

Back to the Basics

The Ten Commandments Pt. 6

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

The key to understanding this Commandment concerning God's gift of marriage is the phrase "sexually pure and decent life." The first thing to notice is that this concerns the whole of life, not just married couples. The second thing to realize is that God created us as sexual beings. There is nothing wrong with sex, as long as it's carried out in a God-pleasing way. Third, marriage is a gift from God as His way of us channeling our sex drive. Fourth, marriage was given to be a permanent institution. More than an institution imposed upon us by society, it is a relationship created for us, in which we find fulfillment.

Purity—a Lifestyle

The apostle Paul is clear that this concerns more than just adultery and that everyone is to be sexually pure (**1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18**). This means controlling the sex drive and not allowing it to control us. Allowing the sex drive to control us leads to pain and suffering because it goes against God's plan for our lives. Here are some things outlined in Scripture we are to avoid, because they go against God's plan for His creation: Incest (see **Leviticus 18:6-18**); child abuse (**Leviticus 18:21**); bestiality (**Exodus 22:19**); pre-marital sex, made quite visible in live-in relationships and adultery (**Leviticus 18:20**); homosexuality (**Leviticus 18:22-23; Romans 1:26-27**). I included the passage from Romans here because the phrase "God gave them up" appears three times (**v. 24, 26, 28**) to show a downward spiral of the sinfulness of humanity.

Some try to excuse homosexuality by saying they were born that way; therefore, it is natural and should not be suppressed. We were all born in sin, with the desire to sin, to go against God. **Romans 8:7** says, *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.* Being born in sin doesn't make sin right. All aberrations of our sex drive must be contained as Scripture encourages us (**2 Timothy 2:22; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-2**).

The Gift of Marriage

How does God intend us to live out our sex drive? He has given us the gift of marriage (**Hebrews 13:4**). Marriage was instituted by God at creation (**Genesis 2:18-25**). God created man and put him in the garden. He gave the man responsibility to take care of the garden and the commandment not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But God said something in **verse 18** that He never said about the rest of His creation. He said that it was not good. *"It is not good for man to be alone."* This doesn't mean that something God had done was wrong. It was incomplete. Man was alone. All the other animals had mates. But there was no helper suitable for man. God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep and took a rib and fashioned a helper. When the man saw her, he said, *"This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man"* (**v. 23**). This is why *a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh* (**v. 24**). This is the closest of all possible human relationships and it shows that it is to be life-long.

Divorce

God's intention was for marriage to be life-long, as we just said. But He allowed divorce because fallen man was unable to make it work (**Matthew 19:8**). This doesn't mean divorce is a good thing. But sometimes, it is the lesser of two evils. Divorce actually takes place before the papers are filed. Divorce is when the relationship falls apart. This can happen due to infidelity, abuse, or desertion. The ideal would be forgiveness, resolution, and restoration. But many times, this is just impossible. One last word about divorce. It should never be used as a tool. Jesus says in **Matthew 19:9**, "*Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.*" If you fall for another woman, you can't just say to your wife, "I don't love you anymore", and get divorced so you can marry the other woman. In "falling for" the other woman, you have already committed adultery (**Matthew 5:28**).

It's All About Relationships

Life is all about relationships, our relationship with God and with others. The husband-wife relationship is the most intimate, most precious human relationship there is. Handle it with care and treat it with love and respect. For more teaching on this subject, see **Ephesians 5:22-33** and **Colossians 3:18-19**.

May the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
