

## The Ten Commandments: No Adultery

As we focus on the seventh commandment and consider God's call to sexual purity, we need to keep two things in mind:

### 1. **We are a mess**

We are broken people. None of us is free from sin. We all are guilty. Preachers are guilty, too. The sexual failures of preachers are especially scandalous and do incredible harm to the Church and the witness of Christ.

### 2. **No matter how messed up we are, Christ offers us forgiveness and freedom through the Gospel**

In Galatians 5:1, Christians are called to freedom from legalism and sin. In this passage, the Apostle Paul wrote: "For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery."

Any sin in our lives seeks to enslave us to our self-centered human nature. But Christ has given His life and brought us salvation that we may live as free people by the power of His Holy Spirit.

## **A. The Problem of Sexual Pollution and Sexual Abuse**

All sexual activity outside of God's design for sex is sexual abuse. Sexual pollution is as ancient as time. The Old Testament records the struggles and sexual failures of men and women throughout the centuries.

After Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, they lost the innocence, unity, and joy that God gave them through the gift of sexual intimacy. Sexual immorality was rampant in Noah's day and led God to cleanse the earth through a devastating flood. In Egypt, Joseph was sent to prison for a crime he did not commit when Potiphar's wife attempted to seduce him. David's adultery with Bathsheba led to the death of an innocent man and to conflict and death in David's family. Solomon could not control his sexual appetite and accumulated hundreds of wives and concubines, leading him to promote worship of idols. His sin eventually led to the division of Israel and captivity. Old Testament prophets spoke of Israel's rebellion against God as an act of adultery. God instructed Hosea to marry a prostitute so that his marriage and family struggles would demonstrate the unfaithfulness of Israel in turning from God.

Sexual pollution today is as close to us as one click on the Internet. Our society is awash in porn and other enticements to sexual sin. Television is filled with sexual images and appeals to indulge oneself in unrestrained sexuality.

### 1. **Sexual impurity plunges a dagger into the heart of God**

When Potiphar's wife urged Joseph to sleep with her, he acknowledged that committing adultery with her would be a sin against God. "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9)

After the prophet Nathan confronted David about his adultery with Bathsheba, David wrote in Psalm 51 that he knew his sin was against the Lord. "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight." (Psalm 51:4)

**2. Sexual impurity defiles a marriage and plunges a dagger into the covenant of marriage**

Having an affair is horrible abuse of one's spouse. Malachi confronted the people of his day who had been unfaithful to their spouses. "...the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithfulness, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant." (Mal. 2:14b)

**3. Adultery destroys families and plunges a dagger into the heart of a family**

Adultery destroys families by destroying the trust on which families are built. It is similar to a cancer that eats away at the members of a family.

**4. Sexual immorality undermines the very foundation of our society and plunges a dagger into the heart of our ability to exist as a civilization**

In the many problems we face in our city, nation, and world today, one common denominator in many of our problems is the breakdown of the home.

**5. Sexual immorality plunges a dagger into the heart of our witness to the nations**

Our sexual sins undermine our efforts to testify to the power and freedom offered through the Gospel.

**6. Sexual sin is not an accident**

We have an enemy who prowls around, seeking to destroy people who are not careful. Sexual temptations are some of the devil's most common weapons. "Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." (1 Pet. 5:8-9)

Because the devil is actively seeking to destroy us, we need to heed these words from the Apostle Peter and be sober-minded. We need to take our covenants seriously. We also need to be watchful and know our weaknesses and blind spots.

## **B. The Freedom of God's Solution**

God's solution is sexual purity empowered and transformed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. To apply God's solution to the problems of sexual pollution in our world, we need to...

**1. Revisit God's design for sexual intimacy**

Sex is God's sacred gift that is enjoyed without shame and guilt only within the bounds of a lifelong, monogamous, heterosexual marriage. We learn from Genesis 2 and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Mark 10:7-9 that God's gift of sexuality is a good gift when we enjoy it within His design. Sex is God's gift in which a husband and wife know each other fully and intimately as persons who belong exclusively and completely to each other. Through the gift of sexual intimacy, God creates a mysterious physical and spiritual union between a husband and wife that helps them weather the storms of life, raise and nurture children, sanctify husband and wife, and make them more like Christ, and prepare them for the intimate relationship God wants us to have with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**2. Rediscover the power of the Gospel**

In Matthew 5:27-28, Jesus expanded our understanding of adultery to include lustful thoughts toward another person. Sin begins in the heart and mind. All of us are guilty of

adultery because we look at other people and contemplate lustful thoughts. But when we believe the Gospel and trust in Christ to save us, God places His Holy Spirit in us and gives us power to resist sexual and other temptations. Romans 8:1-5 shows us how living by the power of God's Spirit gives us power to resist sin and obey God. Jesus Christ experienced sexual temptation but never gave in to it. His perfect life, sacrificial death, and victorious resurrection paid the price for our sin and set us free from slavery to sin.

**3. Recommit to sexual purity and, if married, recommit to your spouse**

Remember Jesus' words to the woman caught in adultery. He did not condemn her but told her "from now on, sin no more." Confess your failure to the Lord and turn away from sexual sin. If you are engaged in an affair or contemplating an affair, end it immediately, confess it to the Lord, and ask for His forgiveness. Our church wants to help heal marriages damaged by sexual sin. Call Susan Warner on our staff and ask about participating in our Reconciliation and Peacemaking Ministry. With God's grace and power, we have seen families heal from the damage of sexual immorality.

Men, remember that our example for loving our wives is Jesus Christ who gave His life for the Church. Each husband is called to devote his life in full and loving service to his wife and family.

Recommended reading from God's Word: Ephesians 5 and 1 Corinthians 5, 6, and 7.

**Discussion Questions**

1. When and in what situations are you most vulnerable to sexual temptation?
2. How can you be more sober-minded and alert to temptation in your life?
3. What encouragement and guidance do you find on being a better spouse by reading Ephesians 5?
4. What helpful instruction and encouragement do you find by reading 1 Corinthians 5, 6, and 7?
5. What can you do to recommit to your spouse?