

## The Seventh Commandment

Q. What does God require in the sixth, seventh, and eighth commandments?

A. Sixth, that we do not hurt, or hate, or be hostile to our neighbor, but be patient and peaceful, pursuing even our enemies with love. Seventh, that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Eighth, that we do not take without permission that which belongs to someone else, nor withhold any good from someone we might benefit.

### Unpacking the Presuppositions

1. When God tells us through the seventh command not to commit adultery, He is assuming that we have a fundamental understanding of marriage.
  - Marriage is an exclusive relationship in which a man and a woman commit themselves to each other in **covenant**<sup>1</sup> for life, and on the basis of this solemn vow become “one flesh”<sup>2</sup>

*Genesis 2:24–25 (NASB95) For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be **joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.** And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

- “one flesh” denotes sexual intimacy

*Malachi 2:14 (NASB95) “Yet you say, ‘For what reason?’ Because the Lord has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, **though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.**”*

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<sup>1</sup> Covenants in Scripture are solemn agreements, negotiated or unilaterally imposed, that bind the parties to each other in permanent defined relationships, with specific promises, claims, and obligations on both sides (e.g., the marriage covenant, Mal. 2:14)<sup>1</sup> [The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version](#)

<sup>2</sup> Sproul, R. C. (Ed.). (2005). [The Reformation Study Bible: English Standard Version](#) (p. 1347). Orlando, FL; Lake Mary, FL: Ligonier Ministries.

*Matthew 19:5–6 (NASB95 Jesus said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**”*

- This union was blessed by God and was expected to be “fruitful and multiply” *Gen 1:28*. This assumes the delight of sexual intimacy within the marital bond.

*Hebrews 13:4 (NASB95) Marriage is to be held in **honor**<sup>3</sup> among all, and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge*

*Proverbs 5:15–19 (NASB95) Drink water from your own cistern and fresh water from your own well. Should your springs be dispersed abroad, Streams of water in the streets? **Let them be yours alone** and not for strangers with you. Let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth. As a loving hind and a graceful doe, let her breasts satisfy you at all times; **Be exhilarated always with her love.***

- See also the book Song of Solomon
  - The bible (Christianity) is not sexual intimacy. It is very positive about sexual intimacy within the right context.
- With and brief foundational understanding of what is originally intended for marriage and sexuality, we are now able to better understand the seventh commandment. We can also see that a broad list of issues will also find their application in this command.
    - ... that we abstain from sexual immorality and live purely and faithfully, whether in marriage or in single life, avoiding all impure actions, looks, words, thoughts, or desires, and whatever might lead to them. Including: prostitution, homosexuality, transgenderism,

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<sup>3</sup> τίμιος, timiōs ‘held in honor’ pert. to being of exceptional value *costly, precious*

polygamy, incest, divorce, pedophilia,  
lust/pornography, sexual humor ect...

## Understanding the Seventh Command Physically and Spiritually

2. Adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse – Merriam Webster

○ Other way to say it: Marital **unfaithfulness**, breaking of a sacred covenant vow, distorting of creational intentions for sexuality.

▪ Quote: The 'one flesh' relationship of marriage involves a joining together of the man and the woman at all levels, social, economic, emotional, and physical. Adultery is the violation of this one flesh relationship, the intrusion of an outsider into the total, unique and exclusive commitment which husband and wife are to have to each other. - R.E. Ciampa

○ In the OT this warranted the death penalty

Leviticus 20:10 (NASB95) 'If *there is* a man who commits adultery with another man's wife, one who commits adultery with his friend's wife, **the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.**

NET Note: This is a sin against the marriage of a fellow citizen—**it destroys the home.** The Law distinguished between adultery (which had a death penalty) and sexual contact with a young woman (which carried a monetary fine and usually marriage if the father was willing).<sup>4</sup>

▪ Proverbs 6:32–33 (NASB95) The one who commits adultery with a woman is lacking sense; He who would destroy himself does it. **Wounds and disgrace he will find and his reproach will not be blotted out.**

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<sup>4</sup> Biblical Studies Press. (2005). [The NET Bible First Edition; Bible. English. NET Bible.; The NET Bible.](#) Biblical Studies Press.

3. Although the seventh command speaks to the act of physical adultery. Scripture also clearly speaks of spiritual adultery that also can take place. Spiritual adultery walks hand in hand with the second command of committing idolatry.

- After the conquest of Canaan under Joshua significant Canaanite communities remained in the land and thereafter were a snare and temptation to the Israelites. All too easily Israel was persuaded that the God of the land Baal, and not Yahweh, was the source of nature's gifts the people came to believe that to have sexual intercourse with the sacred prostitutes was to share in the divine. In consequence, Baal worship, with its attendant sexual practices, was the problem against which prophets and godly Israelites had constantly to contend. - R.E. Ciampa

Jeremiah 3:8 (NASB95) “And I saw that for all the **adulteries of faithless Israel**, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce, yet her treacherous sister **Judah did not fear; but she went and was a harlot also.**

Ezekiel 23:30 (NASB95) ‘These things (*destruction from other nations*) will be done to you because you have **played the harlot**<sup>5</sup> with the nations, because you have defiled **yourself with their idols.**

- **Ezekiel 23** is terrifying and graphic depiction of spiritual idolatry and how it destroyed the nation of Israel and brought upon them untold punishment.
- **Food for thought:** The link between physical adultery and spiritual adultery is profound. The relationship between a husband and his wife, the relationship between God and his people, is rightly understood within a covenant. It is only within this covenant relationship that an exhilarating love and joy for one another can be experienced. This is why the sin of adultery is so heinous, because it is a covenant breaking act.

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<sup>5</sup> This phrase is found in the OT 47 times in reference to Israel's spiritual adultery.

## Jesus' application of the Seventh Commandment

4. The religious leaders and the people of Jesus day may have been under the impression that they were keeping the 7th command as long as they weren't committing physical adultery. Jesus is teaching in the sermon on the mount reveals a deeper and more comprehensive application of this command. the sin of adultery does not start at the moment of physical contact, It starts in heart and mind.

Matthew 5:27–28 (NASB95) “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 lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

- Boom! Everyone is guilty. Why? Because adultery and every other sin that we commit ultimately boils down to a heart issue.

Matthew 15:19 (NASB95) “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, **adulteries, fornications,** thefts, false witness, slanders.

- πορνεία, pōrnēia (Used 25x in the NT) (of various kinds of ‘unsanctioned sexual intercourse’: ① **unlawful sexual intercourse, prostitution, unchastity, fornication**<sup>6</sup>)

Acts 15:20 (NASB95) but that we write to them that they **abstain from** things contaminated by idols **and from fornication** and from what is strangled and from blood.

1 Thessalonians 4:3–5 (NASB95) For this is the will of God, your sanctification; *that is*, that you **abstain from sexual immorality**; that each of you know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in lustful passion, like the Gentiles who do not know God;

1 Corinthians 6:18, 19 (NASB95) **Flee immorality.** Every *other*

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<sup>6</sup> Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000). [\*A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature\*](#) (3rd ed., p. 854). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.<sup>7</sup>

### **You must be Born again to overcome sexual sin**

John 3:3 (NASB) Jesus answered and said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Romans 8:13 (NASB950) for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

5. Many attempts are made at overcoming sexual sin by people who have found themselves enslaved to it. Addiction groups, accountability partners, “cutting off hands and gouging out eyes”. And yet for many people, including professing Christians, freedom from sexual sin is not attained.

To be continued for next week...

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<sup>7</sup> Sexual immorality is unique among sins inasmuch as it is sin against the **body**, thus assaulting the sanctity of a believer’s sacred oneness with Christ (sealed by **the Holy Spirit who is in you**) and the oneness of holy matrimony (Holman Christian Standard Study Bible)

**outside the body.** The meaning of this passage is disputed. There seem to be many sins that are against the body. Nevertheless, in Paul’s teaching the physical union involved in sexual immorality has special consequences because it interferes with our Christian identity as people who have been united with Christ through the Holy Spirit.