

A PARTICULAR PROBLEM

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: Proverbs 6:20-25; Proverbs 7:1-5

Selfishness is at the core of law-breaking. We say we are above God and His law, that our needs and our wants are more important than anyone else's. Breaking the Seventh Commandment is deeply selfish and again, like the Sixth, deeply personal. It means breaking all the other Commandments that follow such as the Eighth, the Ninth and the Tenth. It involves stealing someone from another, lying and coveting. Adultery is a particular problem that has been an issue throughout the history of mankind.

1. The power of sexual desire.

Sexual desire is meant to be strong in human beings because we are meant to have children and continue the human race. It is a pleasurable experience at its best, but it can be humiliating and disappointing.

Especially, one issue that human societies have had to face, is to regulate the strength of male sexual desire. This has always constituted a danger to society. Wrong solutions have been to allow polygamy, legalise prostitution and liberalise pornography. These are all forbidden in the word of God for what this Commandment teaches is that all contact or exposure to sexual stimulation, outside of marriage between a man and a woman, is wrong. In the Old Testament the Lord 'winked' at polygamy but now the standards are higher. We see habitual sexual immorality, in other words, everything that breaks the Seventh Commandment, excludes a person from heaven (Revelation 21:8; and 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

2. Just for marriage.

All expressions of sexual intimacy and experience are reserved for marriage, between a man and a woman, alone. Marriage, properly understood, is making solemn pledges and covenant commitments before God, ideally, and before society. Sexual immorality is everything sexual that happens outside that union. Adultery is the term, more strictly speaking, of immorality between people who are already married. But the Seventh Commandment includes all forms of sexual immorality. All sexual expressions are to happen in a context where, if a child is conceived, that child would be properly cared for in a marriage.

There is something very fundamental when a man and a woman come together for the purposes of having sex together. It is not an event which has no consequences or implications for the people involved. Paul tells the Corinthian church that joining with a prostitute is to make a one-flesh relationship, however temporary (1 Corinthians 6:15-16). Where people do not take seriously the fundamental nature of the linkage between a man and a woman in a sexual union, there are some bad results. It undermines the characters of the people involved, and makes something vital and important, common place and unexceptional. It results in the loss of personal dignity, selfishness, a loss of respect for other people, the loss of the meaning of love, and can further result in hardness, cruelty, and violence. It destroys existing relationships, and damages future relationships. It breaches trust and makes people hesitant to commit to each other in marriage. (See Proverbs 6:32-35).

3. Recent developments.

Sexual immorality in our generation has been made easier by various medical and surgical inventions, and by corresponding changes in legislation. These changes have enabled sexual activity and marriage to be uncoupled.

Contraception has allowed for relatively risk-free sex, where the likelihood of conceiving a child is greatly reduced. Abortion on demand has offered the 'ultimate solution' to an unwanted pregnancy and has 'legalised' murder. Divorce, where no-fault has to be cited, again allows people to commit sexual immorality more easily by dissolving the covenant commitment, and giving an easy escape route to one partner or the other wishing to commit immorality with another.

Many lives have been lost and other lives ruined as a result of these developments. The peace of children has often been destroyed as they have grown up in broken homes. It has left a legacy of distrustful people who would prefer not to commit to marriage.

4. Our response.

We should pray for young people caught up in this increasingly permissive and liberal culture. So many are from broken homes, are in abusive and unsatisfactory relationships, the victims of sex education in schools and the evil world of internet pornography and social media which encourages and facilitates immorality.

We should pray for strong marriages, the protection of the unborn and for societies that seek to help improve conditions, such as Lovewise and the Christian Institute. We should pray the Lord would bring an awakening to our society and bring us back to His laws.