

Do Not Commit Adultery

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[0 : 0 0] The scripture reading comes from Deuteronomy chapter 5. Please follow along in your bulletin. And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them.

I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on earth beneath, or that is in water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God. Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.

[1 : 3 1] Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock or the sojourner who is within your gates.

That your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder, and you shall not commit adultery, and you shall not steal, and you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field or his male servant or his female servant, his ox or his donkey or anything that is your neighbor's.

This is the word of God. Thank you, Annabelle. Are we on?

[3 : 0 9] Hello? Can you hear me? Brilliant. Great. Thank you so much, guys. We're just so blessed by you as a church family. Just Etienne doesn't know how blessed he is yet to be part of Watermark, but we know how blessed we are, and just want to thank you so much for just walking with us right from, well, right from before Etienne was even an idea.

So thank you so much. Let me just pray for us. Father, you want to speak to us.

Open our ears to hear you. Open our hearts to be receptive to what you want to say to us. I pray, Lord, that you would come and speak with power into our lives.

Show us yourself this morning, I pray. Teach us to be a community which lives under your word and loves your word and delights to obey your word.

Father, I pray just take whatever I say now, and I pray that your spirit would just really bring what you want to say into people's hearts, Father. Father, so we love you.

[4 : 26] In Jesus' name. Amen. Great. So for those of you who are, this is your first time here, or whether you're at the community center, or whether you're in the overflow, or whether you're here, we've been going through a series in the Ten Commandments.

And we've come to that place in the Ten Commandments where things begin to get a little bit more sensitive. Where we come to areas where some of us may have real struggles and real hurts and real areas where we wrestle with some of the things that God is saying in his word.

And so what we want to do, like before I even share what we're going to talk about, which is do not commit adultery today. And in your bulletin, by the way, there's a mistake. It's not do not murder.

It is do not commit adultery. But there may be areas which are going to be just touching on things which we can't share everything in this sermon.

But we want to walk with you. So if there are things which actually come up from this, please don't just run away. Please come and see myself or Kevin, Sylvie, Eugenia, one of the staff, because we really want to walk with you through these issues to be the people that God calls us to be.

[5 : 38] So in 1631, there was a Bible that was printed. It was called the Wicked Bible because the printers missed out one word.

It was the word not in this verse. It read, thou shalt commit adultery. Now, very quickly, it got taken off the shelves.

But incredibly, it became very popular as a Bible. Everyone wanted to get their hands on it. Because people, though they knew that adultery was wrong in that culture, they secretly hoped that God would somehow accommodate to their kind of guilty pleasures in life.

And I think that typifies a lot of in our society, this kind of tear between things that we think are maybe wrong, but actually the desires that we have. I mean, last year, you know, canto pop star Andy Ho, you know, Sammy Chang's husband, he was condemned widely for getting caught cheating.

But I heard quite a lot of people going very sympathetically that when he apologised, he just gave in to desire, saying, oh, yeah, I understand. It's kind of natural, you know. Chimpanzees do it.

[6 : 52] So why can't we? And until 1971, I mean, Stanley Ho just died a couple of weeks ago, but polygamy was legal in Hong Kong.

Even today, if you are, many people do business in mainland China, and there is a wife or a mistress or someone in mainland, and then here you have someone else. And if the spouse is accepting of that, what's the problem?

Why has God got such a big deal with this? Well, what we want to do is have a look at this topic, and we want to talk about what is marriage. We want to talk about what is adultery.

Then why is it such a big deal, and then how do we find freedom to obey this command? Okay, so that's where we're going. First of all, what is marriage? Marriage in Scripture is not a cultural man-made institution.

It is a God-given, exclusive, lifelong commitment between one man and one woman, united together in a one-flesh relationship, with a new identity, which is in some way patterned and modeled after God's exclusive covenantal commitment to his people.

[8 : 08] And sex within that is the joyful self-giving of yourself to your spouse within that marriage covenant, primarily to deepen your sense of union and oneness together, and then secondarily for pleasure and reproduction, if biology allows.

In other words, marriage and sex are gifts from God, but they are deeply spiritual signposts pointing beyond themselves to a greater reality of the nature and character of God himself.

So just take the Ten Commandments. We've said before that they're actually like a big wedding ceremony. This is a relational covenant between God and his people.

And they've got promises. They've got promises to be faithful to one another. And so throughout Scripture, from this point, and you move on, God keeps showing himself to be a faithful husband to his people.

Let me, a couple of verses. Isaiah 54 says, For your maker is your husband. The Lord of hosts is his name. Ezekiel 16.

[9 : 23] This is an amazing passage where God describes his relationship with his people like somebody who's picked up a dirty, abandoned, ugly, unloved girl from the side of the road, and he's brought them to himself.

And rather than just using her to meet his own desires, what he does is his heart is to restore her, to beautify her, to honor her. And so it says this.

It says, About Israel, God's people, your fame spread among the nations on account of your beauty because the splendor I had given you had made your beauty perfect.

Do you see what he's saying? God's about purifying, cleansing, beautifying, restoring people, and restoring us into the glorious image bearers that he made us to be.

You know, he made us to be beautiful and glorious. And his love towards that end is steadfast. That means it's not just a kind of dutiful, okay, we've got to kind of stay together for the kids kind of love.

[10 : 30] That's not God's love. God's love is he rejoices over his people with singing. It's a long-haul, promise-keeping, engaged, passionate commitment to his people.

And marriage is a reflection of that. You know what the sex symbols of the Bible are? You know, the kind of romantic ideal that the Bible brings you. It's not like a steamy one-night stand that Hollywood would show you.

It's actually a couple who have been married for 60 years, hand in hand, faithfully looking into each other's eyes through all the ups and downs they've been through.

And at the end of it, with this glowing passion, saying to one another, you know that I love you. And the other person turns and says, yeah, I know. Because I've had 60 years of experiencing that.

That's what the Bible's reflection of God's, just a tiny reflection of his faithful, passionate love. That's what marriage is meant.

[11 : 32] So what is adultery then? Well, the seventh commandment here is specifically referring to a married man or woman sleeping with someone who is not your wife or husband.

It is breaking a promise with your body. You know, there's other laws about, deals with other areas of sex outside of marriage. But this one is particularly about unfaithfulness to your marriage covenant.

And so one author says it's the social equivalent of breaking the first command to have no other gods. See, the most common image, do you know what the most common image for idolatry when Israel worships other gods in the Old Testament?

The most common image is adultery. Just one example, Jeremiah 3 says, like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so have you been unfaithful to me, O Israel, my people.

You see, since all the commandments flow out of that first one to have no other gods and to worship God alone, then to break the seventh command is to break the first command.

[12 : 40] In other words, physical adultery is idolatry. And idolatry is spiritual adultery against God. Okay? Because both of them, both idolatry, worshipping other gods, and adultery are like con artists, offering you products and saying, the grass is greener on the other side, just look over the fence.

And it offers you what is not yours to take, and it promises you life. Just take the forbidden fruit. You know, it's like this.

Your marriage is going through a rough patch. You feel unheard. You feel unloved. You feel disrespected, bored. And then someone comes along, and you just click with. And it seems that everything you wanted, the respect, the approval, all those other things you wanted, they seem to offer it.

More than your spouse does. And if what you do is you'll say, well, let me see what that grass is like on the other side. Your heart is not just turning away from your spouse to fulfill you first.

Sorry, it's not just turning towards that person. It's turning away from a promise that you've made to your spouse. And it's turning away from a promise you've made to God.

[13 : 56] So you're being unfaithful to God, and you're being unfaithful to your spouse. And you know where there's a culture where promises are broken, it creates a culture of fear, suspicion, and distrust.

So when a pastor or a believer says, God is faithful and he loves you, but then you hear that he's been sleeping with his secretary, what happens? Don't many people start questioning the credibility of Christianity?

They lose faith in God or in people because we know that actually our marriages are supposed to be a reflection of showing us something about God. But what if you're single?

Okay, you go, hey, I'm not married. I'm not even tempted in this area. Are you free from worrying about this command? Somebody gave the right answer. Yes. No, because Jesus takes this command.

I'm glad you got there. Otherwise, you can just walk out if you're single right now. Jesus takes this command and he goes, hey, it's fine. Don't worry about that, guys.

[15 : 00] It's like, this is New Testament. No, he doesn't say that. He goes, he actually makes it, like he ramps it up even harder, if I can put it like that. He goes, you've heard it said, you shall not commit adultery.

Okay? We've just heard that. But I say to you that anyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Thank you, Jesus.

You just made things much harder. Because he's saying, if you follow the breadcrumb trail of adultery back to its source, there you'll find a heart condition of coveting.

Say, coveting? How do you get that? Well, the word lustful intent here is the same word that is used in Romans 7 to describe the 10th commandment, don't covet.

You see, adultery is not just about who you're jumping into bed with. It's not just about marriage. Adultery is about desiring someone or something that is not yours to own.

[16 : 03] It's about, it's about sexually looking at someone or looking at someone for your own sexual gratification. You know, it's not wrong to appreciate somebody's beauty.

That's a gift from God. But it's the second look. It's the lingering look. It's the movie in your mind which takes appreciation for someone made in God's image and making them into a piece of property for your own personal pleasure.

It's actually failing to trust God to meet your sexual desires in his way and instead taking matters into your own hands. That's what adultery is in Scripture.

So we've seen what marriage is, that faithful, passionate, beautifying love. We've seen what adultery is. And now I want to think, why is that a problem?

Because some people go, okay, yeah, that's fine, but why is that an issue? Well, let's think back to what we said about even sex.

[17 : 03] And here's just a couple of things. Firstly, we can use people, adultery is using people, not serving people. If sex is actually meant to be about self-giving, not just about self-taking, do you know what?

Sex is actually service. It's the best kind of service you can imagine, but it's service to somebody else. It's actually about deepening your relationship, your one flesh relationship.

And though it's meant to be pleasurable in different ways, it's primarily serving your spouse. Which actually, by the way, means that you can actually get sex wrong even if you're married and you're doing it within marriage.

Because you can be unfaithful by making sex all about yourself. So either, I see people doing this in a couple of ways. One is, you either withhold sex from your partner because you just don't feel in the mood for like a lot of time.

or you actually demand sex because you are in the mood like all the time. And both of those get it wrong because what happens instead of us talking about it and thinking how can we serve each other, what happens it becomes this weapon of war rather than an instrument of love.

[18 : 21] Doesn't it? We use, not serve. I mean just at the heart of adultery, whether it's physical or at heart level, is actually a tyrannical dictator sitting on his throne not to serve people but to get there to use them to meet their own desires.

You know, think of pornography. What's pornography? Pornography is non-relational, non-committed sex. It's using another human being made in the image of God not to honor them but as an object for your own personal pleasure.

Isn't it? You know, it's Friday night, you're tired, you're bored, you're stressed, you're lonely and porn promises you an escape. It promises you life.

It promises to fulfill you with just a click or two. Just like, you know, in the Garden of Eden the serpent comes to Eve and says, well, God knows if you eat of this your eyes will be opened.

That's what porn promises and if you click you're saying to God you as my lover are not enough for me. I don't trust you to provide for me so I'm going to have to steal for myself.

[19 : 38] Do you know, pornography is actually robbery. I don't know if you've ever thought of that. It's grabbing for yourself what is not rightfully yours.

Has anyone looked at pornography and afterwards been inspired to serve and lay down your life for other people? Anyone?

I don't think so. No, it leaves you shameful. It leaves you feeling dirty inside. Why? Because every time you watch porn what happens you're committing a theft stealing the dignity and value of broken people when God created you saved you to serve to restore and to beautify people.

people. Like if you just followed the scandals of the world's largest porn site porn hub have you seen that? The scandals of rape and child abuse.

Can we not see that what we do in the dark has ripples effect all around the world? We use people not serve people that's why God says don't. But also what about another area what about the fantasy world in your mind?

[20 : 47] You see watching rom-coms which leads you to just fantasize about a man or woman who will just complete you. You know daydreaming about a celebrity or someone who you know who's going to become yours but you know they'll never really be yours.

Who's at the center of your fantasies? Me. I'm on the throne and I want a whole load of beautiful servants to come and serve my desires. That's what we do with fantasy.

That's why we're using not serving. God says don't. But then he also says it's adultery is slavery not freedom. You know the Ten Commandments starts with God saying I've brought you out of slavery and then he gives you the commands.

In other words what he's saying is I've opened the prison door for you to walk out into freedom through obedience to these commands. To be a people who love like I love.

But then adultery says no no stay in the prison and keep the door shut so nobody will find out that you're there. Stay hidden or maybe justify yourself by saying it works.

[22 : 03] But what do you think the prison is that adultery brings you? It's those desires that we have for approval for pleasure for control. just think about sex outside of marriage.

You know a previous pastor of mine he said this he said I've married a lot of couples and you know what many of them were Christian and many of them would say yeah we know the Bible's teaching that sex outside of marriage is wrong but they've still been sleeping together for all the time and why are they doing that?

He would ask them it's not because they lacked information. they all knew the right information. It's because there was a desire in their heart where they feared losing the other person or they wanted to just gratify their own desires and they would justify it saying things like I have physical needs.

But it was amazing when it came for some of these people when it came to an incredible work opportunity how these so-called physical needs suddenly they didn't need it for months because that work opportunity came and they were totally sold out.

Why? Because it wasn't primarily about biology it was slavery to an idol which could be replaced by another idol which came along and seemed to satisfy them more.

[23 : 22] But God says he gives you this command because he wants to set us free from the addictive nature of our desires to just self-gratify so that we're free to know how to love people and be patient and to be able to not just get instant gratification all the time.

There's a freedom in that and you know without a marriage covenant commitment what we're doing is we're providing for sex we're providing a picture of a God who could walk out at any moment.

A God who's just interested in playing with his people for a bit of temporary pleasure when actually the God we serve says I want to free you and I want to beautify you.

So adultery it uses not serves adultery it can enslave not bring freedom last thing adultery can promise life but bring death.

Do you know when self is at the center when we worship pleasure control or acceptance above God it doesn't give life it destroys. You know the story of David and Bathsheba in the Bible?

[24 : 30] it destroyed his adultery tore his family apart and you know I've got a friend one of my best friends growing up really close family and the father was just this amazing family man and then when my friend went to university suddenly he came out and said I'm leaving for another woman and they discovered that actually for seven or eight years this had been going on and none of them had known and it just tore them apart and some of you know that sense of being torn apart some of you feel that pain whether it's from your parents or whether in your own marriage and if marriage is supposed to be this mirror reflecting the beauty of God adultery is like taking a hammer to that mirror and shattering it and how many people do I know right now who are suspicious of marriage or commitment because of the fear of betrayal adultery it serves so it doesn't use to serve it uses it doesn't free it enslaves it doesn't bring life it brings death but how do we get free from this how do we get is there any hope for this in what is a very highly sexualized world that we live in

Ray Ortlund who is a pastor in the states he preached a sermon on the book of 1 John and he came to this incredible promise in 1 John he says this if we walk in the light as he Jesus is in the light we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus his son cleanses us from all sin and then he paused and he looked the congregation in the eye and he said I am a sexual sinner and he paused for a very long time remember the congregation said this at that moment in that interval of time

I wondered if perhaps I was witnessing the last day of our church in Manuel Nashville looking back now I believe it's the first day of the new Emmanuel he continued I'm not cheating on my wife I'm not looking at porn but I am a sexual sinner if all the thoughts that went through my head this week were put up on the screens this morning none of you would want to be my friend brothers and sisters that's true of me and I think that's probably true of most of us but Jesus wants to bring not condemnation you see sexual sin hides in the dark like a cockroach but Jesus wants to bring it out into the light but don't we often fear like a cockroach getting exposed that God if we come out into the light he's going to crush us or we're going to get rejected by other people because if you knew what I was really like inside you wouldn't want to be my friend so I want to speak to those of us who know that we've actually fallen in this area maybe once maybe many times you know there's this incredible verse in the book of Hebrews

Hebrews 7 25 it says it says this Jesus is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them shame wants you to hide in the closet shame wants you to think there's no hope shame and don't we often think that Jesus we know Jesus is forgiving we know Jesus is loving but we think there's this little corner at the end where his love and his forgiveness doesn't reach this kind of dark area in our hearts it doesn't quite get there but this verse says Jesus saves us to the uttermost you know do you know what that means our sin may be to the ends of the earth his grace and forgiveness is to the end of the universe he saves to the uttermost and he doesn't just say he forgives to the uttermost and then leaves us to try and sort it out ourselves and work on he says he saves to the uttermost that means he can save you from your porn habit that means he died to set you free from the fantasies that you have that means he's given everything to enable even the adultery in your marriage for God to work through that and to save you in that you see he's in the restoration business he's in the beautifying business the cleansing business because that's the kind of husband he is you see some of you may have experienced the pain of adultery in the past and what's happened even in your marriage you're still together but actually you've you've kind of settled for a second rate functional marriage for the sake of the kids or whatever

Jesus didn't die for that Jesus died to even save your marriage in that area to bring beauty out of the ashes in that because that's the kind of husband he is that's to those who have fallen what about to those who you know you're tempted you know maybe you started an emotional bond with a non-believer or somebody else and you know it's not healthy like don't wait until you're exposed like Ashley Madison we need to be a community where we take this so seriously you know what Jesus says he says if your eye causes you to sin just put some eye shadow on it is that what he says no he says if your eye causes you to sin like rip it out like be merciless with that thing get ruthless with it you see we often go like yeah but it's only a coffee yeah but it's only a thought yeah but it's only a movie but Jesus says no no no you run like cancel your Netflix account like delete that phone number like text others when you're tempted do whatever it takes not even a hint of it because you see desire in the heart looks like a kitten to start with but you will keep feeding it it will become a lion and eat you alive and what we need in this church is groups of guys and girls who don't just do these kind of vague accountability things where we go oh have you looked at porn this week any last yes okay do better next week we don't need that we need people who are willing to commit to each other to be there night and day for each other to help each other to walk in the freedom that God

[32 : 32] Jesus has brought for us you know people who are going to help each other to stare down shame and to say I'm not going to live under your shame Jesus has cleansed me people who are going to walk with each other and help each other to go when temptation promises us things we're going to go no I'm not going to buy from your promises because your promises are fake because in Jesus I have my acceptance in Jesus there is approval my freedoms in him he's my faithful lover and even if I have to wait maybe I feel lonely maybe I feel bored my God says he will satisfy my desires with good things and I will trust him that's the kind of people we need to be for each other those who fall and those who tempted what about for those who you know you've been really hurt in this area I want to just appeal to you don't walk alone

I've said it before but I want to say it again don't walk alone in this you see what shame does shame wants you to stay silent or to live with the what if's bitterness wants to wants to harden or numb or make cynical your heart pain wants you just to escape through busyness or all kinds of other relationships but Jesus comes to you and he weeps with you Jesus suffers with you and he says this to you I know what betrayal is like it cost me my life it cost me my life I understand and so he says I will never forsake you because I died to save you to heal you to the uttermost

Ephesians 5 says this and I'm going to close with this husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle that she might be holy and without blemish that's the kind of people Jesus died to make us let's run to him let's be honest with him let's come out into the light and let him just work in our hearts today I want to just take a minute to pray I'm going to ask the band to come up but you know where you are right now I'm going to ask some of us afterwards to actually come up for prayer that's a big move because you may feel the sense of oh what other people think listen we are all sexual sinners in this room

Jesus wants to bring us out into the light and to bring healing so I want you just to do business with God maybe you need to repent of where you've actually just been minimizing areas of your life maybe you need to just open your heart up to get healing for him to speak into your heart just take a minute now to allow him to just minister to you be real with him father we are broken people we desperately need you but thank you that you are the one who satisfies our desires with good things

I pray for those who right now really feel this struggle and the wrestle Lord I pray would you come to them I pray that they wouldn't leave here today without talking to someone about it I pray Lord that we would be a church where it's the safest place to be sinners and sufferers but Lord that in this place you would just bring healing and restoration to us father just work in our lives show us that you are more satisfying than anything else we chase after because you're a better lover in Jesus name Amen you