

**Command 7: “You shall not commit adultery” (Exod. 20:14)**

**I. Marriage**

A. Marriage

1. What constitutes a marriage?

→ a public promise before God and other people to be husband and wife for life

a. Viewed as a “covenant”

Malachi 2:14 But you say, “Why does he not?” Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

b. Traditional marriage ceremony includes both a public promise and a recognition of God’s presence:

“Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God and in the face of this congregation, to join together this Man and this Woman in holy Matrimony; which is an honourable estate, instituted of God in the time of man’s innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church ...”

c. Marriage changes your status

-Before God: it changes the way God looks at you

-Before society: it changes the way society looks at you

d. Therefore something deeply spiritual is happening at a wedding

He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, <sup>5</sup> and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." (Matt 19:4-6)

e. Sexual intercourse alone does not constitute a marriage

John 4:18 for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband.

Exod 22:16-17 If a man seduces a virgin who is not betrothed and lies with her, he shall give the bride-price for her and make her his wife. <sup>17</sup> If her father utterly refuses to give her to him, he shall pay money equal to the bride-price for virgins.

2. Marriage pictures the relationship between Christ and the church

"Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. (Eph 5:31)

B. Some people are unmarried for various reasons

1. Divorced, widowed, never married.

All of us have been single, at least half of us will be single again someday

2. Some have chosen this, some have not chosen it

3. Paul sees advantages to being single (1 Cor 7)

v. 7 I wish that all were as I myself am.

vv. 26-27 I think that in view of the present distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. <sup>27</sup> Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

vv. 32-35 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. <sup>33</sup> But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, <sup>34</sup> and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. <sup>35</sup> I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

v. 40 Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is.

a. Jesus and Paul as examples

b. But each person has his own gift and calling from God (1 Cor. 7:7); therefore, getting married and not getting married are both morally right choices, not sin

1 Cor. 7:36, 38 If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. <sup>38</sup> So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

C. Why did God allow polygamy in the Old Testament?

1. God never commanded polygamy

2. He temporarily allowed it (did not explicitly prohibit it) without giving explicit moral approval to it

a. However, in the OT narrative, wherever a man has two or more wives, it leads to trouble!

Abraham, David, Solomon

b. It is de-humanizing to women (does not treat them as equal in value to their husbands)

3. It was not God’s ideal from the beginning

Gen. 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

4. Prohibited for elders in New Testament churches

- 1 Tim 3:2 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, (see also Titus 1:6)
- this provides a pattern that would generally lead to the abolition of polygamy in a church in a generation or two

#### D. Human sexuality within marriage

##### 1. Fundamentally good as created by God

Gen. 1:27-28 with 31 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.<sup>28</sup> And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."<sup>31</sup> And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

A spontaneous longing to re-unite what God has separated

Gen. 2:22-23 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.<sup>23</sup> Then the man 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."

Sex is seen within the context of marriage ("his wife") from the beginning (leaving father and mother assumes the creation of a new household)

Gen. 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Physical unity also represented a deep relational unity

Gen. 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.

2. Biblical language for sex within marriage implies deep interpersonal involvement  
"to know" (Gen 4:1, etc.)
3. Sin brings disruption, hindrance to physical intimacy in marriage  
Gen. 3:7: signifying a relationship problem (shame, hiding, probably also blame)
4. But sex within marriage is still seen as good, still a source of great pleasure and a good gift from God  
Prov. 5:15-19: "rejoice" "delight" "intoxicated"  
"always" => into old age
5. Univ. Chicago study concluded: greatest level of sexual fulfillment seems to be found in faithful married couples with strong religious commitment (!!)  
(this is opposite to the world's stereotypes, caricatures, and deceptive temptations)
6. Sex is an important part of a healthy marriage relationship  
1 Cor. 7:2-5 But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. 3 The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. 4 For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. 5 Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. (also implied in Prov 5:18-19)
  - a. Satan wants to tempt us to stray in hearts or in actions, and therefore he does not want us to have physical joy within marriage (he will oppose it)
  - b. Having sex within marriage is therefore doing battle against Satan's plans, and is one protection God has provided against temptation
  - c. It tends to keep our desires focused within our marriage, to give us strong desires for our own spouse  
(= the opposite of coveting someone else in Exod. 20:17)
  - d. Sometimes physical disability will hinder or prevent this: 1 Cor. 10:13 is still true  
No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and *he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability*, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it. (1Cor. 10:13 ESV)

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