

# Exodus Our Journey – God’s Best for Relationships The 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment

## 1. Introduction

- a. I am glad there is children’s church today. And I am very thankful that the youth are in here today. The subject of my sermon this morning cuts right to the heart of a wonderful greatest gift God has given to us and our tendency to misuse it.
- b. That gift is our sexuality.
  - i. Scientists tell us that our sex drive is virtually equal to our will to live.
  - ii. This is not a bad thing.
    1. We are this way because God has made us this way.
    2. God designed man and woman with a sexual desire.
    3. When God made man, His first command to mankind was for them to multiply.
    4. When you consider how painful childbirth is, you begin to understand why we need the sex drive
      - a. After the first child, no woman would want her husband to get near her...”I’m not going through that again!” would be her response.
      - b. The sexual drive God gives us overrides even the common sense drive in us to avoid pain.
      - c. That drive is of paramount importance to the preservation of humanity!
  - iii. Society and our culture often promote a view of sex opposite to what Scripture teaches.
    1. This is a view that makes sex appear as little more than a biological function.
    2. Sex is presented as an appetite that must be fulfilled just like our appetite for food and for sleep.
    3. Television and movies portray men and women as creatures who separate love and marriage from the act of sex.
  - iv. But biblical sexuality is much different.
    1. Sex is as much a spiritual mystery as a physical fact.
    2. Ephesians 5:31-32 *“For this reasons a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. 32 This mystery is great...”*
    3. **Marriage is the only setting in which the bible approves of sexual relations.**

## 2. This fact brings us to our 7<sup>th</sup> commandment:

- a. Exodus 20:14 *“You shall not commit adultery.”*
  - i. On the level of primary interpretation, this commandment deals with having marital relations with someone other than your spouse or with someone else’s spouse.
  - ii. But the term used for adultery in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is not just having relations with someone else’s spouse, but also applies to anyone having relations outside of marriage.
- b. We cannot fully understand the magnitude of the sin of adultery unless we understand the mystery and majesty of marriage.
  - i. (+)Marriage is a sacred union in which two people commit to one another to love one another even above themselves and above their own needs.
    1. The New Testament compares marriage to the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church.
      - a. Most of us gloss over that comparison, never really getting our heads and hearts around just how incredible a concept that is.
      - b. Men: Ephesians 5:25-30 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no*



2. The Greek word rendered "lustfully" (Matt. 5:28, NIV) is found elsewhere and translated in such a way as to help us know what the Lord meant by mental adultery.
  3. The same exact word is found in Lk. 15:16 and Lk. 16:21. I
    - a. *"He [the Prodigal] longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything."*
    - b. *"And [Lazarus was] longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores."*
  4. Like gluttony which abuses the good and necessary gifts of food and drink, lust profanes the goodness of sex.
  5. Like gluttony, **lust is self-absorbed and solitary.**
    - a. It operates without the necessity of another person being present at all.
    - b. Another body maybe, but even that's not required.
    - c. Consider pornography. The desire pornography elicits is not for sexual experience with someone else, but merely for the empty cravings and gratifications of lust itself.
- ii. Lets look at some contrasts:
1. Our relationship with Christ is often referred to in the Bible with sexual language of union -consummation, bride and bridegroom.
    - a. Sex as gift from God unites; but lust as perversion of this gift rips apart.
    - b. Lust is clandestine, covert, secretive, private and hidden.
      - i. Lust is more than just a sin of the flesh, it is a sin against the flesh committed with the heart and with the eye.
      - ii. As a sin of the eye, lust distorts what it sees.
    - c. Blind to truth and virtue, lust limits its vision to surfaces.
      - i. Limited to surfaces, lust cannot see the object of its desire as anything more than an object.
      - ii. Lust falsifies in order to enhance its pleasure.
      - iii. Lust exaggerates, and inevitably disappoints and isolates its users from others and from reality.
- c. **What are some of the root causes of lust?** I believe there are three of them we need to pay attention to:
- i. **Lust comes from is a fear of true intimacy**, a fear of being seen as one really is.
    1. The isolation in which the one who lusts finds himself is due in large part to his fear of rejection and hurt—which are both real possibilities when it comes to love.
    2. When you are aware and afraid of your flaws and imperfections, there is a temptation is to shut yourself off deep inside your private, hidden life.
    3. To open yourself up to another person in intimacy seems impossible.
      - a. It feels too painful, is too frightening or requires too much effort.
      - b. So we take the shortcut and choose lust over love.
    4. Yet at the core of the gospel of Christ is the liberating truth that Jesus has died to heal your sinful flaws and imperfections.
      - a. While you were still full of flaws, Christ loved you enough to die for you.
      - b. It is by receiving this amazing love of God that will enable you to risk being received by other people.
      - c. And it is ONLY through this kind of true intimacy that you will find complete and total freedom from the powers of lust.
  - ii. **Lust is the consequence of permitting the flesh to control us instead of the Spirit.**
    1. Galatians 5:19 *"...the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality..."*

2. Galatians 5:22-23 *"...But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control..."*
3. We understand that walking according to the flesh is the norm for someone who does not belong to Christ, but when a professing Christian lives according to the flesh, we have to wonder why.
- iii. **Lust is the consequence of compromising God's values.**
  1. When we compromise, take a shortcut, look over our shoulder and realize no one is looking so maybe I can take a peek...we take a step that we will find very hard to undo later.
  2. We lose a piece of our innocence, we break a boundary, we tear down a wall that protected us, and are never the same again.
  3. I have counseled enough people to know what a single compromise can do.
  4. Compromise can be even questioning God's authority over our sex lives.
4. Why is adultery & sexual sin condemned? The world loves to label the Christian who waits till they get married as prudish and old fashioned; and call the church which teaches these things as legalistic and close minded.
  - a. I wish we could all understand this better.
  - b. God's prohibition on adultery and all forms of sinful sexual behavior is that He desires to protect YOU and the FAMILY that you either are a part of or someday will be a part of.
    - i. I know of the heartaches of young women who must raise a child alone because of disregarding this commandment.
    - ii. I know of marriages stressed because of one or more persons bringing incurable diseases into their marriage because they disregarded this command.
  - c. The sin of adultery is committing a transgression against a number of important entities:
    - i. **It is against God**
      1. All sin is primarily against God.
      2. Psalm 51:4 *Against You, You only, I have sinned And done what is evil in Your sight,*
    - ii. **It is against your own body and soul.**
      1. *"Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body."* (1 Corinthians 6:18)
      2. Lust, adultery and all forms of sexual sin aren't just sin against someone else, but against your own body.
        - a. There is a sense in which sexual sins are different from all others. In sexual sin we violate the sacredness of our own bodies, these bodies that were made for God-given and God-modeled love, for 'becoming one' with another."
        - b. And not only do we violate our own bodies, but the bodies of those with whom we have sex.
        - c. Sex outside of marriage is a distortion of God's intent.
    - iii. **It is against the family.**
      1. It robs a person of their rights by taking from them the affections of their spouse
      2. It breaks the original bond between the couple by adding another person to the equation of intimacy.
      3. Adultery says to the innocent spouse, "You weren't good enough for me."
        - a. Adultery damages the self-esteem of the innocent party.
      4. It robs a family of the sense of trust.
        - a. **Ross Perot** when asked by the news media about his company's policy of firing executives who cheated on their wives, he said, "If a man's own wife can't trust him, why should I?"

5. It introduces disease and death into the family.
  - a. Look at Africa where AIDS is rampant. Why is this? Because of extramarital sexual encounters.

iv. **Adultery is against your children**

1. David's children followed in his footsteps.
  - a. Amnon raped his half-sister Tamar.
  - b. Absalom took his father's concubines unto himself.
  - c. Sexual immorality has a way of filtering down to the children.)
  - d. One's spiritual influence is also compromised when we stoop to committing adultery.
  - e. Children lose respect for a parent that destroys the family over illicit and indecent pleasures.
2. Your children reap what you sow. Perhaps in a single parent household?

v. **Adultery is a sin against the church.**

1. Committing adultery will destroy your witness and testimony. (2 Sam. 12:14)
  - a. When you commit adultery just try to tell a sinner how he can be saved!
2. Immorality in the life of a member of the church can tarnish the entire work of God.
  - a. The televangelists and others we have heard of have left a legacy of ridicule for the church.
  - b. 1 Cor 12:26 *And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.*
  - c. Do not think that your sin is a private thing, just a little affair that you can hide when you please.
  - d. In truth, it is a sin, it is adultery and it tarnishes the name of the church and destroys our ministry in the community!
3. Immorality in the life of a Christian seriously affects the spiritual health of their church and Christ's church.
  - a. 1 Cor 6:13 *"...the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. 15 Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! 16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH."*
  - b. In a very real sense, not only do you join your body to another, you take the corporate body of Christ, your brothers and sisters, and spiritually join them as well. You damage the spiritual well-being of others.
- d. **Immorality brings into question the authenticity of your salvation.**
  - i. Ephesians 5:3-6 *"But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that **no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolator), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.**"*
    1. If you are comfortable "doing it" outside of marriage, then you better ask yourself if you really belong to Christ.

5. Some Excuses

- a. My spouse doesn't love me the way I deserve to be loved/treated.
- b. It's none of anyone's business what I do in my private life.

- c. We are in love!
  - i. Premarital relationships - A study at a Midwestern school showed that 80% of the women who had intercourse hoped to marry their partner. Only 12% of the men had the same expectation
  - ii. Sometimes when I'm talking to teens, I draw an analogy between the bonding capacity of the body and adhesive tape. Adhesive tape is not made for repetitive use. The strongest bond adhesive tape is capable of making is formed with the first surface to which it is applied. You can remove the tape and reapply it to other surfaces several times, and it will still adhere. However, with every application, some of the adhesiveness has been compromised. Finally, if you continue the practice long enough, there will not be enough adhesiveness left to make the tape stick to any surface. God intended that the bond between mates be the closest and strongest one they are capable of forming.
  - iii. There is a direct correlation between age at loss of virginity and having an affair later in life. In women who have their first sexual relationship at age 21, or later, cheating occurs with only 16%. But for those who have their first sexual relationship at a younger age, up to 50% cheat on a future mate. -Homemade, Vol. 10, No. 7, quoted from Female Sexuality.

6. **What are some popular solutions to the problem of lust?**

a. Well, these aren't really solutions. They are misinterpretations of solutions.

b. **Get Married**

- i. 1 Cor. 7:8-9 *But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I. 9 But if they do not have self-control, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn with passion*
- ii. I worked with a fellow in Houston Texas named Donny. He and I talked a lot about our Christian live and journey. He had been divorced and remarried and still quite young. When he was 18 years old, he was trying to obey God and yet lust seemed to be at every corner. Then he read this passage. Feeling that this was God's solution to his problem, as soon as he found a women willing to date him, he asked her to marry him. It wasn't long after the marriage that he realized he now had two problems instead of one.
  - 1. He was married to someone he didn't love.
  - 2. He still had a lust problem. It didn't go away.
- iii. Marriage won't "solve" your lust problem. This passage was written as advice against remaining single if you didn't have the gift for singleness. It wasn't written as a prescription for lust.
- iv. If you are dating or engaged and you are struggling with resisting the temptation to wait, then of course, move up the wedding date! Don't cheapen your marriage by taking a drink of your wedding night before its time.

c. **Pluck out your eyes.**

- i. Matthew 18:19 *"If your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it from you. It is better for you to enter life with one eye, than to have two eyes and be cast into the fiery hell.*
- ii. I found it amusing that the Latin word for Monk (those are the guys who would go live in a monastery and refuse to get married) comes from "monacle"; which means One-eyed.
- iii. I don't know how many of them took Jesus' advice literally, but there is evidence some did.
- iv. If you have ever read Thomas Merton's Seven Story Mountain, his account of his journey toward living for God, you will find that the struggle with lust lasts long after all of the images and stimulus are gone. He was in a cloistered room, no women, no tv, no magazines and yet he found he struggled with lustful thoughts.
- v. This is because lust is a heart problem and not an eye problem.
- vi. The answer is not in changing your flesh but in changing your heart.

d. **Get rid of temptation**

- i. This solution is partly true, especially if you struggle with certain sources of temptation. If you are struggling with pornography on your computer, get rid of your computer. Get rid of your premium subscriptions to your cable TV. Don't willingly embrace its source.
  - ii. It is naïve however to think that by getting rid of a source of temptation that somehow you will no longer have temptation.
    - 1. Muslims cover women from head to toe because it is the "woman's fault" that men lust. (wrong!). It is primarily a heart issue not an eye issue.
- 7. **What can we do to avoid the trap of adultery?**
  - a. **Walk With God** –
    - i. Galatians 5:16 **If you walk by the Spirit, you will not carry out the desires of the flesh.**
  - b. **Avoid Suggestive Activities** – Remember the words of Psalm 100:3. Never allow your eyes to behold things that will cause you to stumble. Keep a clean life!
    - i. Paul wrote that women are to dress "modestly" (1 Tim. 2:9).
    - ii. It is possible to INCITE lust in another by how you dress and act and flirt. Granted, if there was only perfect people, then it would not be possible to incite it in others, but because every one of us has a fallen nature, and many have a leaning toward at least one particular temptation, it is like taking a magnet and making it an electro magnet. You intensify the problem by becoming a part of the problem.
    - iii. I read this week that "a woman who dresses with the intent to make men lust after her is on a par with a prostitute"
  - c. **Avoid Flirty Relationships** – Stay far away from the person who is flirty, watch out for that "friendship" which could lead to other things. Beware that you never just "play around" with someone who is not your spouse! Often, simple flirtation leads to big time adultery! No one just wakes up one day and says "I think I'll go out and commit adultery today." It is always the result of things building up on top of other things that leads to that point. If you can stay from those little things, the big one will never happen to you!
  - d. **Count The Cost** – Take a minute to look at the incredible damage that can be done to your spouse, your Lord, your children and your own life. Nobody, however great the body, is worth what you can potentially lose!
  - e. **Love Your Mate Only** – Proverbs 5:15-21.
- 8. **Prayer and Conclusion**
  - a. If it is too late and you are guilty of committing adultery in one of its forms, there is hope and forgiveness in the blood of Jesus.
    - i. He promises us in 1 John 1:9 that He will forgive all our sins when we confess them to Him.
    - ii. Maybe it hasn't gotten that far, but you are guilty of flirting and doing things that you know are dangerous. Jesus will forgive that also!
    - iii. Maybe your sin is a secret one, you look at pornography, or watch and read things that you know cause you to lust in your heart. Jesus will forgive that too.
    - iv. Shame is often the result of sexual sin. Our society tries to get us to deny the shame, but it lies there because it resides in our nakedness before God in the abuse or misuse of one of His greatest gifts.
    - v. There need not be any more shame. The altar is here. Use it. Are you afraid someone will see you and wonder "what has he/she been doing?"
      - 1. You will never find victory until you are willing to risk exposure and deal with your sin on a level that says I will let nothing come between me and victory.+
      - 2. God wants you to experience His best. Won't you choose to do that today?
  - b. You may just want prayer for something else. Use this time, let us pray with you.