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Exodus 20

“No Sexual Sin”

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In 1631, Archbishop Laud, fined the Royal printers of London, Robert Barker and Martin Lucas, £300, which was equivalent to a lifetime’s earnings, for a printing error in a reprint they did of the King James Bible. What was their crime you ask? They left out the word *“not”* from the Seventh Commandment! This reprint of the KJV became known as the “wicked Bible.”

It seems like there are a lot of men and women who are reading the “wicked Bible,” especially considering the way adultery has become commonplace in movies, TV programs, as well as in communities all over the United States. Statistics, however, vary concerning the sin of adultery, because there doesn’t seem to be a universal agreement on what defines adultery these days. However, as far as people’s view on adultery, a George Gallup survey on behavior and social issues (“Morally Acceptable” or “Morally Wrong”), found that 92% of Americans believe adultery (married men/women having an affair) is morally wrong.¹ This was the highest rated “Morally Wrong” issue among the 16 topics in the survey. And while 92% of people say it’s morally wrong, not nearly as many are practicing what they believe.

One explanation was offered a few years ago in an article in the Wall Street Journal.² The WSJ writer attributed the high number of extramarital affairs as being caused by two major factors: opportunity and delayed marriage.

As far as greater opportunity is concerned, social media has made it very easy for people to connect discreetly, which has not only increased opportunities but also

¹ <http://www.gallup.com/poll/137357/four-moral-issues-sharply-divide-americans.aspx> Other findings in the survey include: 46% believe doctor assisted suicide is morally wrong; 43% believe gay/lesbian relations are morally wrong; and abortion; and 50% believe abortion is morally wrong.

² This article appeared in the November 8, 2008 edition.
<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122782458360062499.html>

decreased boundaries. ABC7 Washington did a report in May 2012, in which one local divorce attorney stated that at least 20% of her cases involved illicit relationships that began on Facebook. The reporter also stated that divorce attorneys in the U.S. estimate that 80% of their cases now involve evidence that they cull from Facebook pages for use in court.³

Regarding the delay in people getting married, men and women are waiting longer than they did 60 years ago. Today, the average age for women is 25, and 27 for men. In 1950, it was 20 for women and 22 for men. As a result, people are more sexually active before getting married and they take that sexually permissive attitude into their marriage. Their actions indicate they believe that if fidelity wasn't sacred before they got married, why should it be sacred after getting married. This mindset contributes to a more casual view of marital faithfulness.

One example of the way things are trending away from following the Seventh Commandment, includes the beliefs espoused by people like Catherine Hakim, a British sociologist. She wrote an article titled: "The Recipe for happiness? An enduring marriage and an affair with lots of sex." She also wrote in a book she recently authored: "it is time to redraw marital rules – with a radical rethink on fidelity."⁴

Other examples include websites that provide alibis for people who want to be involved in so-called discreet affairs, as well as websites for dating services for married people. No matter how things are trending, and no matter what the stories, opinion polls and statistics indicate, it's 100% true that 100% of the time someone is found to be in an adulterous relationship, someone else is hurt. If for no other reason than avoiding putting people in a position to suffer pain and anguish, people should obey this Commandment so their marriages, lives, families, and careers aren't ruined by adultery.

Notice that the last five Commandments all begin with "*You shall not.*" These are negative commands, which means there is a corresponding positive statement to each negative commandment. Last week, for example, we saw that "*You shall not murder,*" has a corresponding positive statement that God values life from conception to natural death. The corresponding positive statement concerning the Seventh Commandment is that God values marriage and ordained it as a loving, lasting, binding, holy, life-long covenant between a man and woman.

It's important to recognize that marriage and family are the backbone of society, and human society hinges upon the marriage bond being held in high honor. When you start tampering with or redefining that, we do so at our own peril. In [Hebrews 13:4](#), the writer states God's perspective on the matter: "*Marriage should be honored by all, and*

³ <http://www.wjla.com/articles/2012/05/facebook-adultery-trend-rising-as-people-find-long-lost-flings-76049.html>

⁴ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/sex/9486351/The-recipe-for-happiness-An-enduring-marriage-and-an-affair-with-lots-of-sex.html>

the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

Jesus And Paul – The Seventh Commandment

1. **Matthew 5:27-28** – “ ‘You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.’ ”
2. Physical adultery often begins in the mind as lust.
3. Don’t underestimate how thoughts and imaginations can often lead to actions and behavior (in a positive and a negative way).
4. Paul wrote in **Philippians 4:8** concerning the positive way.
 - a. *“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.”*
5. Paul wrote in **2 Corinthians 10:5** concerning the negative way.
 - a. *“... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”*
6. The mind is a battleground and we must fight this battle every day.
7. Adulterous thoughts are sinful and grievous to God, but they do not carry the same consequences as actual physical adultery.
 - a. We should never buy into the lie that we may as well go “all the way” when we are guilty of adultery in the mind.
 - b. Alistair Begg⁵ comments on this in his book *Pathway to Freedom*.
 - i. Adultery breaks the marriage covenant; adulterous thoughts do not.
 - ii. Adultery provides grounds for divorce; adulterous thoughts do not.
 - iii. Adultery is a vehicle for sexually transmitted diseases, whereas the mind is not.

King David – The Woman Caught In Adultery

8. Rather than focus on the details of these accounts in the Old and New Testaments, it’s important to see that the ending was the same for both.
 - a. Both were confronted about their sin.
 - b. Both were broken over their sin.

⁵ <http://www.truthforlife.org/about/about-alistair-begg/>

- c. Both were forgiven for their sin.
9. **Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12** - *“Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”*
10. Jesus said to the crowd that wanted to stone the woman caught in adultery: *“If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her.”* (See **John 8:1-11**)
11. We know that Jesus was not “soft on sin,” because he told her to leave her life of sin, and he offered her grace and forgiveness, which he still extends to each of us today.

Cultivate Spiritual And Physical Intimacy In Your Marriage

12. **1 Corinthians 7:4-5** - *“The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.”*

Avoid Compromising Situations Either In Person Or Electronically

13. **Romans 13:14** - *“Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”*
a. The KJV translation: *“make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.”*

Pray for God’s Protection Over Your Marriage And Your Heart

14. **Proverbs 4:23** - *“Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.”*
15. **Malachi 2:15** - *“... guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.”*

Moral Purity Before Marriage

16. God calls for moral purity before marriage, as well as fidelity in marriage.
17. If you are single and want to be married, you can help sure up the foundation of your marriage by practicing purity now.
18. It's this simple: Self-control begins now!
19. If you can't practice purity and self-control now, what would make you think you'd be strong enough to resist an affair after you're married?!

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [Exodus 20:14](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Review the findings of the George Gallup poll Pastor Gary mentioned.
 - a. Were you aware of the impact social media has and is having on the subject of adultery and sexual sin?
 - b. Do you know anyone who has entered into an adulterous affair because of the easy opportunities available on Facebook, etc.?
 - i. What are some of the signs of danger?
 - c. How do you maintain appropriate boundaries when it comes to using social media?
 - d. Read and discuss [Romans 13:14](#).
4. Read and discuss [Hebrews 13:4](#) and [Malachi 2:15](#).
5. Read and discuss [Matthew 5:27-28](#).
 - a. How has the Lord helped you when it comes to committing "mental adultery"?
 - b. Do you find that you experience a daily battle in your mind?
 - c. Read [Philippians 4:8](#) and [2 Corinthians 10:5](#).
 - i. How have these Scriptures helped you resist the temptation to sin?
6. Read and discuss [Psalm 51:1-2, 10-12](#) and [John 8:1-11](#), and focus on the forgiveness of God for those who are broken over their sin.
7. Read and discuss [1 Corinthians 7:4-5](#).

- a. How has the Lord helped you cultivate spiritual and physical intimacy in your marriage?
 - b. Do you think it's possible to experience God's blessing without being intentional?
 - c. What are some of the things you've done in your marriage to be intentional about keeping your marriage strong and growing? (e.g., attended a Weekend to Remember⁶ marriage conference)
8. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: (Married and Singles) seek the Lord to receive his forgiveness if they have committed adultery or some type of sexual sin; ask the Lord to help them resist the temptation to enter into improper relationships that might lead to adultery/fornication; avoid compromising situations in person or electronically; seek healing from the Lord for wounds caused by an unfaithful spouse; (Married) to cultivate spiritual and physical intimacy in their marriage; pray for God's protection over their heart and their marriage; (Singles) commit to sexual purity before marriage by practicing self-control; (have someone ready to read) read and pray [Proverbs 4:23](#).

- i. You shall have no other gods before me
- ii. You shall not make for yourself an idol
- iii. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God
- iv. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy
- v. Honor your father and mother
- vi. You shall not murder
- vii. You shall not commit adultery
- viii. You shall not steal
- ix. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor
- x. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).

⁶ <http://www.familylife.com/weekend>