

Sexual: Deviations from the divine institution of marriage between right-man and right-woman. Scripture cites and defines a large number of sexual sins all of which are the result of volitional ascent to the sexual lust pattern of the sin nature (see Hebrews 13:4).

A synonym is the noun *concupiscence* which is derived from: “Middle English via Old French from late Latin from Latin *concupiscent-* ‘beginning to desire.’”² In the King James Version, it is used as a synonym for the lust pattern in (Romans 7:8; Colossians 3:5, and 1 Thessalonians 4:5) and implying that of a tawdry nature. The Greek word is *epithumía*, the word for lust in James 1:14.

Approbation: An overwhelming desire for approval, praise, acceptance, admiration, respect, commendation, and acclaim (compare 2 Corinthians 10:17–18).

Monetary or Greed: An excessive desire to acquire or possess more than what one needs or deserves especially with respect to material wealth (1 Timothy 6:10).

Chemical: Includes overindulgence in alcohol (cf. 1 Timothy 5:23 with Ephesians 5:18a), drug abuse, and inhalants for the purpose of intoxication.

Crusader or Activism: Both categories can and do include civil disobedience, criminality, social engineering, terrorism, anti-Semitism, and violence (cf. Absalom’s rebellion in 2 Samuel 15:7–18:18; Acts 9:1–2).

Revenge: The desire to retaliate; vindictiveness; to seek vengeance (see Romans 12:19).

Principles:

1. Lust destroys the believer’s motivation to remain loyal to truth and its guidance found in the Word of God.
2. When “lust conceives” it divorces the believer from reality causing unrealistic expectations which eliminate doctrinal recall and use of problem-solving devices.
3. Lust destroys residence in the sophisticated spiritual life and replaces it with inordinate desire of self-gratification.

² *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, eds. Elizabeth J. Jewell and Frank Abate (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), s.v. “concupiscence.”

4. Lust is not sin but it solicits sin. There are two results, unfulfilled and fulfilled. Neither outcome provides the kind of happiness anticipated.
5. Unfulfilled lust results in frustration and intensifies the desires anticipated. Fulfilled lust does not bring the anticipated happiness which increases the reaction factor:
Failure to assuage the reactor factors and to achieve the desired happiness only causes the initial reaction to be intensified: Frustration becomes rage; discouragement becomes depression; loneliness becomes dissolution. The more you chase happiness the more it eludes you.³
6. Fulfilled lust increases the function of Christian degeneracy, removing the believer from the use of recovery procedures. Happiness and contentment do not originate from the fulfillment of the lust pattern of the sin nature.
7. Happiness and contentment come from one's relationship with God and the understanding of His grace provisions, grace policy, and utilization of the problem-solving devices.
8. Lust is often associated with love of others, but what actually occurs is the selfish use of others for the aggrandizement of self.
9. Once a believer advances to the sophisticated spiritual life, his relationship with people is one of great happiness. Gone are the lust patterns related to degeneracy and replaced with the lifestyle of grace orientation.
10. Lust destroys the believer's use of prayer because it is impossible for prayers to be answered when out of fellowship.
11. Our friend James has something to say on this subject:
James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motivation, so that you may spend it on your pleasures [ἡδονή (*hēdonē*): sensual pleasure]. (NASB)

³ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Reversionism*, 2d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 2000), 25–26.

12. Obviously, this word is associated in its meaning and application with **ἐπιθυμία** (*epithumía*): “lust.”
13. A word study of *hēdonē* is important here because it has a distinct relationship with *epithumía*, the word for lust in James 1:14 and 15. Here is an analysis of the former with several references to the latter while citing their uses in James:

In the New Testament ἡδονή [sensual pleasure] represents one of the many forces which belong to the world of unsanctified carnality, which drag man back again into the kingdom of evil. (909)

Greek Usage. The word ἡδονή derives from the same root as ἡδύς [*hēdús*], “sweet,” “pleasant,” “delightful,” and it shares the original sense of what is pleasant to the senses, namely, to the sense of taste. The narrower basic meaning, which relates to what tastes good, was accompanied for many centuries by that which causes pleasure to the senses. Already in its earliest use, however, the term ἡδονή bears the broader sense of a general “feeling of pleasure” or “enjoyment.”

Instead of the “sense of pleasure” ἡδονή can sometimes denote the “desire” for it. In this group we should reckon instances in which it is parallel to ἐπιθυμία [lust] and thus denotes “passionate yearning.” (910)

Ἡδονή in the New Testament: The Origin and Nature of Ἡδονή. Ἡδονή is one of the marks of a definite orientation of life opposed to the Christian. As such it has its place in the antitheses on which the world of New Testament thinking is based. It belongs to the sphere ruled by ungodly forces. (919)

Ἡδονή and Man's relationship to God. Ἡδονή is a magnitude which is opposed to God. Yielding to ἡδοναί [plural: sensual pleasures] in James 4:1ff. is unfaithfulness to God (v. 4) and it is enmity against God and of Satanic origin (cf. James 4:7). (920)

Ἡδονή in man is opposed to the will of God. Man lives either according to his own desires or according to God's will (cf. 1 Peter 4:2). The ἐπιθυμία (James 1:14) as a goal in life denote rejection of God's will in an impotent attempt at revolt. Persistence in lusts is the state which follows decision against God.

So long as no decision is taken against God, ἡδονή struggles bitterly against the Word of God in man (Luke 8:14) to try to hamper its work. Indeed, we even read in Mark 4:19 that ἐπιθυμίαι [plural: lusts] choke the Word.

In Christians who find a place for ἡδονή in their lives, however, it is not only what is said by God, the Word, but also what is said to God, i.e., prayer, that is affected by the destructive operation of ἡδονή. James 4:3: “You ask and do not receive.” To make the satisfaction of carnal ἡδοναί the object of prayer is to “ask with wrong motives.” To use what is requested from God in accordance with ungodly principles is a complete perversion of the relationship to God.

Thus prayer, too, is brought into the attitude which James (4:1) calls the conflict of ἡδοναί and which he describes in 4:2f., the attitude of unbridled earthly desire, of a greedy lust to possess, which drives from the σάρξ [*sárx*: flesh] rather than the Spirit and which is orientated to the carnal, to ἡδονή rather than to the spiritual. This attitude is completely opposed to that of prayer for what can be asked in the name of Jesus and of true waiting on God (cf. James 4:2: “because you do not ask”). (921)

In James the emphasis is not so much, perhaps, on the inner conflict, but rather on its results, on conflict with others. For ἡδοναί disrupt not merely the relationship with God and man’s εἰρήνη [*eirénē*: peace], but also relationships with other men.

Closely related to the image of conflict is that of slavery, for if we are defeated by ἡδοναί, or refuse to fight them, we become their servants. Ἡδοναί are masters which rule men instead of God the Lord. In the pre-Christian and non-Christian life the service of ἡδονή takes the place of service of God.⁴ (923)

14. Lust transforms the believer from virtue to deceit and honor to dishonor. Where formerly he was motivated to glorify God, lust motivates him to a self-centered and self-aggrandizing person.
15. One of the distinctive behaviors associated with the lust pattern is inferiority. Such an individual is suffering from an inferiority complex, defined as “an acute sense of personal inferiority often resulting either in timidity or through overcompensation in exaggerated aggressiveness.”⁵
16. The motivation is often an effort to prove oneself to a clique, impress someone admired, or acquire attention from those he assumes are ignoring him.

⁴ Gustav Stählin, “ἡδονή,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 2:909–910, 919–21, 923.

⁵ *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. “inferiority complex.”

17. The dominant lusts patterns of any individual are directly related to the areas of weakness or strength of his sin nature. The strength of the sin nature is human good while its weakness is personal sin.
18. One individual may have a dominant trend toward legalism or self-righteousness and thus a tendency toward human good.
19. On the other hand, another may have a dominant trend toward antinomianism or self-indulgence and thus a tendency toward personal sin.

Romans 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts,

v. 13a and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness. (NASB)

20. These are the major attackers that make up the intrinsic fifth column of an individual. The extrinsic fifth column is usually led by attackers that promote doctrines of demons:

1 Timothy 4:1 But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons. (NASB)

21. This means that one person's weakness is another person's strength. These things are the basis of arrogance, self-justification, and rationalization about inferiority and superiority.
22. This concept of trying to prove others inferior and yourself superior is a life filled with antagonism. The mental assumption of inferiority results in unnecessary struggles which would otherwise be a nonissue.

James 1:14 But each one is reluctantly dragged away through temptation when he is enticed by his own sin nature. (EXT)

James 1:15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. (NASB)

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1. In verse 14, a lust pattern of the sin nature causes the believer to engage in a struggle with his own volition. In verse 15, volition responds to the temptation.
2. The illustration James uses is that of a tawdry woman luring a man into illicit sex. To confirm this illustration, I provide this synopsis by A. T. Robertson:

The lust when it has conceived, in technical sense of a woman taking a man's seed in conception. The will yields to lust and conception takes place. Sin is the union of the will with lust.¹
3. Robertson's summary statement in our vernacular reads, "Sin is the union of volition with lust." The sin nature sponsors sin but it is volition that responds to the lust pattern's temptation.
4. Temptations are a concentrated assault by the lust patterns functioning as the sin nature's agents provocateurs.² They constantly attack the soul's volition to gain control of thought, decision, and action.
5. Verse 15 is a continuation of the facts established in verse 14. Sin and lust do not have continuous control over the soul of a believer. The temptations are consistently there, but volition must submit to them for sin to occur.
6. When then does temptation end and sin begin? Lust plays the part of the voluptuous prostitute while the sin nature serves as her pimp. When volition responds to lust's allurements, sin is conceived. This is a synopsis of verse 15 which we now address with details.
7. The verse is an extension of verse 14 which makes the claim that a person is "dragged away through temptation when enticed by his own sin nature." The enticement is carried out by a lust pattern.

¹ Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The General Epistles and The Revelation of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1933), 6:18.

² "(ǎ-zhǎn' prô-vô'kâ-toer') A person employed to associate with suspected individuals or groups with the purpose of inciting them to commit acts that will make them liable to punishment" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, 5th ed. [New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016], s.v. "agent provocateur."

8. Verse 15 begins with the particle of continuation, **εἶτα (eíta)**: “Then,” followed by the feminine noun **ἐπιθυμέα (epithuméa)**: “lust.”
9. Lust is the sin nature’s prostitute who is sent out as an agent provocateur to achieve copulation with the host’s free will. This example is obviously designed to denigrate the entire process.
10. The believer is portrayed as being involved in a ménage à trois.³ His soul is married to the truth of God’s Word, but he also has an adulterous relationship with the Dark Side’s prostitutes whose pimp is the sin nature.
11. The betrayal of truth occurs next, the aorist active adjectival participle of **συλλαμβάνω (sullambánō)**: “to conceive,” or “to become pregnant.” The prefix *sul-* refers to “seed” while *lambánō* means, “to receive.”
12. Lust patterns are constantly being sent out by the pimp (the sin nature) to solicit a volitional response from the soul. For example, within the biblically approved arrangement of marriage, there are many copulations, but few children.
13. Obviously, there is neither lust nor sin in marriage, but biblically approved aggression and response. Contrarily, this verse illustrates the presence of lust and sin outside the boundaries of marriage.
14. Lust is temptation; sin is response to the temptation. When this occurs, conception is said to “give birth,” the present active indicative of the verb **τίκτω (tíktō)**. Pregnancy results in birth.
15. The present tense is static, “representing a condition which is assumed as perpetually existing or taken for granted as a fact.”⁴
16. The active voice indicates that volition produces the action of the verb while the indicative mood certifies the event as a consistent fact of life.
17. The blastocyst that is produced is indicated by the noun **ἁμαρτία (hamartía)**: “sin.” All categories of sin occur when volition copulates with lust. The offspring is the type of sin committed.

³“(mā-nāzh' ä twä') an arrangement in which three people share a sexual relationship, typically a domestic situation involving a married couple and the lover of one of them” (*The New Oxford American Dictionary* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2001], s.v. “ménage à trois.”)

⁴ H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 186.