

An Examination of the Ten Commandments

GLORIFYING GOD WITH OUR SEXUALITY

“You shall not commit adultery.”

— Exodus 20:4-6

Why are you Christians so hung up about sex?” I have lost track of how many times I have been asked this question. The really ironic thing is that Christians ought to be the most pro-sex people on the planet. We have God’s Word on sex—it’s His idea and He intended it as a glorious gift. He commands limits for sex’s proper use not to keep us from enjoying it, but so that we can *really* enjoy it.

But this is the pattern of sin in all the areas we are seeing—distortion of a good thing to serve our purposes rather than God’s. All of this second table of the law has to do with our relationships with others and there is no more intimate aspect of relationship than sexuality. God here instructs us that what He has design for delight can be destructive if it is misused. Sexual intimacy is intended for man and wife alone. Together the two are united and built up as one whole.

In any other setting it tears apart and leaves both fractured and undone. This fidelity/infidelity contrast is also a picture of our relationship with God as a covenant bond demanding absolute faithfulness.

“Lust produces bad sex, because it denies relationship. Lust turns the other person into an object, a thing, a nonperson. Jesus condemned lust because it cheapened sex, it made sex less than it was created to be. For Jesus, sex was too good, too high, too holy, to be thrown away by cheap thoughts.”

— Richard Foster

THE LAW SHOWS US CHRIST’S CHARACTER

God is our holy husband who is jealous with a righteous zeal for our faithfulness to Him. He will countenance no rival. Jesus not only loves us with this great love, but also pursues us as a bridegroom. He will win us to Himself and be spurned no more. What a wonderful window into the heart of our Savior we have in marriage. The intimacy, delight, and fruitfulness of the marriage bed reveals the nature of God’s calling to us as His bride.

We also see that our King is the giver of all good gifts. Sexuality is not ours. It is His to give as He sees fit and He has designed it as a gift to be enjoyed within in the commitment of a loving marriage.

THE LAW SHOWS US HOW OUR HEARTS WORK

Oh what adulterous whores we are! This command and all that it reveals about God’s great love for us also reveals our utter baseness as unfaithful people. Again and again we turn to rivals for affection. Time after time we leave our betrothed and revel in the streets of our own desires. When will we learn that those suitors will always leave us naked and ashamed?!

“... mankind very quickly distorted God’s gift of sexuality, making sexual lust into an idol that steals the hearts of men away from their God.”

— Ed Clowney

Few things point out our propensity for self-gratification like our sexuality. Designed as an expression and means of union together, it is all too often pursued or avoided for self rather than other. The law instead reminds us that sex is a gift bestowed by God to be enjoyed for His glory by those whom He has joined together.

HOW DID CHRIST FULFILL THIS LAW?

Jesus is the lover of our souls. Scripture tells us that marriage is a picture of Christ's relationship with the Church as His bride.¹ He was no adulterer, but has loved us faithfully coming even to lay down His life for us. Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Christ has loved the Church. He not only has not strayed from fidelity to us, but He has perfectly led us as His Bride, securing our freedom on the cross.

“Love desires to satisfy others, even at the expense of self. Lust desires to gratify self, even at the expense of others.”

— Ed Cole

He even now has gone to prepare a place for us in His Father's house and will return for us to glorify us and sing over us His love song of delight.

He provides the purity for both sides of this marriage. He is the faithful husband and He redeems us out of our harlotry and restores us to purity and fidelity to Him. He has selflessly loved us and at the same time paid for the horror of our self-centeredness with His own sacrifice.

FLESHING IT OUT—BOTH SIDES OF THE LAW

Which is the 7th commandment? (WLC #137)

The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.²

What are the **duties required** in the 7th commandment? (#138)

The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency, conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.³

What are the **sins forbidden** in the 7th commandment? (#139) *The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage, having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.⁴*

What does the 7th commandment require? (WSC 71)

The seventh commandment requires us and everyone else to keep sexually pure in heart, speech, and action.

What does the 7th commandment forbid?

The seventh commandment forbids thinking, saying, or doing anything sexually impure.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does adultery point to our spiritual failings?
2. What is the biblical solution for adultery? How are we set free from our adulterous ways?
3. How has Christ revealed the fullness of this commandment?
4. What are you doing to protect yourself and your (current or future) spouse?

APPLICATION

How do we repent of our spiritual adultery? How do we avoid the very real temptation of physical or emotional adultery against our spouse? This law points us to our radical need for a Savior. We desperately need Him. Let us pray that we as a community of faith will be growing in our understanding of this law and help one another in keeping it.

¹ Ephesians 5:32

² Exod. 20:14

³ 1 Thess. 4:4, Job 31:1, 1 Cor. 7:34; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:2; 1 Cor. 7:2,35–36; Job 31:1; Acts 24:24–25; Prov. 2:16–20; 1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Cor. 7:2,9; Prov. 5:19–20; 1 Pet. 3:7; Prov. 31:11,27–28; Prov. 5:8, Gen. 39:8–10.

⁴ Prov. 5:7; Heb. 13:4, Gal. 5:19; 2 Sam. 13:14, 1 Cor. 5:1; Rom. 1:24,26–27, Lev. 20:15–16; Matt. 5:28, Matt. 15:19, Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3–4, Prov. 7:5,21–22; Isa. 3:16, 2 Pet. 2:14; Prov. 7:10,13; 1 Tim. 4:3; Lev. 18:1–21, Mark 6:18, Mal. 2:11–12; 1 Kings 15:12, 2 Kings 23:7, Deut. 23:17–18, Lev. 19:29, Jer. 5:7, Prov. 7:24–27; Matt. 19:10–11; 1 Cor. 7:7–9, Gen. 38:26; Mal. 2:14–15, Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:16, Matt. 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:12–13; Ezek. 16:49, Prov. 23:30–33; Gen. 39:19, Prov. 5:8; Eph. 5:4, Ezek. 23:14–16, Isa. 23:15–17, Isa. 3:16, Mark 6:22, Rom. 13:13, 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30, Jer. 4:30, Ezek. 23:40.