

## LORD'S DAY 41

108. Q. But does this commandment speak only of killing?

A. That all unchastity is cursed by God.<sup>1</sup>  
We must therefore detest it from the heart<sup>2</sup>  
and live chaste and disciplined lives,  
both within and outside of holy marriage.<sup>3</sup>

1. **Leviticus 18:30** Therefore you shall keep My ordinance, so that you do not commit any of these abominable customs which were committed before you, and that you do not defile yourselves by them: I am the LORD your God.

**Ephesians 5:3-5** But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;<sup>4</sup> neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.<sup>5</sup> For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God.

2. **Jude 1:22-23** And on some have compassion, making a distinction;<sup>23</sup> but others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire, hating even the garment defiled by the flesh.

3. **1 Corinthians 7:1-9** Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband.<sup>3</sup> Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband.<sup>4</sup> The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body,

but the wife does.<sup>5</sup> Do not deprive one another except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.<sup>6</sup> But I say this as a concession, not as a commandment.<sup>7</sup> For I wish that all men were even as I myself. But each one has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that.<sup>8</sup> But I say to the unmarried and to the widows: It is good for them if they remain even as I am;<sup>9</sup> but if they cannot exercise self-control, let them marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

**1 Thessalonians 4:3-8** For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;<sup>4</sup> that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor,<sup>5</sup> not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God;<sup>6</sup> that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified.<sup>7</sup> For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness.<sup>8</sup> Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.

**Hebrews 13:4** Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

109. Q. Does God in this commandment forbid nothing more than adultery and similar shameful sins?

A. Since we, body and soul,  
are temples of the Holy Spirit,  
it is God's will  
that we keep ourselves pure and holy.  
Therefore He forbids all unchaste acts,  
gestures, words, thoughts, desires,<sup>1</sup>  
and whatever may entice us to unchastity.<sup>2</sup>

1. **Matthew 5:27-29** You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not commit adultery."<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.<sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

**1 Corinthians 6:18-20** Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his

own body.<sup>19</sup> Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?<sup>20</sup> For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

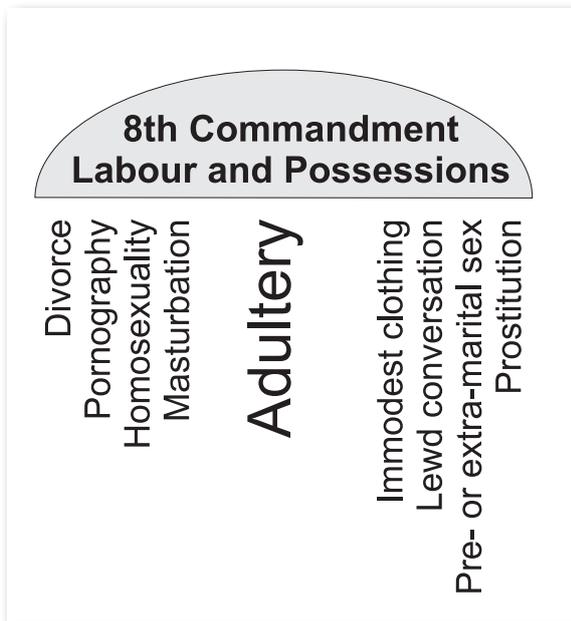
**Ephesians 5:3-4** But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints;<sup>4</sup> neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

2. **1 Corinthians 15:33** Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits."

**Ephesians 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,



In the seventh commandment we deal with the sphere of marriage and sexuality. The Lord has summarised this sphere by taking the most serious breach of the marriage covenant, and allows it to represent all the other related topics in this sphere, as illustrated below:



**God's original purpose for marriage and sexuality**

The first thing that we should speak about is marriage. For every sin against the seventh commandment is basically a perversion of that which was intended for marriage.

The main purpose of marriage is that of mutual assistance. Marriage is designed to bring men and women together that they may help each other. That is clear from the creation account, where woman is called a "helper" for man. This help is not limited to the physical aspects of life, though this is included. Women do not marry simply to be provided with a home to live in, and clothes to wear, although a husband will

provide her with these things. Men do not marry simply to acquire a maid who will do the domestic duties in the home, although a woman will perform these duties for her husband (cf. Titus 2:4,5 "...admonish the young women ...to be homemakers").

As a team, husband and wife may work together in the fulfilment of the cultural mandate. They may offer each other physical, emotional and spiritual assistance in fulfilling the great and noble task which God has given them.

We have spoken about the great and noble task that God has given man which we call, the *cultural mandate*. We should describe this mandate. God said to man, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

After God created man, He said that it was not good for man to be alone. What was needed was not just another man, but a woman. In our day there is a trend to the identity of the two sexes. But God created two distinct sexes, giving each their own abilities and characters. From this it is clear that man was not complete by himself. Woman was a complement to man. Man found his completeness in woman.

God bound man and woman together in a covenant, which we call marriage. It was God's intention that together they form one unit, and as one unit they were to work for the fulfilment of the cultural mandate. Together they were to exercise dominion over this earth, cultivate it, develop it and subdue it.

As a sign that husband and wife complemented each other as one unit, and as a means of expressing the love which binds them together in marriage,

God created man and woman with sexual organs. It is important to recognise this first purpose of the sexual organs, for it is this first purpose that distinguishes man from beast. Animals also have sexual organs, but they have received them only for the purpose of reproduction. But man has received the sexual organs as a means of expressing love and unity in marriage. As such, sexual intercourse is a beautiful gift that God gives to husband and wife, for which they may thank God in prayer and never be ashamed of.

As mentioned, the sexual organs are at the same time the reproductive organs. By means of these organs man is able to fulfil the second purpose of marriage, which we call "*procreation.*" God gave to Adam and Eve the command: "*be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth*" (Genesis 1:28).

It was God's wish that the earth should be filled with mankind. It is also God's will to have children born within the framework of marriage, so that they can be raised by both a father and a mother.

We mentioned already that men and women differ in their abilities and characters. This is true also in the sphere of raising children. A mother will find it hard, if not impossible, to fill the role of a father and to be a father-figure. Similarly, a father will find it hard to fill the role of a mother and to be a mother-figure. It is God's will that children are born within marriage, so that they may be raised, not just by two parents, but by a father and mother who have complementary gifts and abilities.

### Man's dishonouring of marriage and sexuality

Since the fall into sin, man is incapable of honouring the holy institution of marriage. Instead, he abuses and perverts the beautiful things which God created for marriage.

We find that in society there is a disdain for marriage. Many are quite content to live "*common law*" or "*de facto*," that is, to live together without being legally married. Among those who do marry there

is an increasing rate of *divorce*. God hates divorce (cf. Malachi 2:16). Scripture allows divorce only in two situations, namely, for adultery (cf. Matthew 5:32, 19:9) and for desertion of an unbelieving husband in the context described in 1 Corinthians 7:13-15.

There is also much perversion in the sphere of sexuality. In the context of marriage, sexuality is a beautiful means of expressing love and unity between husband and wife. But sinful man takes what God has made beautiful and makes it filthy. Let me relate a meaningful story to this effect which I heard from a minister when I was young.

A mother was working in her garden with her young son at her side. She fertilised the soil, turned it and watered it. At the end she remarked how rich the soil was. She returned to her house to look for her young son. She followed his tracks into the lounge and was horrified when she saw her carpet. She reprimanded her son saying, "*Look at the dirt on the carpet!*"

At one moment this mother spoke very favourably of the garden's *rich soil*. But when that soil was taken out of its proper place, it became *dirt*. So it is with sexual relations as well. In their proper place, that is, in marriage, sexual relations are a beautiful expression of the love and unity in marriage. But outside of marriage, sexual relations are dirty.

There are many ways by which sexuality has been corrupted by man. There are those who gratify their own sexual desires by self-manipulation, which is called *masturbation*. There are those who seek to gratify their sexual desires by paying another to participate in sexual relations with them, which is called *prostitution*. These acts are not motivated by love and unity of husband and wife. They are simply means of self-gratification, and a serious perversion of God's gift of sexuality.

Others engage in sexual relations outside of the bond of marriage on the pretext of love, as though love makes it acceptable. When this happens with those who are not married we call this *pre-marital sex* or

**fornication.** Even if their love for each other is genuine, and even if they plan to marry in the future, they sin when they take what belongs to husband and wife in the garden of marriage. In the old dispensation God commanded that if this occurred, the couple must marry (cf. Deuteronomy 22:28-29). Today the obligation to marry remains, providing that the other conditions pre-requisite for marriage are met, such as marrying in the Lord.

Some who are married engage in sexual relations with someone other than their spouse. This is called **adultery** or *extra-marital sex*. Adultery displays unfaithfulness to the covenant of marriage, and is abhorred by God. In the old dispensation adultery was punished with death (cf. Leviticus 20:10). Although adultery is no longer punished in this way, it remains a sin which is abhorred by God. Those who do not repent of this sin will be excluded from the kingdom of God (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9).

There are other gross perversions of sexuality which God abhors, such as **homosexuality** or **sodomy** whereby men leave the natural use of the woman and commit what is shameful with men, or whereby women lie with women as with a man. This abomination was punished with death in the old dispensation, and remains an abomination in the eyes of God (cf. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Romans 1:27).

Another perversion in the eyes of God is **bestiality**, where men or women engage in sexual relations with an animal. This, too, was punished by death in the old dispensation (cf. Leviticus 18:23, 20:15), and remains an abomination in the eyes of God.

Related to this perversion is **pornography**, obscene or lewd literature, pictures or films which portray nudity and sexual engagement. God does not only forbid immoral acts; He also forbids all impure thoughts. Christ said, "*Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart*" (Matthew 5:28).

The perversion of sexuality is also evident in **immodest clothing** and **nudity**. In Paradise there was no need to cover the body, for the mind and heart of man were pure. But for fallen man immodest clothing and nudity will arouse sinful thoughts and desires which are themselves sinful, and will often entice men and women to sinful acts.

There is yet one matter that must be discussed in relation to the dishonouring of marriage. This pertains to the second purpose of marriage, namely, being fruitful and multiplying. Couples are no longer willing to have large families. Often couples postpone conception and limit the number of children they receive. Some are motivated by financial reasons, knowing that children cost money. Some women wish to pursue a career rather than raise children. Other couples are afraid of over-population. Some wish to experience the joy of parenthood, but they do not wish to make too many sacrifices which must be made if families are large.

None of these reasons are legitimate. Neither financial concerns, nor freedom, nor careers, nor fears of over-population should induce us to disobey the command of the Lord.

The only legitimate consideration when establishing the size of a family is whether the parents (and especially the mother) are able to cope with and fulfil the demands of raising these children in the fear of the Lord.

### The redemption in Christ

Scripture makes it clear that those who live in sin against this commandment will not enter the kingdom of heaven. "*Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, ... nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, ... will inherit the kingdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10).

Christ has come to redeem man from sin against this commandment, as with all the others. Through Him there is forgiveness

of all the sins committed in this sphere of marriage and sexuality (cf. John 8:3-11).

Through Christ there is also freedom from the pollution of sin in this sphere. As Paul writes, "*And such were some of you [fornicators, adulterers, homosexuals, sodomites]. But you were **washed**, but you were **sanctified**, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God*" (1 Corinthians 6:11).

Through the power of the Spirit we may again honour marriage and sexuality, albeit with shortcoming and weakness. And we must. Listen to what Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 6:18-20:

<sup>18</sup> Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

### **An Added Dimension to Marriage for the Redeemed**

For the redeemed of the Lord, the two-fold purpose of marriage takes on added dimension. Not only is woman given as a helper for man with respect to the cultural mandate, but she is given to man as a spiritual helper as well. Marriage partners receive the added mandate to assist each other in spiritual matters as well. We could say that in marriage husband and wife are to assist each other in reaching the goal of the great wedding feast of the Lamb. They are to help each other live in covenant faithfulness to God. They are to exhort each other in times of weakness, comfort each other in times of distress, encourage each other in trials, and rejoice together in good. This has become a very important purpose of marriage.

That husband and wife are to help each other live in faithfulness to God affects the criterion we use in choosing a boyfriend or girlfriend. We do not just choose one who

is beautiful to look at, or one who excites us. Such are the criteria of many people today, but that cannot be ours. We must seek a spouse who will help us to fulfil our cultural mandate. We must choose a spouse who will assist us in the service of God. We must look for one who will help us to arrive at the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Scripture is very clear about mixed marriages: "*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers*" We must marry "*in the Lord.*" (cf. 2 Corinthians 6:14-17; 1 Corinthians 7:39). That is, we must marry someone who, like ourselves, is a faithful Christian.

The command to marry "*in the Lord*" is also fundamental with respect to the raising of children. To raise children in the fear of the Lord is not an easy task. In the first place children of the covenant are inclined to evil. In the second place parents are inclined to sin, and often the example which they show is far from perfect. If parents are to serve as good and useful instruments of the Holy Spirit, they need to support each other and to encourage one another. To raise children in the fear of the Lord is difficult enough when both parents are faithful Christians. But if only one parent is faithful, it is much more difficult.

Furthermore, a "*mixed marriage*" (wherein a believer marries an unbeliever) will be a source of confusion for the children that are born in that marriage. For the good influence which the children receive from the faithful parent will be impaired by the bad influence of the unfaithful parent. The children will be confused when they see their parents both living according to different norms.

Thus, if we wish to raise children in the fear of the Lord, we must seek a marriage partner who will be able to assist us in this, and who will set a good example for the children.



**Questions:**

1. With what sphere does the seventh commandment deal?
2. What other related topics are covered by the seventh commandment?
3. What is main purpose of marriage? How is that made clear to us? In what ways can husband and wife fulfil this purpose?
4. What is the cultural mandate?
5. With respect to the different sexes, what trend do we find in society today? Is this correct? Why or why not?
6. Is man complete by himself? What did God say in Paradise?
7. Explain the first purpose for the sexual organs in man.
8. What is the second purpose of marriage? How does this relate to the second purpose for the sexual organs?
9. Why does God want children to be raised by both a father and a mother?
10. In what way does sinful man show his disdain for marriage?
11. In what way does sinful man show his disdain for sexuality? Define the following:
  - a. masturbation
  - b. prostitution
  - c. pre-marital sex or fornication
  - d. adultery
  - e. homosexuality or sodomy
  - f. bestiality
  - g. pornography
  - h. immodest clothing and nudity
12. How does sinful man show his disdain for the second purpose of marriage? What is the only legitimate consideration when establishing the size of a family?
13. Why is it so important that we live moral lives? What does Christ do in order to make it possible for us to live moral lives?
14. For the redeemed, marriage partners receive an added mandate. What is it?
15. How does added dimension affect the criterion we use in choosing a husband or a wife? What does Paul say in 2 Corinthians 6:14-17?
16. With a view to raising children, why is it so important that we marry "*only in the Lord*" (that is, that we marry someone who is a faithful Christian)?