*, therefore, is not the sin of Matthew 5:28. The sin is not even the natural desire to make love to a woman—any woman—for that would only provide an opportunity for the spirit of self-control to kick in. The sin of Matthew 5:28 is lusting after a woman *with the intent to steal her from her husband*.

Philo Thelos writes in *Divine Sex: Liberating Sex from Religious Tradition*:

“Human nature is such that it is automatic for a man to delight in the sight of a beautiful woman and to have a strong sense of her sexuality. Is this *arousal* sin? If a man is sexually excited by the beauty of a *married* woman, yet has no desire and forms no intention to take her away from her husband, has he sinned? Where is the sin—in the look? In the sexual excitement? What biblical word or phrase describes this as sin? Is being sexually aroused the same as desiring to possess a person?

“It may not be apparent to wives that when a husband ‘checks out’ a beautiful woman he is not somehow being ‘mentally unfaithful’ to her, or wishing he had married someone else, or no longer thinks she is beautiful, or no longer loves her. ... The wife need not feel hurt as though she has somehow become less in his eyes.”

\* \* \*

**FROM REBECCA:** The same God-given instinct that causes a man to look at beautiful women causes that same man to be at-

### The moral neutrality of the word “lust”

Galatians 5:17–  
**“For the flesh is lusting (epithumeo) against the spirit, yet the spirit against the flesh.”**

Who knew that the spirit of God, itself, lusted? And yet here is proof. In this passage, both the spirit and the flesh are lusting. When the spirit lusts against the flesh, it is a good lusting, but when the flesh lusts against the spirit, it is bad. Lust itself, therefore, is morally neutral. In other words, it is neither angelic, nor demonic. It can be put to either good (natural) use or evil use.

#### Jesus Himself lusted

In Luke 22:15, Jesus says to His disciples, “With yearning I yearn to be eating this Passover with you before My suffering.” The Greek word translated, “yearning,” and “yearn” is the same word (*epithumia*) translated “desire,” “yearning,” and “lust” elsewhere in Scripture. Thus, Jesus, “with lusting, lusted to be eating the Passover” with His disciples.

Obviously, then—since Jesus did it—lusting itself cannot be a sin. The fact that the Word of God knows of *foolish and harmful* lusts, verifies this. Here is 1 Tim. 6:9–

**Now those intending to be rich are falling into a trial and a trap and the many foolish and harmful desires which are swamping men in extermination and destruction.**

If some lusts can be qualified as foolish and harmful, it stands to reason that some lusts are natural and good. ■

tracted to *his own wife*. Appreciating beauty is a sign of life and vitality; wives ought not to condemn it. A husband, freed of condemnation, is far more likely to fulfill his potential, becoming the patient, giving, loving man his wife deserves.

Wives: If you totally accept your husband and encourage him to share his deepest desires with you, he could become the passionate man who cherishes, adores, and serves you—emotionally and sexually—in ways you’ve only dreamed of.

\* \* \*

Let the healing begin.