

INSIGHT

Despite what we hear about on the news and read in the papers concerning marriage and divorce, the truth is that most married couples stay married for the rest of their lives. Even though we have seen the divorce rate climb steadily during the early eighties, nowadays the pendulum seems to be swinging in the other direction. *“Economic considerations, the fear of AIDS, a general maturing of the baby-boom generation—all these factors have been offered to account for the drop. While they have probably contributed, a more fundamental factor seems to be having even more effect: people are realizing that making commitments and keeping promises is at the heart of being authentic human beings.”*

Even though the seventh commandment is aimed at keeping the human covenant of marriage pure, God’s desire for His people is for them to keep their covenant relationship with Him pure! There are many passages in the Bible that parallel Jesus’ relationship with His church and a husband’s relationship with his wife: *Ephesians 5:22-33; Romans 7:1-6 and Matthew 25:1-13* are some of them. If you recall the first study of the *Heart of God* series, where we learned about how personal God considers our relationship with Him to be, you will remember that the whole book of *Hosea* parallels God’s relationship with Israel to Hosea’s relationship with his adulterous wife.

This command deals with our attitude towards the covenant we have made with our God. If we have not realized the extent of our covenant with Him, are we ready to make covenants with partners on Earth? It is my conviction that the kind of marriage covenant God designed can only succeed if we have held to His teaching. God not only want you to stay married, He wants you to stay *happily* married! He designed this covenant relationship to be one of the richest experiences you can have during your life on Earth. You just need to be aware of what you’re getting into when you decide you want to marry someone. It is a *choice* you make, not something you *must* do. Therefore, once you make that choice you must stick to it.

“Another thing you do: You flood the Lord’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer pays attention to your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. {14} You ask, “Why?” It is because the LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her,

though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.”

(Mal 2:13-14)

The Heart of God: The Seventh Commandment Keeping your Marriage Intact...

Key Text: **Exodus 20:14**

“You shall not commit adultery.”

Theme:

The seventh commandment protects the sanctity of the home and expresses the value God places upon faithfulness in relationships, especially in the most intimate relationship of life (cf. Mal. 2:14-16). To commit adultery is to compromise one’s integrity, to cast a shadow on the trustworthiness established with your mate and to break a union that has been established by faith in God’s sight.

Application:

Here’s a four part prescription for the “*best*” of all possible marriage relationships. While no human formula for marriage is anything other than an encouragement toward the divine ideal, Edward Wheat, in his book *Love Life for Every Married Couple*, offers insights that could help:

1. ***Blessing*** your mate includes kind deeds, telling them how much you appreciate specific qualities about them, and praying to God for them.
2. ***Edifying*** your mate happens when you show support in something that he’s trying to achieve, praising how well she does certain things around the house, and responding positively to your mate’s attempts to show love and affection.
3. ***Sharing*** refers to doing things together. Sharing conversations, feelings, romantic moments, spiritual experiences, and decisions.
4. ***Touching*** denotes all forms of non-sexual contact between a husband and wife—holding hands, a kiss in the morning, gentle pats and hugs. These are all non-verbal statements of your mate’s importance and desirability to you.

Only through the Spirit can we crush the fleshly desires

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

“Keeping Marriage Intact”

Introduction: Last Week

1. The sixth commandment deals with the value of a soul.
2. The Gospel is about life: *John 3:16*
3. Christians must be people promoting life!
 - a. *Anger* carries same sentence as murder (*Mt 5:21-26*)
 - leads to abusive speech
 - must be dealt with right away!
 - b. Hating a brother makes one a murderer (*1 John 3:15-16*)
 - c. We must rid ourselves of sinful anger! (*Col 3:8*)

I. Seventh Commandment: Moral Commitment

Exodus 20:14

A. God’s relationship with Jerusalem (*Ezek. 16*)

1. Pre-Israelite Days
 - a. People despised and uncared for (*vs. 4-5*)
 - b. God shows compassion (*vs 6-7*)
 - c. God enters a covenant with her (*vs. 8*)
2. After the blessing of being God’s wife:
 - a. They became prostitutes through idolatry (*vs. 15-22*)
 - b. Sentenced to be punished as adulterers (*vs. 38*)
3. Marriage to God is to be a faithful one

B. Jesus’ teaching on adultery (*Matt. 5:27-30*)

1. The spirit of this law goes beyond the act of adultery!
 - a. Adultery begins with the eyes
 - ensnaring looks cause adultery
 - the tempter who dresses to be seen is also guilty
2. The dangers of adultery: Destructive to soul
 - a. Deal drastically with sin
 1. Avoid the occasions of sin
 2. Resist the beginnings of it
 3. Decline the company of those who snare us
 4. Be involved in lawful things
 5. Seek God’s grace, and depend on it!

Conclusion: *Gal. 5:16*

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

What would you expect in a marriage? How would you feel if your spouse were to love another?

See To It

Ezekiel 16:1-63

1. What was Jerusalem’s early days like?
2. What did Yahweh do for Jerusalem? How did He demonstrate his love?
3. **Read verse 8.** What is meant by the word *covenant*? What did Yahweh expect from Jerusalem?
4. What happened after Yahweh “married” her? What went on?
5. What was the punishment of adultery?
6. **Read verse 59 through 63.** What is God’s ultimate desire for His people to whom He made a covenant?

Seeing It Closer

1. How does verses 4 and 5 apply to us today? How were we like Jerusalem’s early beginnings?
2. How does verses 9 and 10 apply to us today? With what did God bathe us and with what are we clothed?
3. List some ways for us to avoid adultery:
 - a. in the spiritual realm?
 - b. in the physical realm (marriage)?
4. How is the events in Ezekiel 16 similar to Christianity today?

Getting To It:

Thanks be to God for His grace! Grace that gives us hope of eternal life! Pray that we all keep in step with the Holy Spirit! Pray that we may develop a strong hatred towards sin and flee from circumstances that lead to adultery!