

# Training Your Heart

## Introduction (5 minutes)

This study explores Jesus's teaching on lust, desire, and self-control from Matthew 5:27-32, using the metaphor of letting a "five-year-old drive" to illustrate the danger of allowing untrained desires to control our lives.

**Central Thesis:** Our homes must be training grounds for our hearts, where we don't change the rules to accommodate our desires but change our behavior to stay in God's lanes.

### Opening Story: The Five-Year-Old Driver

A Utah state trooper pulled over a car swerving at 30 mph on the highway, expecting a drunk driver. Instead, he found a five-year-old behind the wheel with \$3 in his pocket, headed to California to buy a Lamborghini.

### Opening Questions:

- What's driving you?
  - What's driving your attitude, behavior, and words?
  - Are you letting the "five-year-old you" drive?
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## I. Who's Driving Your Life? (10 minutes)

### A. The Five-Year-Old Inside Us

#### Why we don't let five-year-olds drive:

1. They can't reach the pedals
2. No training or experience
3. They're bundles of desire and emotion
4. Good days = things go well; bad days = chaos
5. They'd swerve for an ice cream truck regardless of traffic

**The metaphor applied:** Sometimes we let the five-year-old inside us drive when we allow:

- Raw emotions to control us
- Untrained desires to direct us
- Anger to drive our words
- Sadness to drive our decisions
- Lust to drive our thoughts
- Fear to drive our actions

**If someone pulled you over:** "Why did you say that? Why are you acting that way?"

**Our answer might be:** "I wanted to" (like the five-year-old wanting a Lamborghini)

- No discipline
- No training
- No wisdom
- No experience
- No maturity
- Just doing what I wanted to do

## **B. Culture Says: Let the Five-Year-Old Drive**

**The message of our culture** (and every culture):

- Follow your heart
- Let your emotions drive
- Let your desires drive
- Do what you feel like doing
- See something you want? Go get it
- No rules, no lanes—just do what your heart tells you

**The problem:** Our hearts are often:

- Untrained
- Undisciplined
- Immature
- Inexperienced

**Yet culture says:** "Follow your heart"

## **C. Changing Lanes vs. Changing Driving**

**The chaos of changing lanes:** Imagine if we said on highways:

- "Lanes don't matter"
- "We'll change the lanes to fit your driving"
- "Let your five-year-old drive; we'll accommodate them"

**Result:** Complete chaos. Destruction. Death.

**What we do culturally:** We try to change the rules (the lanes) to fit our behavior (our driving):

- Don't worry about right and wrong
- Just follow your passions
- Do what feels right for you
- Follow your own truth

- Change the lanes to fit your driving

**The better way:** Change our driving to fit the lanes

- Train our behavior
- Train our desires
- Train our hearts
- Stay in the lanes rather than redefining the rules

**For households that are embassies of God's kingdom:** We cannot change the lanes to accommodate our driving. We must change our driving to stay in the lanes.

**The commitment:**

- I will change my behavior
- I will change my thoughts
- I will change my words
- To stay where I'm supposed to be
- To go in the direction I'm supposed to go

**Discussion Question:** In what areas of life are you most tempted to "change the lanes" rather than "change your driving"?

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## **II. Jesus on Lust and Desire (15 minutes)**

### **A. The Text (Matthew 5:27-28)**

**Read together:** "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

### **B. The Heart of the Issue**

**The cultural approach:** This is probably one of the biggest areas where our culture wants to change the rules.

**The message:** Give the keys to the five-year-old inside you

- Do whatever you feel like doing
- Do whatever you want to do
- We'll change the rules to accommodate your desires

**The truth:** This is nothing new. Human beings have always tried to change the rules to accommodate their behaviors.

### **C. The Religious World's Loophole**

**Their position:** "You shall not commit adultery" = the only line

**Their logic:**

- As long as you don't commit adultery, you haven't done anything wrong
- You haven't crossed the line
- We can do anything else and be fine

**Jesus's correction:** "No. Listen. Whoever looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart."

**The pattern** (same as last week with murder):

- Last week: You haven't just crossed the line when you murder; you crossed it when you got angry and insulted
- This week: You haven't just crossed the line when you commit adultery; you crossed it when you look to lust

**"Look to lust":** Looking at a woman in order to lust after her—with lustful intent

**The line is crossed:** When you look to lust, you've already gone outside the lane.

**D. Self-Justification Doesn't Work**

**The religious world tried to change the rules:**

- "We're not doing anything wrong"
- "We haven't messed up"
- "We've been faithful to God and our spouse"
- "We haven't committed adultery"

**Jesus's response:** "Yes, you have. You committed adultery in your heart."

**Understanding "heart":** Not just feelings

- Your imagination
- Your mind
- Your thought life

**The indictment:** You've given the keys—you've allowed:

- Your desires to drive your heart
- Your sin to drive what you're thinking about
- Your lust to drive your imagination

**The ramifications:** This will inevitably affect how you actually live out your life.

**The verdict:** You've already crossed the line.

**The goal:** Not to change the lanes to accommodate our driving ("I'm just a guy; that's just how guys are; this is just how people are; can't we just change the rules?")

**Jesus says:** "No."

- Your heart needs to be trained
- Your heart needs to be disciplined
- Your heart needs to be transformed
- Your heart needs the gospel

**Discussion Question:** How does Jesus's teaching challenge the "follow your heart" mentality of our culture?

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### III. Radical Self-Control (10 minutes)

#### A. The Warning (Matthew 5:29-30)

**Read together:** "If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell."

#### B. The Hyperbolic Point

**Jesus's meaning:**

- If you can't control your eyes, it would be better if you didn't have them
- If you can't control your hand, it would be better if you didn't have your hand

**The application:** Control your eyes. Control your hands. Control your mind. Control your heart.

**The command:** Stop letting your desires—whatever those desires may be—drive you:

- Your anger
- Your passion
- Your wants
- Your fears
- Your sadness
- Your lust

**Stop allowing:**

- Untrained desires
- Undisciplined desires
- Inexperienced desires
- Unwise desires

**To drive:**

- Your thoughts
- Your heart

- Your mind
- Your hands
- Your eyes

### **C. Get Control**

**The expectation:** "Get control."

**Jesus's point:**

- "You can't control your hand? Better not to have it."
- "You can't control your eye? Better not to have it."
- **But you should be able to. I should be able to. We should be able to control ourselves.**

**Not just external:** Not just hands and eyes

**But internal:** Your heart

- "I know where your heart is—it's right here"
- Control your heart
- Control your imagination
- Let it be disciplined and trained

**Discussion Question:** What does it practically look like to "control your heart" in areas where you struggle?

## **IV. Finding Loopholes vs. Living Faithfully (10 minutes)**

### **A. The Divorce Loophole (Matthew 5:31-32)**

**Read together:** "It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

### **B. Changing the Lanes**

**What they were doing:** Quoting Deuteronomy 24:1

- They knew this passage
- They loved this passage
- They were changing the lanes to accommodate their driving

**The mindset:**

- "I see another woman; she's pretty"
- "I'm already married, so I'll give my wife a certificate of divorce"

- "I'll do what the law says because I'm righteous"
- "I can go marry this other woman"

**Or:**

- "My wife upset me"
- "I don't like what she's done"
- "I'll do what the law says"

**The self-deception:** They were patting themselves on the back for being law-keepers.

### **C. Jesus's Correction**

**Jesus's point:** "You're not keeping the law just because you write a certificate of divorce."

**The law allowed it:** Yes, but:

- It wasn't saying that was good
- It wasn't saying that was righteous
- It wasn't what God wanted from you
- That's not what kingdom families look like

**What they were really doing:** Looking for loopholes, trying to change the rules to accommodate their own desires and wants.

**The verdict:** "Thinking you've found a loophole makes you a lawbreaker, not a law-keeper."

### **D. The Purpose of the Law**

**God's intention:** Just like Moses, just like always, God wanted His people to:

- Examine their heart
- Examine their mind
- Examine their life

**The purpose of the law:** Not just to give them lanes to drive in, but to **train them how to drive in the lanes.**

**Hear this carefully:** The purpose of the law was not just to define the lanes but to train them to drive in the lanes.

**Torah means:** Training, teaching

**The whole purpose:** To train them to:

- Drive in the lanes
- Live as people of faith

**What they were doing instead:** Looking for loopholes

- "Wait, there's a dotted line—does that mean I can drive anywhere I want?"
- "No. Stop. Be trained. Be disciplined. Be self-controlled."

**The call:** Allow:

- The law
- The Scriptures
- The Word

**To train and discipline you:**

- To drive in a way that pleases God
- To walk in a way that pleases God
- To live your life in a way that pleases God
- To live in your family in a way that pleases God

**Discussion Question:** What are modern "loopholes" people try to find in God's commands?

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## **V. Our Homes as Training Grounds (15 minutes)**

### **A. The Universal Temptation**

**What we all do:** Figure out what we want, then try to change the rules to accommodate it:

- This is what I want to do
- This is where I want to go
- This is how I want to live
- I'll figure out a way to change the rules

**Personal confession:** "I'm guilty. How about you? I'm guilty of trying to figure out: How do I still get what I want and stay in the lanes?"

### **B. What God Wants**

**God's desire:** Disciplined people

**Even when unclear:** Even when we can't exactly see where the line is, we're still driving the way we should

**Why?:**

- Because we've been trained
- Because we're wise
- Not like giving the keys to a five-year-old

**Who's driving:** Someone:

- Wise
- Understanding
- Experienced

- Trained

#### **Driving:**

- Our thoughts
- Our words
- Our mind
- Our hands
- Our feet

**Isn't this what we want?:** This is what God wants for us.

### **C. Diving Into Scripture**

**God's method:** He wants us to be people diving into the Scriptures to be trained.

**What our houses should be about:** Training

**What our homes should be about:** Training

**What our families should be about:** Training

**The vision:** May our homes be the training ground for our hearts.

### **D. The Alternative Approach**

**What we could do:** Listen to Hollywood, listen to our world, and tell our kids:

- "Grow up and do whatever you want to do"
- "Just follow your own heart"
- "We will change the lanes to accommodate your desires"

**The problem:** We wouldn't be doing them any favors—only contributing to the chaos in the world.

### **E. True Prayer**

**The only way:** To truly live out "May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven":

- Be the kind of people who change our driving to accommodate the lanes
- Change our driving to accommodate the direction God wants us to go

### **F. Our Resources**

**What we have:**

- The entirety of Scripture
- Most importantly: Jesus and His Holy Spirit
- The gospel of Jesus Christ indwelling us, shaping us, changing us
- The Spirit who is in us
- The gospel teaching us

**Colossians 3:16:** "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"

**Ephesians 5:18:** "Be filled with the Spirit"

**This is wise living.**

## **G. Embassies of the Kingdom**

**If our homes are to be:**

- Embassies of God's kingdom
- Embassies of peace

**They also must be:** Training grounds for our hearts

**What we don't do:** Allow our hearts, minds, and thoughts to just go any direction they want

**What we don't give the keys to:**

- Our imagination
- Our mouth
- Our eyes
- Our hands
- Our feet
- Our passions and desires
- Our five-year-old self

**What we do:** Allow Jesus through His Spirit and the gospel to:

- Shape us
- Mold us
- Train us
- Make us wise people

**That's what our home should be:** Training ground for:

- Our hearts
- Our individual heart
- Our spouse's heart (if married)
- Our children and grandchildren
- Our nieces and nephews
- Our brothers or sisters
- Our parents
- Whoever makes up our household

**Where we don't buy into the lie:**

- That our passions and desires get to drive our thoughts
- That they get to drive our actions
- That they get to drive our words

**But instead:** The gospel of Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God trains our hearts that we might live our lives in a way pleasing to God.

**Discussion Question:** What would it look like practically for your home to be a "training ground for hearts"?

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## **VI. Application: Taking the Next Step (10 minutes)**

### **A. First: Seek Forgiveness**

**The reality:** We've already blown it, to a large degree. We've already messed up. We know that.

**So we seek forgiveness:**

- In the grace and mercy of God
- By the blood of Jesus Christ
- We confess and repent

**What we confess:**

- We let our five-year-old self drive our thoughts
- We let our five-year-old self drive our words
- We let our five-year-old self drive our behavior

**We repent:** And seek the forgiveness of God.

### **B. Then: Take the Next Step**

**The theme:** Take the next step by faith

**The question:** What's the next step you need to take?

- For the sake of your own heart being trained
- For the sake of your family

**What could you do:**

- Today
- This week

**To train your heart:**

- More controlled
- More disciplined
- Not turning the keys over to base desires

- Allowing the gospel and Spirit to shape, mature, and make us wise

**The goal:** Live a life more pleasing to God, so that in our home God's will is done—"May Your will be done in our home as it is in heaven."

## **C. Practical Steps for Heart Training**

### **1. Identify what's driving you:**

- What emotions frequently control your responses?
- What desires often dictate your decisions?
- What fears shape your behavior?
- Where does the "five-year-old you" take the wheel?

### **2. Recognize the lanes:**

- What does Scripture say about this area?
- What does Jesus teach about this?
- Where are God's boundaries?

### **3. Implement training:**

- Scripture meditation (Psalm 1, Colossians 3:16)
- Accountability relationships
- Spiritual disciplines (prayer, fasting, study)
- Remove access to temptation
- Create positive habits to replace negative ones

### **4. For families with children:**

- Model self-control
- Talk about what's "driving" decisions
- Teach the "lanes vs. driving" metaphor
- Create family rhythms of Scripture engagement
- Celebrate growth in self-control

### **5. This week specifically:**

- Choose one area where you need more control
- Identify one specific action to train your heart
- Share this commitment with someone for accountability
- Pray daily for the Spirit's power to change

## **D. The Fork in the Road**

**Today can be a point of change:** There's a fork in the road, and you've got to decide which direction you're going to go.

**The decision:**

- Will you keep letting the five-year-old drive?
- Or will you let the gospel and Spirit train your heart?

**The invitation:** If we can help you follow Jesus, we want to help you.

**Discussion Question:** What specific area of your life needs the most "heart training" right now? What's one practical step you can take this week?

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## **Closing (5 minutes)**

### **A. The Challenge**

**The temptation:** To change the lanes to fit our driving—to accommodate our desires, passions, and wants.

**The call:** To change our driving to stay in the lanes—to train our hearts, discipline our desires, and live as wise, Spirit-filled people.

**For our homes:** They must be training grounds where:

- The gospel shapes us
- The Spirit transforms us
- Scripture teaches us
- We grow in wisdom and self-control

### **B. The Hope**

**We've all failed:** We've all let the five-year-old drive.

**But Jesus offers:**

- Forgiveness through His blood
- Transformation through His Spirit
- Training through His Word
- Power to change

**The promise:** God doesn't leave us to train ourselves. He gives us:

- His Spirit within us
- His Word before us
- His people around us
- His grace covering us

### **C. This Week's Action**

**Identify:** One area where you're letting untrained desires drive

**Confess:** Your need for forgiveness and transformation

**Take one step:** Toward training your heart in that area

**For families:** Have a conversation about making your home a training ground for hearts

## **D. Closing Prayer**

*Father, we confess that we've let the five-year-old inside us drive too often. We've followed our desires instead of Your ways. We've tried to change the rules instead of changing our behavior. Forgive us.*

*Thank You for the gospel of Jesus Christ that offers forgiveness for our failures and power for transformation. Thank You for Your Spirit who dwells in us to shape us, train us, and make us wise.*

*Help our homes to be training grounds for our hearts—places where Your Word dwells richly, where Your Spirit works powerfully, and where we grow in wisdom and self-control.*

*Train our hearts to love what You love, to desire what You desire, and to walk in Your ways. May Your will be done in our homes as it is in heaven.*

*In Jesus's name, who perfectly controlled His desires and showed us the way, Amen.*

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## **Discussion Questions (Choose 3-4 for your context)**

1. When you're honest with yourself, what areas of life are you most likely to let the "five-year-old you" drive?
2. How does culture encourage us to "change the lanes" rather than "change our driving"? What are specific examples?
3. Why is "follow your heart" such dangerous advice if our hearts are untrained and undisciplined?
4. How does Jesus's teaching on lust (looking with lustful intent) challenge our culture's approach to sexuality and desire?
5. What does it mean practically to "control your heart" and not just your external behavior?
6. In what areas of life do people most commonly look for "loopholes" in God's commands?
7. What would it look like for your home to be a "training ground for hearts"? What specific practices could you implement?
8. How can we train our children's hearts without being legalistic or creating Pharisees?

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## **Key Scriptures for Reference**

- **Matthew 5:27-32** - Jesus on lust, adultery, and divorce
- **Psalms 1:1-3** - Blessed is the one who meditates on God's law

- **Proverbs 4:23** - "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life"
- **Jeremiah 17:9** - "The heart is deceitful above all things"
- **Romans 12:2** - "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind"
- **Galatians 5:16** - "Walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh"
- **Ephesians 5:18** - "Be filled with the Spirit"
- **Colossians 3:16** - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly"
- **Hebrews 5:14** - "The mature... have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice"
- **2 Timothy 1:7** - "God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control"

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## Summary: Core Truths to Remember

1. **The five-year-old metaphor:** Letting untrained desires drive our lives leads to chaos
2. **Culture says:** Change the lanes to fit your driving (follow your heart)
3. **Jesus says:** Change your driving to stay in the lanes (train your heart)
4. **Lust is adultery:** Looking with lustful intent crosses the line in your heart
5. **Radical self-control:** Control your eyes, hands, mind, and heart
6. **No loopholes:** Finding ways around God's commands makes you a lawbreaker
7. **Torah means training:** The purpose of God's law is to train us, not just define boundaries
8. **Our homes as training grounds:** Places where hearts are shaped by the gospel and Spirit
9. **We've all failed:** We need forgiveness first, then transformation
10. **Take the next step:** Choose one area to train your heart this week

**The Bottom Line:** Stop letting the five-year-old drive. Let the gospel and Spirit train your heart. Make your home a training ground where wise, self-controlled, Spirit-filled people are shaped.