

CHAPTER D34

LUST A AND LUST B

This is one of several chapters that exposes morality as unscriptural. Those Christians who skim this material without looking up the referenced Scripture – and whose values have been improperly determined by traditional “Christian morality” rather than the word of God – will be offended. They are going to have to gird their loins against themselves and their carnal tradition-bound gut reactions because this is a Bible study – not a review of society’s moral values. I say again, this is written for those Christians who want the Bible to be their sole authority in all matters of faith and practice.

The information on masturbation in the earlier chapter, *Sex*, is easily understood because the Bible is quite clear on the subject of two becoming one flesh. But it invariably produces questions among Christian men. Married men and bachelors have both approached me to ask about masturbation and **Mt 5:28**. They’ve approached me in different ways because each warrior handles combat differently. All men fear combat. In order to deal with their fear some get themselves mad, some get macho, some turn to humor, etc. Because today’s Christianity shuns manliness, confrontation, rebuking, and sex talk, and focuses on producing pewsters and preachers whose interest is conforming to denominational tradition and getting along with everybody, it takes discipline and courage for these men to leave their comfort zone and ask me about something their denominations have led them to believe is sinful and discussed only by low-life, unsaved, degenerate sex fiends.

One married Christian man told me he had a problem with girlie magazines. When he walked past a drugstore he’d bop in and thumb through them. (This was back before the magazines were wrapped in plastic.) Because his church led him to believe he was sinning he felt awful about it. He tried crossing to the other side of the street when a store that carried magazines came into view. But eventually his David-like enjoyment of eyeballing a Bathsheba would result in his return to the newsstand.

One married pastor told me he routinely bought a popular girlie magazine so he could “read the articles” in order to keep up with “what the enemy was up to.”

A successful national evangelist who is married told me churches often put him up in a hotel (rather than treating him like a visiting brother in accordance with **Mt 10:6,7,11-14; Mk 6:10**) where he’d tune in the porno movies on TV and masturbate. He hated himself for it. He tried unplugging the TV when he first checked into his room. He tried putting his Bible on top of it. Nothing worked and he was tormented by the fact that he was a weak, hypocritical, habitual sinner. This man knew his Bible better than most Christians I’ve met. He was squared away on many doctrines that Christianity, because of its ignorance of the word, has fumbled. He and I enjoyed the kind of fellowship I imagine a couple of “geeks” have when they finally stumble across someone else who shares their love and passion for a topic. We engaged in wonderful Swordplay. It started with each of us picking up on little things the other would say, or on the way we’d word it. Stuff other Christians wouldn’t notice. Then we’d respond in a way the other wouldn’t understand unless he’d really intended to say what he’d said. Then, stepping back to look at each other with appreciation and respect, we acknowledged each other as true Swordbearers with a salute and went at it. It was so wonderful I’m willing to unnecessarily add length to this chapter as a tribute to comrades like him who truly love the Lord. What did this fine man not understand? Sex. It’s a big problem in Christianity.

A married Christian woman told my wife and me she was divorcing her husband because of the horrible sexual thing he liked her to do. (Because the marital bed is undefiled and because no sex act between man and wife is made sinful in the Bible, she couldn’t possibly come up with anything wrong.) What was this horrible thing? He liked her to stand on her head for him while she was naked. (Because neither standing on your head nor being naked in front of your husband is sinful, we can safely surmise this woman rejects God’s contention that submissive Sarah is a good model for New Testament wives.) What was this woman’s problem? She didn’t understand sex, marriage, divorce, or authority. And neither did her pastor.

A Christian bachelor told me he had problems on dates with unsaved girls. When the lights were down low and the music was playing softly, they’d be talking. Then she’d move in, wanting to kiss, pet, and have sex. He’d try to avoid the very thing Samson and Judah openly enjoyed because his church never taught him *anything* about sex. But sometimes, in spite of his inner struggles, a moment would arrive when he could feel his whole being give in as he surrendered to the situation. He enjoyed the sex but felt terrible as a Christian.

Another Christian bachelor – let’s call him Mike Magdalene – and I were having a Bible-oriented conversation in a restaurant one night. He had an excellent command of the Bible and I enjoyed our fellowship. He was a homosexual before he got saved. He knew Christians are not permitted to engage in homo behavior. But he was still drawn toward it. He, like the previous bachelor, would sometimes give in to his lust and have sex with other guys. This man is a David – a Christian brother who has problems controlling his sexual desire. This man, like David, was sinning. But of the six Christians I’ve mentioned, he is the only one who was engaging in real sin.

Are Christians generally this ignorant about sex, marriage, divorce, authority, and masturbation? They are if preachers are any indication. Let’s take a look at how poorly today’s preachers know the Bible in order to get a glimpse at how they are FUCKING the church (according to the definition in the chapter on *Fornication*). They know what Mt 5:28 says and they think they know what it means when it talks about lust. Then they read **Ja 1:14,15** and see that lust and temptation go together. But they don’t really reveal the depths of their depravity until they read verses like **He 4:15**. If they believed the Bible and got their doctrines from it instead of from their denominations, they’d be shocked when they read that Christ was in all points tempted like as we are. Why? Because having learned from Ja 1:14 that *temptation* is when we are *drawn away* by our own *lust* and *enticed*, they should wonder how Christ in He 4:15 could be *drawn away* by His own *lust* and *enticed* like we are and still not be a sinner! Either their doctrine about Mt 5:28 is wrong or the Lord Jesus Christ was a sinner! I mean, can you find a more glaring problem than that?! What kind of Christian wouldn’t want to figure that huge discrepancy out? If your preacher hasn’t preached a sermon on the contents of this chapter you’d better pray it’s because he’s Biblically incompetent and not because he has decided to FUCK his sheep. Either way he’s defrauding the Lord’s anointed. I know many preachers don’t know much about the Old Testament and only go there when the books of sermons they buy use Old Testament verses to make points, but don’t you think a preacher in whom there is no guile (**Ps 32:2b; Jn 1:47**) would wonder about both *lust* and *strong drink* if he even accidentally stumbled across **Dt 14:26** one day? According to that verse, and if he were consistent, if he thought strong drink to be sinful he’d also be preaching against beef and Passover lamb. I’d say our Pharisees have been spending too

much time masturbating and not enough time in the Bible. “Full time Christian service” my ass! Well, let’s move on with our topic.

As you’ve probably already figured out, the key is in comparing how God defines temptation and lust in Ja 1:14 and then figuring out that Ja 1:14 and He 4:15 are talking about the same kind of temptation; being *drawn away* by your own *lust* and *enticed*. It is also helpful to note the Holy Spirit wanted Christ to be drawn away of His own lust and enticed (**Mt 4:1**). We are here on earth to endure temptation, to be in control of our lusts. Do you realize a person who walks into your church who is fat because of gluttony is no different from the person who stumbles in drunk? Just as we must understand the difference between strong drink that is controlled (**Ru 3:7; Pv 31:6; Ec 9:7; 10:19; 1 Ti 5:23**) and strong drink that is not controlled (**Dt 29:19b; 1 Sa 25:36; Ep 5:18; 1 Pe 4:3**), we must understand when sexual lust is acceptable and when it is sinful.

Did Christ *want* to yield to the Devil’s temptations to satisfy His pride and His lusts for food and power? Of course He did. *According to definition*, lust and temptation don’t exist unless you *want* something. For example, if my earlier dinner companion, Mike Magdalene, had offered me his hairy ass would I be tempted? Of course not – because it doesn’t interest me. (You’ll just have to take my word on that.) Therefore, since I wouldn’t be drawn away by my own lust and enticed, it wouldn’t be temptation.

Then when is Mt 5:28 a sin? When the un sinful “lust A” of Ja 1:14 becomes the sinful “lust B” of Ja 1:15. Lust A *must conceive* in order to produce sin. Your temptation, your lust, *conceives* the instant you agree to give in and *do* that which it is unlawful to do. Go back to Mt 5:28 and let me show you why the words *after her* and *with her* are in the verse. I’m going to use an example to show that, unless you *intend to do* something unlawful *with her*, you haven’t lusted *after her* in your heart.

Our evangelist brother in his hotel has just tuned in the triple X channel because his favorite porno queen is doing “it.” While he’s masturbating, Miss Porno Queen herself opens the door he forgot to lock, looks at him and at herself on TV, realizes what’s going on, and steps in and closes the door. She explains that she’s horny and wants him to fulfill his fantasies with her – no one will know. He looks at her and says, “I’d love to have sex with you. But I’m a follower of Jesus Christ. Since I’m married, He orders me to not have sex with you. And, as much as I want to have sex with you, I want to serve Him more. So thank you for adding to my fantasies, but the answer is no.” She leaves, he picks up where he left off, and no sin has been committed. Why? Because in accordance with Mt 5:28 and **Ex 20:17**, he never wanted to do *anything with her!* Therefore he is not guilty of what Mt 5:28 *says*. He never wanted to *take* her; he wanted to fantasize *about* her and have sex *with himself* – and that’s permissible.

Another example. Same scenario only this time she can see the evangelist is wavering. She bares her breast, pouts, and says, “Pretty please.” That’s it, he can feel the moment he gives in – he’s going to do it. But before he has time to say, “Yes”, the pastor of the local church unexpectedly bangs on the door and yells, “Let’s go get some chow!” Even though he never does let her know he would do it, and even though he can look the suspicious pastor in the eye and say, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman”, he has committed adultery in accordance with Mt 5:28 and Ja 1:15 because his lust *conceived*. He decided to go beyond fantasy and masturbation; he decided to actually have sex *with her*. That’s a sin.

Using Ex 20:17 with Mt 5:28 shows that if you fantasize about how nice it would be if you had your neighbor’s big house, his lush stream-crossed pastures, and his nice stand of timber, that is lust A. But when you decide to *take* what belongs to another, your lust A has turned into the covetousness of lust B and you’ve sinned. Lust B and covetousness are the same. Covetousness is always a sin. Lust is only a sin when it is lust B. In Mt 5:28 Christ was showing what the law (such as *don’t commit adultery*) was supposed to teach us: The spoils in **Josh 7:21** are not the problem, and having sex with another man’s wife is not the problem. The problem is covetousness. Covetousness makes us corrupt trees, and corrupt trees bring forth theft, adultery, murder, and other evil fruit. That’s what **Ro 7:7** is about. Covetousness is automatically a sin because it involves wanting something *that belongs to someone else* – whether it be property or prerogative – *to be ours*. We are here to husband what belongs to God, not want it to be ours. Put all of this together with the covetousness of **1 Ti 6:10** and the lust of **Jn 8:44** in order to grasp the fundamental issue the Lord was talking about in **Mt 15:8,18,19**.

Next question I’m asked: If a Christian is having sex with his wife while fantasizing about Miss Porno Queen, is he sinning? No, having sex with your wife is no different from masturbating. You are not being unfaithful no matter what you are thinking about.

Earlier I said no sex act imaginable is unlawful between a man and his wife. Didn’t I make a mistake? Because of **Le 18:22** isn’t anal sex with your wife a sin? Good question, and sadly, a necessary question because your preacher hasn’t taught you *anything* from the Bible about sodomy. (Anal sex is generally called sodomy because of the men of Sodom.)

Is it OK to have sex *with a woman* according to Le 18:22? Yes, it says we may lie with womankind, but we may not do that with mankind. Does the verse forbid anal sex with a woman or with a man? No. It forbids Christian men from having sex *of any kind* with other men. Therefore, it also says whatever sex (all sex) is forbidden *with men*, is permissible *with women*. For example, apply sodomy to the verse and it says, “Thou shalt not have sodomy with mankind, as you may with womankind.” You see, anal sex isn’t an abomination; the abomination is *any* sex between Christian men. Now apply heavy petting, oral sex, and anything else you can think of to the verse. You see, heavy petting itself is not an abomination; it’s any and every kind of sex between Christian men. Most Christians seem to have an anal fixation because anal sex is all they think Le 18:22 refers to. They will reveal their inconsistency, however, when you ask them if they think heavy petting between Christian men is OK, because they will strongly reply that heavy petting is an abomination. Then if you ask them why they use the verse to condemn anal sex between husband and wife but don’t also condemn petting between husband and wife, they will begin to sputter because they’re not accustomed to reasoning with the Bible (discerning), and will defensively stoop to such pleasantries as, “What are you, a pervert or something?”

But, object some, anal sex is a sin against nature because it doesn’t result in pregnancy. Forget about getting pregnant; that has nothing to do with it. **Ro 1:26** and **27** are talking about women with women and men with men, not about anybody getting pregnant. Those who think a sex act is supposed to fulfill some biological function have probably never sucked on their wife’s breasts (**Pv 5:19**) or nibbled on her ear lobes or done any petting. Sex is most often performed for recreation, not procreation. And if you want to know about nature, ask a shepherd: When my rams and bucks hump each other, do you really think I run out into the pasture and start screaming that what they’re doing is an abomination to God and a sin against nature? No, you’d reply, because they’re just animals. In so saying you’d make two points without realizing it: First, the sex act in and of itself is not an abomination to God; it’s only an abomination if a Christian man does it with another man. Second, God doesn’t care what kind of sex animals engage in. So quit wasting the church’s time trying to stop my rams and unsaved queers

from humping each other; it's OK because they aren't Christians – they're beasts. Anyway, the old “sin against nature” cliché is just an ignorant leftover from when Enlightened Christians thought the laws of nature were the same as the laws of God. We are supposed to let the Bible teach us about sin – nature has nothing to do with it.

Some Christians will argue that I was wrong when I said the bachelor above did not sin when he had sex with his female pagan date. They would support the Augustinian contention that since **1 Co 7:1** says it is good for a man not to touch a woman, that means it is bad to have sex. (Unless, they claim, you're a married person who minimizes the enjoyment of sex by only having sex with your wife when you want to procreate – and only if a position is used that minimizes the pleasure for both of you.) They say sex that is not within the “sanctity” of marriage (including a married woman masturbating and a bachelor dating a Delilah) is so sinful that if you can't “contain” yourself from it (**1 Co 7:9**) you'll go to hell.

Because I hate hypocrisy and inconsistency let me show you how to recognize when someone is just grabbing at any verse that seems to support his traditions. When people make a big deal out of the word *good* in **1 Co 7:1** in order to condemn sex, why do they not – in order to be consistent – also make a big deal out of the word *good* in **1 Co 7:8** by advising against marriage? It's because they think sex between husbands and their wives is the only time Christians should have sex, and that single Christians should never have sex of any kind. Preachers have no idea why the Bible says pewsters should not get married, and why it says preachers should marry, so they ignore it when they “teach” you the Bible – even though the New Testament not only advises us not to get married, but also explains why we shouldn't (**1 Co 7:8,25-40**).

To whom is **1 Co 7:1** written? It is written to those who are under God's authority. It is written, like the rest of the Bible, to Christians. Any time the Bible mentions dogs, such as **1 Co 7:13-16** (which also applies to Christians), it will be very clear when it does so because it is so unusual to deal with the unsaved. The only reason the unsaved are included in **1 Co 7:13-16** is Christians might marry pagans. The Bible exists to educate *God's* people, and verse 15 tells Christians how to handle it when a spouse (any spouse) “departs”: *If an unbelieving spouse (this “unbelieving” spouse can apply both to pagan spouses and to willfully-disobedient Christian spouses) leaves, do not use church discipline to try to prevent it because the Bible's rules of marriage are going to be ignored by unbelievers; therefore, in order to avoid needlessly penalizing proper Christians, the good spouse is no longer bound by the usual one-flesh marital law.* In other words, if a good Christian husband finds himself abandoned by his wife, he may (if he still can't contain and therefore must marry again) exercise the expediency of this verse and remarry, which illustrates the fact that the physically-consummated marital union is – like physical circumcision – really only a type of a more important spiritual reality.

Another way to figure out **1 Co 7:1** is to wonder why God suddenly cares what pagan men do. That's it! This passage, like the rest of the Bible, is not addressing pagan men; this “man” is a Christian. And, of course, the same line of thought means the word “woman” in this verse means *Christian* woman. Therefore the verse is saying, *It is good for a Christian man not to touch a Christian woman.*

Why then does it not come right out and say “Christian woman” to make it easier? Because it's not supposed to be easy. It's designed to make us think. And this one makes us do more thinking: You and I have a head-knowledge that pagan women are dogs, bitches, but have we really incorporated that into the way we view things? Isn't it true that in God's eyes the mortal, old-man body differeth nothing from a beast because they themselves are beasts? And wasn't Christ made a little *lower* than the angels so He could suffer *death*? In other words, He acquired a mortal, old-man dog's body so it *could* die on the cross. Isn't it true that our immortal, new-man bodies put us a little *higher* than dogs because we can't die? Therefore, because God puts such a big difference between immortal saints and mortal pagans/beasts, He doesn't even think of the unsaved as *people* (**Dt 32:21; Ro 10:19; Ezek 34:31**); He thinks of them as *beasts*. Therefore, when He put **1 Co 7:1** in the Bible, He was not only carefully differentiating between (Christian) *women* and (pagan) *bitches*, He was also helping us learn to view life the same way He does.

Notice the amazing consistency of God's Book: Because the “man” and the “woman” in **1 Co 7:1** *are both Christians*, this verse says *exactly* the same thing **Le 18** says: *A Christian man is not to have sex with any Christian woman unless they are married.* You've got to love the Bible – no, let's personalize that: You've got to love the Lord; He is so amazingly and dependably consistent. If we knew the Bible like we're supposed to, we'd be consistent, too.

OK, but doesn't **1 Co 7:9** tell unmarried Christians to “contain” themselves from sex? Of course it does; it tells unmarried Christians to contain themselves from sex *with each other*. Remember, sin is a *transgression of the Bible*, and we have to go to **Le 18** in order to find the list of girls God says a Christian bachelor cannot have sex with. An excellent example of a Christian who couldn't *contain* is Amnon (**2 Sa 13**). The Christian girl, Tamar, suggested he marry her before he screwed her, and she probably quoted **1 Co 7:9** to him. (I know, I know.) And two examples of *proper* Christians who *were* able to contain are Samson and Judah: Those bachelors both found pagan dates and whores to screw – never Christian girls. In other words “contain” has nothing to do with legitimate sex (why would it?); it refers to the list of Christian sex partners outside of marriage in **Le 18**. There is no other list, and we are commanded not to add to the word of God. So, since sin is transgression of the law, a bachelor sins only if he transgresses **Le 18** or if he adds to the word of God by inventing sins.

Christians are advised not to marry at all (except for preachers and those who “cannot contain” themselves) because the Old Commission has been replaced. Those who are not married have more time to devote to the Great Commission. Preachers and those who married because they just had to have sex with a Christian have family responsibilities every day of the week. That family life takes away a lot of time that could otherwise be devoted to the church. By not preaching these New Testament truths, preachers are hindering the cause of Christ.

How could a silly Christian woman like the one I mentioned earlier justify divorcing her husband simply because she didn't enjoy the same kind of sex he did? First, she went about justifying herself before men: All Christians know any type of sex they may enjoy that differs from the missionary position is subject to ridicule in the Christian community if word of it ever gets out. Therefore, she simply went around shocking people with what went on in her bedroom. No Christian has the balls to speak approvingly of sex in front of other Christians or to stand up and ask, “Where does the Bible make kinky sex a sin?” Second, she has equality on her side. If someone did point out that kinky sex is OK with God, she would haughtily reply the sex wasn't the issue; the issue was *she* didn't like it, or felt embarrassed, humiliated, and degraded when standing on her head naked. Therefore her husband, in loving and caring for the weaker vessel, should not have subjected her to emotional trauma. Notice two things: First, nobody cares that God uses Sarah to teach women that any kinky sex their husbands order them to do is to be promptly carried out because husbands are the authorities and wives are the servants. Second, equality has made it so wives want their husbands to submit to their will instead of the other way around.

I groan every time I hear an Enlightened Christian eunuch say, “Boy, I’d never say that around my wife; she’d kill me!” And I cringe every time I hear a liberated Christian bitch say something to her husband like, “I live in this house, too, and I will not allow you to invite your brother to visit here!” Or when her husband is rebuking her for something, to hear her shrill, “I’m standing right here and can hear you – stop shouting!” Or if she stops, turns to him with a disapproving look, and says, “I didn’t hear you say *please*.” Would Christ ever say He was afraid to say something around His wives? Would we wives ever dare say those things to our Husband? *Think*, people! The issue is authority.

How are we to treat Christians who continue to have sex problems like Mike Magdalene? The same way we’d treat David – we’d try to help him. But isn’t Mike worse because he is attracted to men? Be careful how you word things; it’s not a sin for a Christian man to be sexually attracted to men, or for someone who is fasting to be attracted to food, or for a married man to be attracted to other women. It’s a sin to *do* those things. It’s a sin to even *decide* to do those things. But wanting to do them and fantasizing about them are not wrong. We have enough things in the Bible to deal with, let’s not go around inventing more stuff like the Pharisees did.

The Pharisees meant well when they wrongly usurped God’s prerogative by inventing the sins of eating with unwashed hands and not washing the table top and the outside of the bowl. They didn’t want some guy to accidentally get dirty hands from the table and thereby eat unclean food. Augustine and Luther and other modern Pharisees invented a lot of sex sins because they didn’t know the Bible very well and were trying to prevent some poor guy from sinning. But, ignoring the larger issue of taking authority away from God, let’s see how these Pharisees are, indeed, FUCKING the brethren.

The Bible says if you do something you think is a sin, even if it’s not really a sin, you’ve committed a sin. How can that be? Because Christianity is a matter of the heart; it’s a relationship with the Lord. Here’s how modern preachers are destroying the church from within: First, they fail to properly learn the Bible. Second, they stand behind pulpits as if they know what they are doing. Third, they allow tradition and ignorance to flourish – the very things they are supposed to fight.

Therefore, when one of their pewsters wants to masturbate, he has a problem – he thinks it’s a sin. He then makes a decision to overrule what he thinks is the Lord’s will, and satisfy his own will by masturbating (or looking at porno, or anything else he thinks is a sin). *That willful rejection of God in his heart is where the sin takes place.* And there are consequences for sin. His growth is stunted. He secretly thinks he’s a lousy Christian so he publicly becomes a hypocrite to hide it. And when a real test in his Christian walk comes along, something that really needs strength to resist, he caves in because he has become accustomed to giving in to “sin.”

In short, false doctrine is harmful. It unnecessarily makes Christians rotten on the inside. Sneaky, rotten, habitually-sinners hypocrites are not the kind of warriors we want in our ranks because no matter how they may be perceived on the outside, inside they are as dead men’s bones.

So the next time you see a guy lusting and drooling over the gorgeous and tempting pictures in a magazine, relax, it’s OK – it’s not a sin. But if you see him put the food magazine down and break his fast by sneaking something from the refrigerator, he *has* sinned. In fact, according to Mt 5:28, he sinned in his heart the second his lust conceived – when he decided to partake of real food instead of just fantasizing about it via the pictures in the magazine.

So much for lust A and lust B.

But, some will prissily complain, how could I write an offensive chapter like this? **Isn’t it a sin to offend the brethren?** The glib answer is, what Christian would be offended at the prospect of correcting his traditional false doctrines? But seriously, think about the fact that Christ and every Christian worth his salt in the Bible offended many, many other Christians, and from that realize there is an **offense A** and an **offense B**. Offense A involves embarrassing, angering, or hurting the feelings of others. There is nothing wrong with that, so don’t spare the rod for their much crying. We need more offense A in Christianity so our babes can mature into disciplined warriors who aren’t ashamed of the truth and are not afraid to preach it. Offense B is related to fornication and involves hindering or destroying a Christian’s growth. If I knew this stuff and didn’t write this chapter, that would be offense B. That would be hating the brethren. Yes, there is a hate A (**Ro 9:13**) and a hate B (**1 Jn 3:15**). So study the stuff in this chapter, and go, sin no more.

While I’m dealing with the lust that abounds in the church, let’s look at some lessons in the Bible about how we sin against God by **praying** according to our lusts, which is carnality. Turn to **Nu 11**.

V.1: Some of God’s people complained. The complaining “displeased” the Lord and made Him “angry.” So He killed them to teach His people to treat Him with fear, respect, and thanksgiving for whatever His provision might be – even if they didn’t like it.

V.4: God’s people lusted after the good food they’d had in Egypt and “wept again.” In other words, because people weep when they are not happy, this verse lets us know they complained again!

V.10: Moses heard the people weep/complain about the way God was not providing for them in a way they wanted. Now, because a semicolon can be a substitute for the word *because*, this verse ends with: “and the anger of the Lord was kindled greatly *because* Moses also (like the other people) was displeased with the way God was doing things.”

V.11: We can prove Moses was displeased with the way God was doing things because he here complained to God by asking, “Hey, what have I done to deserve this lousy treatment from You?” That was carnal, selfish, and disrespectful for Moses to say; no servant should ever say stuff like that to God.

V.13: The people wept/complained to Moses. But because of the way authority and the chain of command work, and because of the fact that God is always shepherding/husbanding us for our benefit and that of the church, when the people complained to/about Moses they were complaining to/about God (**1 Sa 8:7**).

V.18,20: God says menacingly, “I am going to give you flesh to eat *because you have asked for it/complained/wept*. And you’ll eat it until it comes out your noses and becomes loathsome to you – because you have despised My providence as your Good Shepherd, and you have despised Me and the way I do things, and you have treated Me with selfish disrespect by complaining/weeping.”

V.21,22: Moses’ question here doesn’t seem too bad – until we read God’s reply to him:

V.23: God said (and I hear ominous sarcasm and a rebuke in His tone): “What? You don’t think I can do what I said?! I’m going to show you now whether My word shall come to pass or not.” If the Lord ever says that to one of us we need to quickly fall on our faces and ask Him to forgive the thoughtless disrespect with which we treated Him.

How did the Lord punish the people and how did He punish Moses?

Read **v.33** and then read **Nu 20:12** and **Dt 32:51,52**. Yes, we could blame it all on what happened at the waters of

Meribah, but to do so would be to ignore the above fact that God let Moses live even though He killed many, many people for treating Him the way Moses did. I think Nu 11 is a good lesson about prayer.

Today we pray for a new car; we pray for a sports team to win; we pray for rain; we always pray *for what we want*. In the garden of Gethsemane I think Christ's carnal nature prayed, "Father, let this cup pass", but then His discernment caused Him to properly and respectfully and wisely add, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

About the only thing I ask for in my prayers/discussions with the Lord is that He help His church and that He help me (and others I specifically mention) grow and serve Him properly. If I were to ask Him to give me a big house on a beautiful river, He might see it as selfish carnality, give me what I want, and then cause the river to flood and destroy my home and kill my wife. Therefore, I try to want nothing – except His will (**Es 2:13,15; Lk 22:42**). If my want in life, my goal, is Him, I have achieved servanthood, wifehood. For me to ask Him for *anything* that I'm not sure is in accordance with His will and His plan is to base my prayers on the god of Self.

Let's say I really wanted a waterfall near my home because I thought it would be a wonderful view. God knows that already, so if He asked me what I desired for my residence, I'd be tempted to answer that I wanted to view a waterfall. But then I'd realize He already knew I wanted a waterfall, therefore His question must be a test of some kind. So, I'd wonder if I asked for a waterfall if He might give it to me but then cause the flow over the top to flood and cause damage and heartache. In other words, because I do not know the future and what He has in mind, I think it would be better if I answered Him in the same way Esther did (read **Es 2:12-17** with emphasis on the second part of the first sentence in v.15). No wonder Esther was so pleasing in the sight of her king/husband! If we focus on having the humble, unselfish attitudes of servants, and if we work on loving God, we can be like Esther.

I often say I'll be happy and content in the future grooming all of the saint's horses and cleaning out their stalls if that is the job God gives me. I say that as a reminder that if I am content to sit at the foot of the table, I'll be happy no matter where the Lord has me sit. His kingdom is His, not ours. And He is our reward, not pearly gates, streets of gold, ruling positions, and fine things. If we seek God by humbly and unselfishly serving Him in accordance with His holy word, the rest He will give to us. We must be careful to understand lust so we don't let it interfere with our prayers to God and our relationship with him.