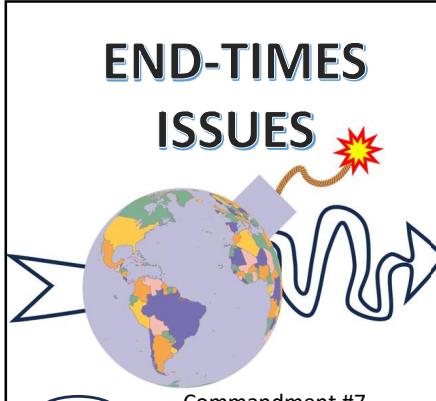


END-TIMES ISSUES



#108 Commandment #7 – The obligations it represents (1).

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

AND BEYOND!

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

You shall not commit adultery.
Exodus 20:14 (BSB);
also in Deuteronomy 5:18

It has ① an immediate focus, and ② it represents a general principle.

✓ **Immediate focus:** A prohibition against violating the marriage relationship. The focus is on humans as "male-female units." This commandment has to do with "the sanctity of marriage."

✓ **General principle:** The moral qualities which are required by this commandment – such as faithfulness and purity – also apply to other relationships, including our relationship with God.

HOW WE PLAN TO ACCOMPLISH THIS.

- As with the previous commandments, we will use the Heidelberg Catechism – just as a starting point for organizing the issues related to this commandment. Scripture will continue to be our final authority.
 - As with most other catechisms, this one starts with:
 - ① what this commandment requires, followed by
 - ② what it prohibits.
 - Starting with "positive" requirements may seem odd to someone who views this commandment as being "negative." But we need to realize that its purpose is to keep us living in the realm of freedom, and out of the realm of slavery and death.
This commandment is an expression of God's love for us!
 - This catechism, like most others, focuses mainly on the *immediate issue* related to the command (sexual purity vs. impurity), and not the *general principle*. So we will look only at the immediate issue today, and the general principle at a different time.

Q. What does the seventh commandment teach us?

A. That God condemns all unchastity, and that therefore we should thoroughly detest it ...

✓ **Chastity/chaste vs. unchastity/unchaste:** These are concepts that many people today (especially younger people) have never heard of, except perhaps in a mocking or disparaging way. In this context, it has to do with moral vs. immoral sexual conduct, as *God defines it*. (As we shall see, this includes not just our actions, but what we think and say.)

↳ The first part of this answer basically says: "Hate what God hates!" This involves: ① not having a *passive* attitude (such as accepting it or treating it like a non-issue), but ② having an *active* attitude, described above as "thoroughly detesting" it (and an appropriate response, depending on the circumstances). If we love or accept what God *hates*, then we can't really say we're obeying this command (or that we love God).

↳ **What does Scripture say?**

① **God condemns all forms of sexual immorality**, in both Old and New Testaments. **EXAMPLES:**

- Leviticus 18 lists a wide variety of sexual practices that are an "abomination" to God (v. 30). This means they are detestable, loathsome, abhorrent and repulsive – deeply offensive to God. (Many other Old Testament passages say the same thing.)
- These practices defile not just *individuals*, but entire *lands*. God said he would punish and "vomit out" the inhabitants of such lands – Leviticus 18:25, 28; 20:22.
- Among the New Testament condemnations of such practices, we are warned that such people will *not* inherit the kingdom of God, unless they repent of their practices (1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Nor will they be in God's presence in eternity (Revelation 21:8).

We can only give a few examples of what Scripture says.
As you read the Bible, you will find many more.

② **Like God, we are to thoroughly detest it.**

✓ There must not be even a *hint* of it among God's people.

But among you, as is proper among the saints, there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed.*
Ephesians 5:3 (BSB)

* (We tend to think of "greed" as referring to riches and money. The word refers to an intense longing for something that belongs to someone else. In this present context, it could be referring to a *sexual* longing.)

✓ The book of Jude is about false teachers who are promoting sexual immorality in the church. We are told to try to rescue those who are being led astray; while at the same time, completely *loathing* the sin, and *fearful* lest we ourselves would become polluted by it. (Consider the warning in Galatians 6:1b.)

... show mercy tempered with fear, hating even the clothing stained by the flesh.
Jude 1:23b (BSB)

Because God condemns it, there are two responses we must have:

- ① We are to detest all forms of sexual immorality.
↳ [Already mentioned, but more about these sins later.]
- ② We are to live the following way:
... and live decent and chaste lives, within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

What does Scripture say?

We will look at a random collection of verses on this issue. This will include *instructions* on how to live, *commands* that show us ways to respond, *warnings*, and even an *example*. These passages represent a variety of issues, but do not cover all possibilities. As you study Scripture, you will find many more passages that deal with this issue.

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- The way you *live* should give no reason to suggest that you are involved in sexual sin. The way you *talk* about sexual matters should not be crude, obscene or suggestive. *God's wrath is on people who do this!*

REPUTATION But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.

CONVERSATION Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. **Let no one deceive you** with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient.

⇒ Regarding your *talk*, your conversation should be characterized by thanksgiving (verse 4b) and by gracious/pleasant speech (Colossians 4:6).

8

- 1 Corinthians 7: A collection of instructions related to applying the Seventh Commandment to: ✓ various marriage situations, ✓ being unmarried, ✓ unsaved spouses desiring a divorce, etc.
- 1 Corinthians 6:18a: You must *flee* – run away from – sexual immorality! Instead, live like "those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
- 2 Timothy 2:22: Flee youthful passions; pursue godly conduct, along with those who rely on God and have pure hearts.
- Hebrews 13:4: Honor marriage; keep the marriage bed undefiled.
- Job 31:1: Regarding lust, Job left a good example of how to respond:

"I made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a young woman."
Job 31:1 (NIV)

(Why? See v. 2+. God sees our ways, and he has allotted *disaster* for those who do wrong!)

9

- Sexual immorality is *incompatible* with holiness. *Those who practice it do not know God!*

HOLINESS IS REQUIRED! **ABSTAIN** **SELF-CONTROL** **DON'T TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OTHERS** **DON'T REJECT THE SOURCE OF HOLINESS!**

For it is God's will that you should be holy: You must abstain from sexual immorality; each of you must know how to control his own body in holiness and honor, not in lustful passion like the Gentiles who do not know God; and no one should ever violate or exploit his brother in this regard, because **the Lord will avenge all such acts**, as we have already told you and solemnly warned you. For God has not called us to impurity, but to holiness. Anyone, then, who rejects this command does not reject man but God, the very One who gives you His Holy Spirit.

1 Thessalonians 4:3-8 (BSB)

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Q. Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

The issue: Do we focus on just the *external* expressions of these sins? Or are there other issues we also need to consider?

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy. ...

↳ This fact is the foundation for the rest of the answer.

- The verse used to support this statement (1 Corinthians 6:18-20, next page) was addressed to people who claimed to be Christians. Those who were *truly saved* would be willing to obey these instructions. They were given no other options or "second choices" – and *neither are we*.
- As we've seen in the past, this issue is related to the *whole* person – both body and soul.

↳ What does Scripture say? (Next page.)

11

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a man can commit is outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have received from God? **You are not your own; you were bought at a price.** Therefore glorify God with your body.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 (BSB)

UNSAVED CHURCH-GOER I BELONG TO MYSELF! I CAN DO AS I PLEASE! ... **GOD, IN SCRIPTURE** NO, YOU DO NOT! NO, YOU CANNOT!

SAVED CHURCH-GOER I BELONG TO GOD! I MUST DO WHAT PLEASES GOD! ... **GOD, IN SCRIPTURE** YES, YOU DO! YES, YOU MUST!

12

"Body" vs. "body and soul/spirit" in the 1 Corinthians passage:

(The catechism says "body and soul" – basically referring to the "material and immaterial" aspects of a person. Why?)

Therefore glorify God with your **body**.
1 Corinthians 6:20b (BSB)

... therefore glorify God in your **body**, and in your **spirit**, which are God's.
1 Corinthians 6:20b (KJV)

- Most modern translations are based on the *earliest* Greek copies of Scripture that are still in existence; these have only the word "body." But the first English and German translations were based on *later* Greek copies of Scripture, which had "body and spirit."
- In this context, the concept of "body" refers to the *whole* person. It was *later*, that gnostic influences caused many to *separate* the two (and often denigrate the body). The phrase "body and spirit" would clarify that *both* are important.
- Since what Paul *originally* communicated implied *both* concepts (whether or not the word "spirit" was present), either translation communicates the message truthfully.

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Another foundational issue (not mentioned in the catechism).

- In addition to the fact that we (God's people) are temples of the Holy Spirit, we can also include the foundational principle that we examined in the past: Specifically, the fact that humans, as "male-female units" (i.e., married, Genesis 2:24), are a picture of the "plurality" aspect of God (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). God *hates* the distortion and perversion of what he created us to be.
- Since this principle applies to *all people*, it is an *even greater* reason for the existence of this commandment. But the catechism is focusing on the command's application to *saved* people (or to those who at least *claim* to be saved).

THE BASIS FOR THIS COMMAND:

- We, as "male-female units" (i.e., as married couples), were created to reflect an aspect of the "image of God" in this unity.
- We, as God's people, are temples of the Holy Spirit.

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That is why God forbids all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires, and whatever may incite someone to them.

- It's not just the *external* bodily act that violates this commandment. This sin can involve actions of the *entire person* – external and internal actions, whether visible or not... *and whether or not the practices have become socially acceptable*.
- As before, we will look at a variety of examples, but not every possible sin. (People have invented too many for us to describe them all in this presentation... and perhaps more have even been invented since the time the Bible was written.)

What does Scripture say?

① Concerning actions, thoughts, desires, etc.

- (Actions) 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 – flee from sexual immorality (a sin against your own body); don't become one flesh with a prostitute

[more] → 15

- (Actions) Romans 13:13-14: Avoid sexual immorality, as well as the various other sins that are described as expressions of "darkness." Verse 14 tells us what to do, in order to replace such conduct with "light."

Let us **behave decently**, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, **not in sexual immorality** and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Instead, **clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ**, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.

Romans 13:13-14 (BSB)

- (Thoughts/desires/looks) 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 to lust after her** has already committed **adultery with her in his heart.**"

Matthew 5:27-28 (BSB)

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- (Words, talk, crude joking about it) Ephesians 5:3-5. (We already looked at this passage.)
- (Issues related to divorce and marrying someone else... potentially *horrible* consequences, even on others) Matthew 5:32.

But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, brings adultery upon her. And he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 5:32 (BSB)

② Concerning things that incite temptation – whether it's influencing us or other people.

(These are examples of practices that an incite *sexual sin*, as well as *other types* of sinful conduct.)

- 1 Corinthians 15:33: Associating with "bad company."

Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."

1 Corinthians 15:33 (NIV)

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- Ephesians 5:18: Drunkenness.

Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit ...

Ephesians 5:18 (NIV)

- Luke 17:1: A warning about being the *source* of temptation.

Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come."

Luke 17:1 (NIV)

(We live in a corrupt world, where people think it is OK to tempt others... and to claim that only the person who *yields* to the temptation is sinning. In contrast, God says that *both* are sinning.)

- 2 Peter 2:14: An example of people who were tempting others.
- 1 Corinthians 7:1-9: Forbidding people to marry (i.e. celibacy), when they don't have the "gift" (or ability) to do so. Also: 1 Timothy 4:2-3.

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★ We are faced with TWO options. ★

What we have seen today, in Scripture, is obviously not the message that the *world* promotes. The world teaches a *complete rejection* of all that Scripture teaches on this issue.

The world wants us to believe that such practices are normal and good, and that we were "made that way." It also tells us that we are not only to *accept* those practices, but also to *affirm* them as legitimate.

The result? An increasing number of people have abandoned what God says, and have lost all moral consciousness in this matter.

* These people have chosen the world's values. *

We have to decide: Who we are going to believe? The one who created us, or the world that hates God and loves sin.

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OUR MISSION

↳ We have to DECIDE:

What are we going to base our conduct on?

- GOD's commands and instructions?

Or on:

- The WORLD's teachings and actions?

NEXT TIME ...

Some of the passages we looked at may leave us with questions that we don't have time to examine today. We can look at them (and other issues) next time.

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↳ What if we have already committed these sins?

(There is probably no one on earth who hasn't broken this commandment in at least some manner.)

- **There is grace, forgiveness and salvation.** This is for *any* who are willing to admit their sin, repent of it and follow Jesus. (This is *not* available for those who would rather remain in their sin.)
- **There is power to change.** The very nature of salvation guarantees it. However, there is *no guarantee* that temptation and struggle will cease in this *present* life – though it may diminish with time. But this is true with *any* type of sin. (Even if we *do* have complete victory over one type of sin, we will eventually discover that there are *other* sins in our lives that we need to deal with. Complete freedom will come only when we enter Jesus' presence.)

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Credits

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