

BORN TO GROW

PURITY, FAITHFULNESS AND COMMITMENT

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The *Born to Grow* series of leaflets is designed to give you
a good basic understanding
of what it is to be a Christian
and how to live
a powerful and effective
Christian Life.

RULE: THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

The most common, and most narrow, definition of adultery is unlawful sexual intercourse with married people. However, the rule of this commandment takes much more into consideration. It deals with the whole sphere of unfaithfulness, lust and betrayal in relationships.

Jesus expanded on the rule of this commandment in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:27-28

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 'But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

In saying this Jesus emphasised that adultery was essentially a thing of the heart.

In a broader sense, adultery is that which adulterates, or renders impure, the loyalty, faithfulness and honour that should be at the foundation of any relationship. This applies then to every relationship from same sex friendships all the way to marriage. This applies in every sphere of life, from family life to the workplace to places of entertainment and to church.

Obedience to this commandment therefore requires a commitment to living and loving according to God's pattern. This requires a commitment to keeping sexual activity within the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. It requires a commitment to a lifestyle of personal loyalty and a determination never to use relationship with or the physical being of another as a means of obtaining any form of personal gratification. This requires a commitment to sexual wholeness. It requires that men be committed to living and loving as men with a purehearted and sacrificial commitment to their sisters. It requires that women be committed to living and loving as women with a purehearted and submissive commitment to their brothers.

In this sick and suffering world, the requirements of this commandment are for many, perhaps for most, a tall order. Sexual brokenness is too often the order of the day. This is equally true of those who struggle with either homosexual or heterosexual sin. Many live much of their lives in the storms of temptation, desire and confusion that regularly swirl and eddy around the issues that are at the centre of this commandment.

Relief and release comes progressively. It comes as each person agrees often issue by painstaking issue with the rightness of God's way regardless of how wrong or powerless they they may feel. Change and growth then develops. Most often progress is not instantaneous. Rather it comes along steadily, a little at a time, as newly adopted values and principles take root and as the heart becomes softer and is more able to respond to the voice of God within.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to stop us using one another as objects to gratify ourselves. In the study on the last commandment we saw the

importance of relationships. We must see that any using of one another for selfish motives will prevent us from ever developing meaningful relationships. Disobedience to this commandment cuts us off from such relationship and as a result makes us shallow and unfaithful.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment.

In the last study we saw that defensiveness resulted in our becoming alienated from one another. Alienation, however, creates a vacuum which is the result of being cut off from the fulfilment of relationships. It is often the drive to fill this vacuum that is the motivating force behind sin against this commandment.

God shows us how much we need one another in this way when he said, before creating women.

Genesis 2:18

It is not good that man should be alone.).

At the point of alienation there are two options. These are:

- to have the need for love met through repentance from self motivated behaviour and the restoration of relationships; or
- to seek to have this need met by seeking self gratification.

The second option is called lust and is sin. The power of lust (or passion) is so great that in His work of salvation God provided for us, especially at this level.

2 Peter 1:3-4

as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The root of this sin is a need produced by the absence of true love. Even in early childhood, if the love and affection that so satisfies a child is wanting, the child will often try to make up for this by seeking out ways of gratifying this need. This emotional deprivation is usually compensated for by seeking sensual gratification. It is at this point that the life becomes predisposed to such things as masturbation, over eating and other self oriented obsessions (which are often compulsive). This seeking for gratification most often continues into later life to the point that many find themselves driven by it.

The drive for self-gratification will usually be found in one of the following categories:

- sensual gratification
- non-sensual gratification
- promiscuity.

SENSUAL GRATIFICATION

In this category are those for whom a “feel good” experience is king. That is seeking gratification, a stimulation or deadening of the senses, has taken priority over true sacrificial love and has become the object of relationship.

There are two subheadings in this category sexual and non sexual.

In the area of sexual gratification are found such problems as masturbation, homosexuality, voyeurism (pornography trades on this), fornication and other perversions

In the area of non sexual sensual gratification is found such things as overeating (the Bible calls this gluttony), thrill seeking and drug abuse (this includes alcoholism and the abuse of narcotics, sedatives and mind expanding - hallucinogenic drugs).

NON-SENSUAL GRATIFICATION

In this category are found those for whom a sense of achievement or even of self righteousness becomes the object that gratifies instead of physical sensation. These express themselves in such forms of antisocial behaviour as the workaholic, compulsive hobbyist, insensitive do-gooder, religious obsessives and so on.

PROMISCUITY

The promiscuous use the experience of relationship as the object of their gratification. They fall in love with love. That is, they confuse romance with relationship. Because of this they are unable to maintain any lasting relationship. They are therefore seen as butterflies flitting from relationship to relationship but have no understanding. Their compulsion often drives them to excessively exposing their inner thoughts. This is spiritually the exposing of nakedness. The motive behind this is attention seeking. In this they never receive the healing promised through the true confession of our faults one to another (James 5:16).

Such people often by “coming on strong”, especially in early stages of a relationship, produce in the other person a pressure of obligation which often weighs heavily.

Promiscuous hearts produce much tension in marriages. Even if a sexual offence never occurs betrayal is always the result. This is because marriage is a total life commitment between two people. It is not just a body commitment.

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is emotional barrenness. This is both felt by the person involved and observed by those who know them.

These people become shallow. This shallowness seems to appear in two extremes. One is an emotional emptiness. The other is an emotional over responsiveness. They also become hypersensitive. This may appear in ways such as having a fear of exposure or being unapproachable or touchy, especially when challenged about responsibilities in relationship.

Even though sin at this level is still relationship oriented, it is at this point that the sinner becomes personally indifferent. Immorality becomes amorality. Becoming set in this often results in the confession of a sort of ‘liberation’. Situation ethnics rule. Right and

wrong are no longer absolute. What has become absolute instead is feeling good no matter what the cost. At this point, permissiveness gains a foothold in the philosophy.

These people often see favour or advantage as being more important than relationship.

For example:

Judas who betrayed Jesus by trading his relationship with him for advantage (30 piece of silver).

Luke 22:47-48

And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Pontius Pilate who betrayed Jesus by trading his office of trust as a magistrate for favour with the Jews and Romans.

Mark 15:14-15

Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

See also John 19:12-16

Eli who betrayed both God and the people of Israel by trading his authority as a father and as High Priest for the favour of his sons Hophni and Phineas.

1 Samuel 3:11-13

Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgment of God on all form of adulterousness is disgrace. This may well be the source of much of the shame with which people wrestle.

Jeremiah 13:25-27

This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. 26 Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face, That your shame may appear. 27 I have seen your adulteries

And your lustful neighings, The lewdness of your harlotry, Your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! Will you still not be made clean?"

To see something of the effect of this judgement in a life, read Lamentations 1:8-14.

The principle of this dealing can be seen for the three categories of sin dealt with in this study.

Sensual

These people fall prey to gossipers and scandal mongers. Consider how much of the media is given to these activities.

Non-sensual

The obsessive behaviour of those in this category becomes the object of ridicule. It is these people who become the "laughing stock". Much "comedy" is devoted to lampooning such behaviour.

Promiscuous

The promiscuous, that is, those who impersonally trade in relationships, suffer an ignominious loss of honour and the experience of obscurity. Extreme examples of this are: the stripping of the uniform of the military traitor (the Judas), the shaven head of the collaborator and the open degradation and despising of the harlot and the adulterer.

REVELATION

The experience of shame may cause people to see the value of personal dignity. Repentance will come through this value being established in the heart. Jesus is our example of faithfulness and commitment in this especially when he restored Peter who was shamed through betraying Jesus by his denial of him. Peter denied Jesus three times and so was required to affirm Him three times.

John 21:15-17

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

RELEASE

The release is into purity, loyalty and fidelity. We become protective of one another's dignity and honour. This is a release into active commitment. We become active contributors in all of our relationships. Therefore we are together establishing and furthering our common life in God's purposes through forsaking the taking of personal advantage at the expense of others.

Read Romans 15:1-7.