

You Shall Not Commit Adultery

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[0 : 00] Well, we are in the book of Exodus, going through the Ten Commandments, as many of you know. And we're arriving today at the Seventh Commandment, You Shall Not Commit Adultery.

This is a serious one, one that really impacts a lot of people and in very serious ways. Of course, last week we looked at You Shall Not Murder. That obviously has a huge impact on the lives of people as well.

Well, really all of the Ten Commandments, I think, are that way. But as we do every week, as we are going through this series, I want to provide a foundation, or the right perspective when it comes to how we look at the Ten Commandments.

And specifically, how we look at this commandment, You Shall Not Commit Adultery. The Bible says that in the age of grace, we are no longer under the law.

In fact, what was our memory verse here? Our memory verse says, For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. Now, notice that it doesn't say that the law is no longer relevant, but it does say this.

[1 : 08] The law is, there's an end to the law when it comes to righteousness. Because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, when we put our faith and trust in Him, that we become children of God and inherit eternal life, regardless of the things that we have done in the past.

And even when we make mistakes, when we have moral failings as Christians, God continues to keep us as a part of His family.

That's what it means to be under grace. But sin is still sin. We can still hurt one another. We can still ruin our own lives through sinful behavior.

And so the law is still good. It provides boundaries for our life. God tells us what's right and what's wrong. And He sets those boundaries so that we can avoid sin that would hurt us and hurt others and lead to pain and suffering.

So we shouldn't ignore the law. We're not under it. We can have confidence in our relationship with Christ, whether we're doing really well or whether we're failing as Christians. But we should take heed to the law and what it says so that we can avoid the pain and suffering that comes from sin.

[2 : 33] So let's read this verse. It's a pretty short one, this seventh commandment, but Exodus chapter 20, and it's in verse 14.

And it says this, You shall not commit adultery. Another short one, not as short as you shall not murder, just one extra word, at least in the English, but actually like you shall not murder, in the Hebrew that commandment was just two words.

This also, in the Hebrew language anyway, is just two words. And if you were to try to somewhat literalize it, it would read, Don't adulteralize. That's a word.

But the idea is, there is an institution called marriage, and do not do anything to forsake the covenant of marriage.

Don't violate that marriage contract. You know, there is a more broad term called fornication in the Bible. Sometimes we just use the word sexual immorality, in which, and that broader term can apply, you know, outside of any kind of marriage being involved.

[3 : 45] But this word, adultery, is specifically related to marriage. Adultery is when there is fornication, there is some kind of sexual immorality, where one party is married.

Sometimes it's both parties. And what this short command does, again, is part of the Ten Commandments, is it provides a foundation, a strict line around an institution, an institution that God created at the very beginning of his creation, the institution called marriage.

Let's go ahead, and we're going to turn back to the book of beginnings, Genesis chapter 2, and look at this foundation, when this institution was first started.

We'll start in verse 18. So Genesis chapter 2 and verse 18. And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone. I will make him a helper comparable to him.

Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name.

[5 : 09] So Adam gave name to all cattle, to all the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam, there was not found a helper comparable to him.

And the Lord caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept. And he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man, he made into a woman, and he brought her to the man.

And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.

Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. You know, this commandment, you do not, or you shall not commit adultery, is negative in nature, right?

It tells us what we should not do. But on the flip side of that commandment, is an invitation from God on what we should do, what we should enjoy through marriage.

[6 : 17] An intimate relationship, in fact, the most intimate relationship that human beings can experience in this life. Marriage. It's a relationship that is closer and more intimate than any other.

In fact, it's such a close relationship that here, God calls it becoming one flesh. You know, God designed men and women to fit together like a hand in glove.

You have the strength of a man and the gentleness of a woman. You have the strong drive of a man and the nurturing tenderness of a woman.

You have the tough hardness of a man and you have the sweetness of a woman. A man so well complements a woman and a woman, likewise, complements a man.

And there is this magnetic pull, this driving force between men and women that compel them towards each other.

[7 : 30] It's one of the most beautiful and powerful forces in all of creation. And it was created, by the way, by God himself.

You know, God really wanted to ensure that men and women would pair up, that they would get married so they could enjoy the, or experience the joy of marriage and the love in marriage.

And also, create a stable and secure environment for raising a family. In Proverbs 18, verse 22, it says this, this is Solomon, He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord. Getting married is a good and a wonderful thing. And this power, this force, this magnetism that drives men and women towards each other is mysterious and wonderful.

It's something that many poets over the years have written about, this attraction between men and women. Shakespeare wrote about it, right?

[8 : 48] Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? Thou art more lovely and more temperate. You know, the music charts are filled with love songs, songs about love.

I think about Michael Bolton's When a Man Loves a Woman, one of my favorites from Huey Lewis in the News, The Power of Love. The power of love, it's a curious thing.

Makes one man weep and another man sing. One of the poets in the Bible, towards the end of Proverbs, Proverbs chapter 30, says this in verse 18.

There are three things which are too wonderful for me. Yes, four which I do not understand. The way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin, or as the King James says, with a maid.

The way of a man and a woman is something that the poet says is too wonderful for me. You know, how is it, when you think about it, that just the sight of a woman can stop a man just dead in his tracks?

[10 : 07] The light that dances from her eyes can steal away the breath from his lungs as if the air is sucked right out of the room. The beauty of her form can make his pulse quicken like a war drum.

And even just the chance touch of her hand brushing up against his arm can send a jolt of electric fire through his whole body.

And likewise, on the opposite end, the sight and sound of a man can leave a woman breathless and her heart racing. His broad shoulders, the confidence in his eyes, the deepness of his voice, the

strength of his body.

And for a woman, she finds herself longing to be held in the arms of a man, a place of safety and comfort. And you know, some people have tried to explain this pull, this drive, in scientific terms, in terms of hormones and pheromones.

But you know, science fails, I think, miserably short of adequately describing the mystery of the attraction, the love between a man and a woman.

[11 : 27] And you know, this romantic love is one of God's greatest gifts. And it's meant to be relished and enjoyed in an exclusive and lifelong relationship of marriage.

You know, Hebrews describes the honor and the respectability of what the author calls the marriage bed.

Talking about sexual love. In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 4, it says this, Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed is undefiled.

But fornicators and adulterers, God will judge. And that first part there says, hey, listen, in marriage, the kind of love that you find in a marriage bed, it is honorable, it is respectable, it is pure, it is good, it is beautiful, it is lovely.

It's even, I think we can say, holy. But then comes the warning. But fornicators and adulterers, God will judge.

[12 : 48] You know, while sexual intimacy is beautiful and honorable, in a marriage, outside of that marriage bed, it brings pain and misery and destruction and even death.

And this is why God says in the seventh commandment, you shall not commit adultery.

You know, when God designed us in a certain way, and when we breach or violate the good design that God created for our lives and for our bodies, when we break those commands, people break. Spouses break. Children break. And even the whole of society becomes broken. Adultery and kind of the more broader category of fornication, which is any sexual activity outside of marriage, they are offenses to others.

They affect our spouse, our children, and like I said, the greater society around us. Marriage, that relationship, that intimate, one-flesh relationship, is meant to provide stability.

[14 : 17] It's meant to provide safety. It's meant to provide security. It's meant to be a place of trust. And adultery violates that trust.

It vaporizes the safety that was there. It was meant to be there. And adultery destabilizes the security of the home.

You know, the fallout of an adulterous affair is both broad and deep. And just to kind of list off some of the consequences, the first one that I think about is just the heartache, the emotional pain of having a sacred trust that is violated.

Many I've heard describe the emotional pain of infidelity being described as if their hearts were being ripped out of their chest.

So painful. Many times, infidelity leads to divorce, a broken marriage. Now, adultery doesn't have to lead to that.

[15 : 30] But the Bible actually is very clear, Jesus himself even, saying that adultery is a legitimate justification for divorce. I know there are many who have worked through adultery in their marriage to keep their marriage intact.

But I also know it's been a long and hard and difficult road. And of course, divorce leads to broken homes. It especially impacts any children that are involved.

Another thing is disease. Bodies racked with sometimes STDs. You know, when sexuality is not kept in exclusive relationship of marriage, which God designed it for, it leads to a proliferation of diseases.

I didn't write this down and I've looked this up in the past and I can't remember what it is, but I think I read that about 20% of the population in the United States at any given time, and this is the whole population, about 20%, has some kind of STD at any given time.

in this country. It's quite widespread. And you know what? All of that can be avoided just through faithfulness in marriage.

[16 : 55] Some other impacts. You, in adultery, you lose the respect among friends, family, and community. Sometimes it impacts your business or your wealth.

We'll read about that in a second from Proverbs chapter 5. I think about, you know, when you go through the checkout line at the grocery aisle and you see, you know, those magazines, sometimes

we have, many times we have famous people whose lives are on display and we see a lot of the hurt and pain and turmoil from infidelity.

I remember, I don't know how long it was, 10 years ago or so, Tiger Woods was famously found out for his many adulterous affairs and it led to him losing sponsorship deals.

People dropped him. He actually stopped playing, stopped competing in golf at least for a while and of course, that was all on top of losing his marriage and breaking up his family.

Do you know that adultery can even lead to murder? You know, we have an example right in the Bible with the story of one of God's favorite people, David, King David.

[18:09] God loved King David. He said, he is a man after my own heart and even a man after God's own heart can fall to the temptation of adultery and we know the story that David committed adultery with Bathsheba and then in order to what?

To cover up his tracks to try to prevent from being found out. He had her husband murdered by putting him at the head of one of the battles.

And you know, this kind of thing, covering up your tracks in adultery, actually happens basically every day in this country and really all over the world. I think about abortion, how many abortions are done in order to try to hide infidelity.

I actually have emblazoned in my memory a time where when we lived in Augusta, Georgia, I would go occasionally on the weekend to an abortion mill an abortion clinic if you will to try to reach out to women who were there to have an abortion and see if I could convince them to change their mind, try to offer help and an alternative.

And I remember there was a woman and she actually stopped about maybe eight feet from me to have a conversation. And as part of that conversation she said to me, you don't understand.

[19:41] I have to do this. You don't understand. I have to do this. I said, no you don't. You don't have to do this. She said, you don't understand.

She said, I'm engaged to be married and this baby does not belong to him. And I said, listen, you can come clean and give life to this child.

Ultimately, she walked away and walked into that abortion clinic. But she was there to cover up her infidelity. And how many times does that happen every day in this country?

Even beyond abortion, how many times are there crimes of violence or murder that are precipitated by adultery? You know, the FBI keeps track of all the crimes that are in any way related to in which alcohol is involved or drugs or guns.

But one of the things they don't do is keep track of how many crimes or murders are related to adultery or sexual immorality. I think that if they did, people might be shocked at how high the numbers are.

[21:00] Does anybody remember the O.J. Simpson case? Another murder that involved infidelity. And you know what? Even right now, today, in our own community, there's a case going on and a trial coming up in which a man is being accused anyway of committing murder because of it was precipitated anyway by an adulterous affair.

You know, the list goes on and on with the consequences of adultery. Solomon, he describes the consequences of adultery and fornication as well in Proverbs chapter 5.

If you turn there, you can read along with me. Proverbs chapter 5, starting with verse 1. I'll just read this is 13 verses. it says this, my son, pay attention to my wisdom, lend your ear to my understanding that you may preserve discretion and your lips may keep knowledge.

For the lips of an immoral woman drip honey and her mouth is smoother than oil but in the end she is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. In other words, she's dangerous.

And by the way, this applies to men and women but this woman is a picture basically of adultery or fornication. There's danger there.

[22:24] Verse 5, her feet go down to death. That's where it leads. Her steps lay down or lay hold of hell. Lest you ponder her path, her ways are unstable.

You do not know them. Therefore, hear me now my children and do not depart from the words of my mouth. Remove your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house. Lest you give your honor to others and your years to the cruel one.

Lest aliens be filled with your wealth and your labors go to the house of a foreigner. These are the things that happen when you do not remain faithful in marriage.

And you mourn at last when your flesh and your body are consumed. And say how I have hated instruction and my heart despised correction. I have not obeyed the voice of my teachers nor inclined my ear to those who instructed me.

You know, here in America we are in the midst of a sexual revolution they call it. Where there is a promotion and a running towards what they call free sex.

[23 : 35] There's legal prostitution now in a good portion of the country. Free flow of pornography. It's even somewhat popular today to have what they call open marriages.

And by the way, just because your spouse agrees to your adultery does not make it any less sinful. You know, and after several generations of this revolution, we have seen just the putrid fruit that it has borne in our country.

There have been generations that have come from those who threw off any reins of sexual purity and have seen the pain that it has caused in their own families.

But despite that recognition, at least from some quarters, it does not appear to be slowing down. As the book title goes, it looks like we continue to slouch towards Gomorrah.

[24 : 39] You know, Christianity is hated by many. And one of the primary reasons that Christianity is hated by many is because of its restrictions on human sexuality.

People want freedom, not restrictions. And their response to Christians or Christianity or the Bible is, how dare you tell me what to do?

How dare you tell me how to live my life? And because of that, right, there is a temptation for Christians, for church leaders, to avoid topics like this, to speak of them maybe in just a whisper. But you know what? The Bible does not avoid these topics. In fact, the Bible speaks about them frequently and loudly and boldly.

And so we should too. You know, in light of the horrific consequences, the destructive consequences of adultery.

[25 : 49] And by the way, in light on the other side of the wonderful beauty of marriage and love in a marriage, I want us to look and to consider what we can do practically to protect our marriages from infidelity.

You know, we should never think that we are above or beyond adultery, fornication, or committing some kind of sexual immorality.

In 1 Corinthians 10-12, Paul says this, therefore let him who thinks he stands, take heed lest he fall. We all need to take heed to ourselves.

Realize that because of the powerful forces that draw men and women together, it is possible for any one of us to be drawn into sexual sin.

And by the way, at any age, it's not just a sin of young people. I remember just in the last couple of years, there was a very popular Bible teacher who traveled around all over YouTube, taught in big conferences, and it came out that this man, who was, by the way, in his 70s, was having a relationship with a young woman in her 20s while he was married.

[27 : 20] He'd probably been married for 50 years or around there, but even though, even though he had been faithful, it seems, or we assume, for 50 years, he was drawn away by his own lusts.

So, let's look at some practical things. Now, what I'd like to do in looking at practical ways that we can protect our marriage is looking at it in two categories.

The first is avoiding temptation, staying away from temptation. And the second one, the second category, is ways that we can cultivate love in our own marriage.

So, one, things that we should shy away from or avoid, and then two, things that we should really lean into. So, let's look at the first, avoiding temptation.

And the Bible speaks directly to this idea. In 1 Corinthians 6, 18, Paul says this, flee sexual immorality, run away.

[28 : 27] For every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Flee, run away from any kind of sexual morality, from any kind of temptation towards it.

And, well, what does that mean? I mean, what are the things that might tempt me? Well, we should consider our own lives. What are the things that have tempted me in the past? And also, by the way, not just what has tempted me in the past, because there might be new temptations.

And so, can we also consider the temptations that we've seen come into the lives of others, and learn from those? There's just a few tips.

When you get married, then you are best friends with who? Your spouse, your husband, or your wife. Now, before you're married, you might have lots of relationships with boys and with girls, with men and women, and they might even be, you know, somewhat close, but when you get married, those relationships with the opposite sex end.

Now, I don't want to say that you're, obviously, you're not, I'm not saying that you never talk to someone of the opposite sex, but you're no longer having close relationships with somebody who's of the opposite sex.

[29 : 55] You're not sharing your lives, if you're a man, you're not sharing your life with another woman. If you're a woman, you're not sharing your problems with another man.

You're not sharing your hopes and your dreams with someone of the opposite sex. The dynamic should and must change because those friendships, right, those intimate conversations can very easily lead to something else.

Another thing to consider is transparency in your marriage, being transparent with one another. And, by the way, a really radical type of transparency that maybe some people aren't used to. A transparency in every part of your life, where you're at, what you're doing, who you're emailing, what's on your phone or your computer. You know, you don't really have a right to privacy from your spouse.

Your spouse has access to your whole life. And so, unless you're working on a surprise birthday party, right, we share everything with one another.

[31 : 10] Think about our phones and computers, right, because those can be private. They're locked behind passwords or pass codes. And there are things that you can do on those devices.

Things that you can look up or people that you can talk to in a private way without anybody ever finding out. But if you know that your spouse always has access to all of your communication, all of your emails, all of your texts, that can really provide a good amount of accountability.

Also, when it comes to social media, having access to private, direct messages, you know, I've heard so many stories since the age of Facebook and social media in which people now have this direct access to old friends from high school.

And sometimes it's an old flame. And, oh, my marriage is kind of in trouble and things aren't going well. And, oh, I remember that old girlfriend that I have.

And, oh, here she is on Facebook. And, oh, maybe I can just message her and see how she's doing. Yeah, be careful about who you friend on Facebook and the kind of people that you connect with.

[32 : 25] And make sure that all those things are open and transparent to one another. Another one is be careful about time away from the family. I've heard so many stories, especially about people doing business travel, getting into trouble because they were away from their family and the accountability that their family and their own community provided.

This happens a lot to musicians and entertainers or public speakers who are touring and traveling a lot or traveling for work. If you're traveling for work, and by the way, these are not hard, fast, right and wrong type things.

These are matters of wisdom. But if you're traveling, consider bringing somebody with you, somebody from the family, your wife, your children. Or if you can't do that, call home every night. Call home, spend a couple hours on the phone with your wife, with your kids. Avoid, you know, spending evenings out with your colleagues. So many opportunities to get into trouble.

Avoid late nights at the office. And sometimes there are actually jobs that you just might want to avoid in general. I remember I had a friend years ago, it's been a while, and I've lost touch with him.

[33 : 39] But his story, he was a traveling salesman. He would go door-to-door selling, I think it was those Kirby vacuums, is that the name? And he said he was doing a sale, went into somebody's home, gave a demonstration, and by the end of that day had committed adultery.

Because he was in a compromised situation. And he had to work through that, and the marriage survived, but it was difficult. Avoid putting yourself in those kinds of situations.

And there are many more tips and advice I could give, but you know what? Fleeing from temptation is not enough. It's not sufficient. It's important to flee from bad things, but it's also important to flee from the bad to what?

The good things. The good things that God has designed for us. You know, God isn't just a killjoy. He actually wants us to experience the joys of marriage, the love and the intimacy that comes

between a man and a woman in marriage.

And so that second category is cultivating love in marriage. God wants us to enjoy one another as husband and wife. You know what? Marriage can be difficult.

[34 : 59] And a thriving marriage actually requires work. And not just a little bit of work here and there. It actually requires a lot of work. And not just a bunch of work in the beginning.

marriage requires work throughout every year and every season of your life. So, some of the things that you can do to cultivate the love in your marriage is one, just connect on a regular basis.

It's so easy when life gets busy, when you have a household full of kids, to not have a chance to just connect on a regular basis. Look for opportunities as part of your morning routine or your evening routine, just to take some time for the two of you to connect.

Talk about your life, your family, share life's challenges. Talk about your hopes for the future and your dreams. The next thing you can do is to enjoy each other romantically.

Husbands and wives are meant to be romantic with one another. Express your affection on a regular basis. Whether it's words of affection or gifts or acts of service, right?

[36 : 17] Many of us have heard of the five love languages. Find ways to express that affection. And then there's the other one is expressing affection through physical touch.

You know, when I was in youth group, the kids in youth group were not allowed, there was a rule against PDA. Does everybody recognize that?

What is PDA? Physical displays of affection. Not allowed. No holding hands, no holding each other, no snuggling. Not in youth group.

But when you're married, we get to lean in all the way into all those things. Lots of PDA in your home. Pursue it in marriage, whether the kids are watching or not.

Hold hands, snuggle, dance, kiss when you leave the house or when you're coming home. Or kiss just, hey, because. It's nice. And you know what?

[37 : 15] Sometimes you can just kiss your wife just to embarrass the kids. And then lastly, enjoy each other physically.

And here I'm talking about the marriage bed. If we go back to Proverbs chapter 5, he starts off talking about avoiding the wayward woman, avoiding the sinful woman, avoiding adultery, avoiding fornication.

But then he continues on in verse 15, talking about what you should run to. He says this, Proverbs 5, 15, drink water from your own cistern and running water from your own well.

Should your fountains be dispersed abroad, streams of water in the streets? Let them be only your own and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice with the wife of your youth.

As a loving deer and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times and always be enraptured with her love. You know, that phrase, rejoice with the wife of your youth, that's not saying, hey, get together with your wife and shout hooray and hallelujah.

[38 : 29] But it's saying, enjoy your wife. Enjoy her. And in this context, actually, enjoy her in a romantic and a sexual way.

And by the way, it finishes up with, and always be enraptured with her love. How often? A few times a year? Once a month? No.

Always be enraptured with her love. All the time. Now I realize that age and health and other things might impact physical intimacy.

But this isn't something that married couples should just pursue when everybody feels like it. Marital intimacy is something that couples should prioritize to share their love with one another regularly.

I'm going to finish up with this. This gets back to our law grace thing. In Romans chapter 13 verse 8, Paul says this related to the law.

[39 : 39] He says this, Owe no one anything except to love one another. So the subject matter is love. For he who loves another has fulfilled the law.

For the commandments, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, you shall not covet, and if there is any other commandment, they are all summed up in this saying, namely, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

love does no harm to a neighbor, therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. You know, the law, like we said, can set up boundaries, important boundaries, boundaries that we should not pass in order to avoid the pain and misery and death that comes from crossing those lines.

But, the law is not sufficient to living a fulfilling life, the kind of life that God wants us to live. He designed for us a life that we ought to enjoy, a life that he wants us to live to the fullest. [40 : 54] And so we don't just avoid sexual immorality, we enjoy, we enjoy the marriage, the romance, the love that he designed for us to have in marriage.

We enjoy the life that he wants us to live to the fullest. So if you're married, let's do that. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for marriage. It was your idea. I think it was a brilliant one. And there are things, there are temptations in life that can ruin a good thing.

And we ask you to work in us. Help us to live a life that is honoring to you. To protect our marriage with, to guard it with such vigilance because it is such a precious thing.

It's a precious thing to you and it should be a precious thing to us. Help us to live lives that are faithful to one another and faithful to you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[41 : 55] Alright. Thanks everybody. Hey, don't forget these books. I really like these. I'll put them here on the front chair if anybody wants to check these out.