

7th Commandment

Deuteronomy Series

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Bible Text: Deuteronomy 5:18

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Please open your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter five verse 18. People believe that the shortest verse in the Bible is “Jesus wept.”¹ And here we find a verse that equals it in shortness. It is composed of two Hebrew words: Not, the negative, and adultery, which is a word that stands for a married person breaking vows by having relations with another person. So, “Jesus wept”² is not the shortest verse in the Bible, but it is one of them and here we find another that is very short.

This commandment is composed of only two Hebrew words, but they find their way working into every part of the heart. They scan the heart for every kind of impurity that might lurk there and this commandment is such a help to us. And I pray that God will really help us to understand what this means for us this morning.

This commandment is such a blessing to all of mankind. It is a blessing to my family. It is a blessing to all of us when we really understand it. And in many ways it is God’s act of mercy toward mankind to give him a commandment that would help him to preserve oneness between a man and a woman, that there would be nothing that could get in the way of that love, that there would be nothing that would reduce it. Because it can be reduced, that there would be nothing to lower the tenderness, but that there would be an undistracted love, that there would be an undiluted love.

And so this commandment was something that causes love to be preserved in the world and so it is a very, very blessed commandment. But it also causes the name of God to be proclaimed rightly in the world. All of the commandments are summed up by the word “love.” It should be no surprise to us that the relationship that is designed to declare the nature of God, the nature of the glory of the oneness and the unity and the love of God that exists in the godhead would find its root in this commandment here.

And you have an outline in front of you and we will move through it.

The first thing I want to identify here is the scope of the commandment, the scope of the commandment. The Seventh Commandment forbids all forms—capital A-L-L—forms of sexual sin.

¹ John 11:35.

² Ibid.

The Westminster Confession written in 1647 poses this question: “What are the sins forbidden by the Seventh Commandment?: And the answer is: “The sins forbidden in the Seventh Commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy and all unnatural lusts, all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes and affections, all corrupt and filthy communications or listening thereunto, wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel, prohibiting of lawful and dispensing with unlawful marriages, allowing, tolerating, keeping of houses of ill repute or resorting to them, entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage, having more wives or husbands than one at the same time, unjust divorce, desertion, idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, lascivious books, pictures, dancings, stage plays and all other provocations to or acts of uncleanness either in ourselves or in others.” So there are many things that come from a common spring, impurity that is addressed in this commandment here.

And so we find that this two word command has enormous implications to everything that we see, everything that we hear, everything we think about, every way that we treat those of the opposite gender and of the same gender as well.

I would like to also notice that Christ explains this command. He helps us to deal with the scope of it because that is the subject of this first point. Christ speaks of it very clearly and he interprets it to help us understand what it means in all of its scope. So he comes and gives us clarification for what this means which is consistent with what we just read in the Westminster Confession.

Christ says in Matthew chapter five verse 27:

You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.³

So Christ comes and reduces this commandment, this Seventh Commandment to a look, not just simply an action. But it can be found in a look of the eye. And then he comes and he fills out the understanding of it by saying, “[Therefore] 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.”⁴

So Christ says that adultery is found in a look just as much as it is in an act. And then he says, “[And] and if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off 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.”⁵

³ Matthew 5:27-28.

⁴ Matthew 5:29.

⁵ Matthew 5:30.

So Christ comes and he explains it by a look and something that you do with your hands, something that you do with members of your body.

So Christ comes and illuminates this and tells us that it is mental, it is visual as well as physical and that it begins in the heart, that it is in the heart that adultery springs. So Christ comes and gives the application of this commandment in very, very clear terms.

The third thing I would like to say about the scope of this commandment is not only does it include many things, not only is it reduced down to the heart that produces a look and an action, but also spiritual adultery is implied.

If you look at the references to adultery all across the Bible from Genesis to Revelation what you find, there are two categories of adultery. There is physical adultery and there is spiritual adultery. Physical adultery is often connected to spiritual adultery because they really are one in the same and so we find like in Jeremiah when he says, “I saw the causes of the backsliding of Israel, they committed adultery, I put her away and gave her away and gave her a certificate of divorce and her treacherous sister Judah did not fear and went and played the harlot also,”⁶ this is spiritual adultery. Israel was playing the harlot with other gods, was loving false gods and had affections for things that were not God.

And so in Jeremiah 3:9 we read he says through her casual harlotry, “She has defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees,”⁷ meaning that the affections of the heart were spiritual adultery.’

In Revelation chapter 2:22 we read, “Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds.”⁸ Here the apostle John is speaking of spiritual adultery, of loving the values of the nations of the world more than the propositions of God.

And so adultery can also be connected with spiritual adultery. So there is a physical and also a spiritual side of it. There are a number of examples of adultery in Scripture as well.

Think about Job who made a covenant with his eyes.

Some of you have installed on your computer a program called Covenant Eyes and the name of this company which provides software that allows people to be accountable to where they go on the internet named their company Covenant Eyes out of this verse in Job 31 verse 1 where Job said, “I have made a covenant with my eyes.”⁹ And he speaks of the dangers of looking on a woman and how God sees every look. He understands what is going on in the heart, that there is nothing that escapes his heart, that he is scanning the heart and he knows where the eyes really are looking.

⁶ See Jeremiah 3:8.

⁷ See Jeremiah 3:9.

⁸ Revelation 2:22.

⁹ Job 31:1.

And he says:

If my heart has been enticed by a woman, Or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door, then let my wife grind for another, And let others bow down over her. For that would be wickedness. Yes, it would be iniquity deserving of judgment. For that would be a fire that consumes to destruction, And would root out all my increase.¹⁰

Job understood that the look of the eye would be the destruction of his life and that it would burn out everything. It would just bring him scorched earth in every way and he includes financial scorched earth to that.

Anyone who has experience a divorce understands the financial scorched earth that happens when there is the breaking of a marriage.

In Job, though, we have a marvellous example, one who did make a covenant with his eyes, one who did guard his heart.

We also can think about Joseph who had opportunity with eye and hand at the same time and he fled.

And it came to pass after these things that his master's wife cast longing eyes on Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me."

But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Look, my master does not know what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand. There is no one greater in this house than I, nor has he kept back anything from me but you, because you are his wife. How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?"

So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.¹¹

And then, of course, this ended up landing him in prison when she said, "Lie with me,"¹² and he finally ran and then she accused him of molesting her.

So what we find here, though, in Joseph is a brother who can help us to see what we ought to do in times like that.

Or we can speak of David, another example of the temptations of adultery. David, who did not protect his eyes. You notice the Lord Jesus Christ talked about the eyes and the heart. This was the source of David's downfall. His eyes led him astray.

¹⁰ Job 31:9-12.

¹¹ Genesis 49:7-10.

¹² Genesis 49:7.

One of the observations that we made last Tuesday as we were discussing this whole matter of adultery is that there seems to be—and check this for yourself—there seems to be kind of a theme from Old to New Testament. In the Old Testament you find men who are falling. In the New Testament when you run across the instances of adultery you find women who are being rescued. The woman at the well, the woman who wipes the feet of Jesus with her tears, the woman caught in adultery. We find rescue from adultery of women in the New Testament where we find many downfalls of men in the Old Testament upon this sin.

So there are a number of examples, very vivid, graphic, helpful examples that will instruct us on how we should conduct ourselves from the heart up. And so this first point that I want to make really zeroes in on the scope of the commandment. The scope of the commandment gives us many examples in Scripture and it also covers a number of issues that we have to think about.

Number two, we ought to really consider the life giving effect of this command. I would like to give you five reasons that this is a life giving commandment.

First of all, it exalts marriage. It builds a wall around marriage. It declares that you belong to somebody. It declares that somebody belongs to you. It declares that you are not your own, but you exist for another person, that you would preserve this marriage for the purpose of preserving love in this world.

And so it exalts marriage. It puts it on a high pedestal and it preserves the blessings of marital intimacy that nothing would get in the way of love of every kind: physical, emotional, mental, and that it would be preserved.

It declares the superiority of the devotion of a husband over his emotions. It is the superiority of loyalty over discontentment. The superiority of single mindedness over diffusion and scattering strength that is designed to be concentrated from a man toward his wife and a wife toward her man.

Isn't it amazing that God would provide a commandment that would make a woman pour her energies of love single mindedly in one direction, pouring them into her husband and at the same time taking the love of a man and concentrating it. Instead of scattering it abroad, instead of it being dispersed like in a broad delta, but that the banks would be brought in and it would be a mighty river of love directed in one and only one direction, that it would not be scattered at all, no diffusion. It exalts marriage.

There is another blessing of this command. It protects women. Let's shout that one from the housetops. There is no religion that protects women like Christianity. There is no higher view of womanhood than the view of Christ toward women. And so here this commandment reminds us that Christ Jesus with a terrifying command, with devastating judgments would protect a woman from being abandoned by a man. And he would heap curses upon the man who would abandon a woman and he would actually promise death

for the man who would abandon a woman. This is how much God loves woman. This is the view of the exalted daughter. This is the view of the protection of women and God is protecting women through all of his commandments that they would be protected and cared for all life long, that there would not be one single second in their lives that they were not protected and loved and cherished and cared for and helped. And he causes a woman to be born into a household and gives her a protector, a head called a father.

And then that father seamlessly gives her in marriage to a man that she would be under the protective care of her husband. And then if she dies he would deliver her instantaneously into the protective care of the elders of the church and they would help this widow and keep her until the day she dies.

God desires women to be protected. Anyone who says that Christianity is against women is insane. They have not read their Bibles. They don't understand the commandments of God. Maybe they hate these commandments. Maybe they say, "These commandments are for another era. That is the Old Testament. We are in the New Testament days."

That is pure hogwash. That is a heresy that is at work in the Church today, that people would ignore and reject the sweet commandments of God that work for the protection of women.

Have we ever lived in an age when women need to be protected more than today? I don't know. But I do know this. Women do need protection today because they are so terribly exposed.

In all of the institutions that are so popular and used even by the Christian community women are not protected. They are set outside of the loving, governing headship of their fathers and their husbands. They are sent out into the work place to be vulnerable to other men and they all in love and they commit adultery and the men in those businesses fall as well. Women are unprotected in the workforce. They are unprotected in many acceptable institutions today. And what we need to understand that our culture is anti woman, the Christian is not, or it ought not to be.

So it protects women. And you can turn this around and say, "Thou shalt commit faithfulness. Thou shalt give your whole heart to that woman that God has given you." Not only does it exalt marriage. Not only does it protect women, this commandment works to proclaim the gospel.

This is one of the great life giving effects of this command is that it works to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Marriage is the earthly representation of Christ's union with his Church and it establishes two things simultaneously. It establishes the principle of love upon which the whole of culture rests, ok. But it also proclaims the principle upon which all things are held together and that is the relationships in the godhead, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father to the Son, the submission of the Son to the Father, the tenderness and the appreciation and the kindness that exists in the Godhead is meant to have a living illustration in the marriage so that there would be a

man who would so tenderly love his wife that all the world would know that there is a God in heaven who so cares for his people that he would love them and care for them. And he would exercise kind authority over them. And that also there would be a woman who in her submission would proclaim that there is a God to be obeyed and that proclaims the gospel, that there is a God in heaven and that it is for men and women to bow down before him in the same way that there is love between a husband and wife. It is a picture of Christ's love for the church.

So this relationship proclaims the gospel and this is why the apostle Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives...as [also] Christ also loved the church and gave Himself [up] for her."¹³

So a husband is charged to love his wife like Christ loved the Church. In other words, every husband in here is under divine command to love his wife so that the world will see that Christ loved the Church. If you are not loving your wife, if you are speaking harshly to her, you are proclaiming that there is no God or there is no good God. So when we dishonor our spouses we compromise the gospel and its expression in the world. A marriage is a very public thing. It is actually a legal covenant on record. And when it is broken up in any way it compromises the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is why God has said, "I hate divorce."¹⁴ Because it compromises the gospel, because it confuses people about love. It confuses children. It doesn't help them to know the love of God that is in Christ Jesus because their father is not loving their mother and their mother is not submitting to her husband. And the gospel is disfigured and children then are confused about the nature of God.

In many ways marriage is sort of like a video clip of the gospel. People look into your marriage in just moments of time. They can't see it all, but they see a little snap shot of it. And when they see it do they see... are they seeing a video clip of the love of God that is in Christ Jesus? Are they seeing a husband who sacrifices himself for his wife and nourishes and cherishes her? Are they seeing a wife that is trustfully submitting to her husband in all things as unto the Lord? Are they seeing that?

Because a marriage is designed to explain the love of Christ. These marriages that God has given us are for far, far more than our own satisfaction and our own prosperity. They are heavenly. They are to declare the glory of God from one generation to the next.

Let me give you two snapshots, one from the 18th century and one from the 19th century. Two homes, two individuals of enormous influence.

Let's go into the home of Jonathan Edwards. Let's look at the fruit of this marriage. Let's go look at the way that this husband and wife lived together. Let me read you the testimony of George Whitefield, the famous evangelist who went into that home.

¹³ Ephesians 5:25.

¹⁴ See Malachi 2:16.

He says, "I felt great satisfaction in being at the house of Mr. Edwards. A sweeter couple I have not yet seen. Mrs. Edwards is adorned with a meek and quiet spirit; she talked solidly of the things of God, and seemed to be such a helpmeet for her husband, that she caused me to renew those prayers, which, for some months, I have put to God, that He would be pleased to send me a daughter of Abraham to be my wife."

Whitefield walked into the house and it took his breath away to see the love and the sweetness in this marriage. It made him desire to be married as well.

The marriage of Jonathan and Sarah Edwards was a declaration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. And, by the way, their children saw that sweetness and they loved it and they honored their father and their mother as they went out into the world. And their marriages also were declarations of the glory of God.

Let's take a contrast, Charles Darwin. Charles Darwin grew up in a home and he was getting ready for marriage. In the year before he was married we see his understanding of marriage and how different, how far apart it was from the understanding of marriage that we find in the Jonathan Edwards home.

He makes a list for reasons not to marry, reasons for not marrying. "Freedom to go where I like, freedom to choose whatever society I want, freedom to have conversation with clever men at the clubs, no forced visit to relatives. I won't have to bend to every trifle. I won't have the expense and the anxiety of children, perhaps the quarreling and the loss of time. I could not read the books that I want in the evenings." Anxiety, responsibility, less money for books. That is his view of marriage. Here is someone who is totally unprepared for marriage and yet the next year he was married. He had absolutely no conception of what marriage was.

But what is marriage? Marriage is a declaration of the gospel. That is what it is. So as our children are growing up here in this church, what do they need to know about marriage? They need to be prepared for marriage. They need to know that marriage is not just about finding somebody you like. It is not just about finding some pretty face. It is joining with the man or a woman for a single purpose. And that is to declare the glory of the gospel through your love.

The purpose of your marriage has nothing to do with you. But it has everything to do with heaven. It has everything to do with the glory of God. It has everything to do with telling the whole world that there is a God in heaven and he loves his Church and his Church loves him through his submission.

And so when we teach our children to get married we need to help them understand that they ought to quick looking for a pretty face, that they ought to think about finding someone with whom they can join their forces together to declare the gospel for the rest of their lives, that they would so love one another that this would be the reason for their getting together. It would be the entire motivation, it would form all of their pictures that they wanted to be married to that one person because it was so strategic to get together

with them, that their gifts, their yoking was consistent, that they loved this one thing, to declare the glory of God from one generation to the next and that they would covenant together to establish a little house that would be a center of love, that would be a fountain of love that would spread out throughout the whole world and that they would multiply greatly on the earth and that their children would also go out and they would be planted in this neighborhood and that neighborhood. They would go to work in this industry and be at work in this business. And all through it the gospel would be declared.

You young men, let me just tell you this. Don't look for a pretty face. Look for a real woman who loves almighty God, who has dedicated her life to the service of Jesus Christ.

You young girls, don't be swayed by some athletic, muscular whatever. There is nothing wrong with that. But don't be swayed by it. There is something greater here. Be looking for a young man who cares nothing for this world. Be looking for a man who desires Jesus Christ.

So this commandment proclaims the gospel.

Next, this commandment glorifies the sovereignty of God. This commandment glorifies the sovereignty of God, number four.

To commit adultery or to look upon unlawful images or to listen to unlawful speech or observe unlawful videos or whatever, is actually to rage against the sovereignty of God. It is to want to get something that God has not given you. To commit adultery, to click on that internet site is to rage against what God has given you in your own marriage or in your own singleness. He has not given you a wife, but you want to go get the pleasures of it. And you are raging against the sovereignty of God. You are raging against the goodness of God and his kind provision for you. You are going at taking something. You are a thief. You are trying to steal something that God has not given you.

At one click the sovereignty of God is overthrown because you lust something that God is not giving you. You want to see a form that is not yours. And so you steal it for your own.

This is why the dangers are so enormous. Discontent with the years of singleness reveals the essence of this sin. That is the Seventh Commandment.

The fifth, it illuminates the need for the reforming of marriage. It illuminates the need for the reforming of marriage.

Now, marriage will always need to be reformed. My marriage is in need of constant reform. All cultures have so disfigured marriage that in all cultures there is a need of reformation in marriage. I am just not sure you are going to go find the perfect culture that exhibits the nature of Christian marriage. So all of the cultures of the earth will be presenting pictures of marriage and ways of marriage that need to be reformed.

And one of the glorious things that happened in the history of the Church is the Protestant Reformation where marriage was reformed. The Roman Catholics had established 183 days of abstinence in marriage. The Reformers said, “That is totally unbiblical.” And they revived marriage that was full of tenderness in all the categories that are in Scripture.

Instead of connecting people in marriage at their infancy, the Reformers said, “That is totally unbiblical. People should love one another.” And so marriage is always in need of reformation.

Here is one area of reformation that you might consider. Marriage is a hedge against sexual immorality for sure. It is one of the purposes of marriage. But consider the possibility that any of us might need to be reformed in our understanding of marriage in this way. Often couples withhold intimacy from one another wrongfully when the Bible asks them not to withhold this from one another. And so reformations are necessary in probably every part of marriage, but perhaps, consider this one that is communicated in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

Now concerning the things of which you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. [He is speaking of this licentious action] Nevertheless, because of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife, and let each woman have her own husband. Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her, and likewise also the wife to her husband. 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. [And then there is a command in verse five]. 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.¹⁵

So here we find that the only reason the couple should deny one another intimacy is if they agree together to go into a period of fasting and prayer. That is the only reason. And so I would just like to consider that this commandment does have to do with the intimate relationship between a husband and a wife. And God has given us many helps and commands so that we wouldn't break this commandment.

So this first point that we have been considering is the scope of the commandment and then, next, the life giving effect of this commandment. And I have just given you five ways that this commandment brings life.

And then, next, I would like for us to consider the judgments there are for violating this command, the devastating condemnation for this sin, the gravity of it is so clear. The severity is communicated in Exodus 22:19 in Exodus 20:13 through 16 and Deuteronomy 22:22.

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.

And one of my favorite moments in our men's Bible study as we were speaking about this on Tuesday was my father, we were speaking about the judgment that there is for the overthrowing of this command in our hearts in every way. And my father said this. "There are not quite enough rocks on this earth to punish us for this sin."

I felt that that was very consistent with Christ's interpretation of this commandment because he brings it right down to the heart. And there are not enough rocks in the world to punish us for this sin.

There are different outward punishments for this sin. There is a particular punishment prescribed for fornication, a particular one for bestiality another for sodomy and another for adultery. And we need to understand that the judgment of God is upon us with this sin. We ought not to take it lightly. We ought never to say, "Christ has forgiven me of my sins it doesn't matter what I do or say or look at or think." That is taking the grace of God and trampling upon it.

So there are many, many dangers to our souls in this.

Thomas Watson identified the devastations of this sin. I will just read them to you. It is a peevish sin, number one. Number two, it debases a person, turning him into a neighing horse. Number three, adultery pollutes. Number four, it is destructive to the body. Number five, it is a drain upon the purse. Number six, it destroys your reputation. Number seven, it impairs the mind. Number eight, it incurs temporal judgments. Number nine, adultery without repentance damns the soul. Number 10, the adulterer not only wrongs his own soul, but does it to others as well. It destroys the soul of another. Number 11, the adulterer is abhorred of God.

And so the punishments of this sin are enormous. But why did God not punish David? Or did he punish David? He actually did punish David. Or what about Abraham? And the truth is that God does not—at least from our own comprehension—punish us for all of our sins. There are natural, terrible consequences to our sins, absolutely. No one ever sins without receiving some kind of punishment in the mind or the body or the spirit or in a relationship of some way. But this kind of external punishment God seems to withhold.

I believe that he has withheld many of the punishments that are due us from our sins in this area, that we have seen things and gone places and done things that he has held back the damage. I believe he does that lest we would be destroyed, absolutely devastated by it. Out of his mercy, in the same way that he had mercy on David and didn't kill him for his sin against another man. And yet there were terrible punishments from it. But his life was preserved. Only God can make these determinations.

And then let's move, finally, here to some application. The first really urgent piece of application that I would like to bring is this. Be a faithful guardian. Be a faithful guardian. Be a guardian of yourself and of your entire family from defiling images. Be a guardian of yourself and of your family from defiling music. Be a guardian of yourself and your family from defiling books. If there is any hint of immorality, remove it. There

should be a zero tolerance policy in our households. There should be a zero tolerance policy for immoral images, immoral songs, immoral books. They should be removed from us, absolutely.

If you don't think so I just want you to go back to Matthew five again and read what Jesus said about immorality. Just read that. If you don't think it applies then I fear for you that you would take so lightly the commandments of God and allow these things into your household. They should be removed. They are of the devil and they are designed to destroy love. They are designed to take your marriage down. They are designed to destroy your children so that they would have no sense of the glory of God. They would not know what love is and they would not be capable of keeping it alive in this world.

Why be so strong about this? Why be so binary? Why be so black and white?

Look at your wife. Her heart is at stake and all of your children. Look at it in their eyes. Do you love them or would you defile them? "The lamp of the body is the eye."¹⁶

Why? Because of what Solomon said.

My son, give me your heart, And let your eyes observe my ways. For a harlot is a deep pit, And a seductress is a narrow well. She also lies in wait as for a victim, And increases the unfaithful among men.¹⁷

Or Proverbs six. "Whoever commits adultery...destroys his own soul."¹⁸ How about that one?

Are my comments stronger than that? I don't know. I think these are actually stronger than anything that I have said about this matter this morning. So the first is: Be a faithful guardian. Be a faithful guardian. Preserve love in this world. That starts right in your home. That starts with what you do with your hand. It starts with what you do with your eyes.

And then, number two, take pains to prepare your children to marry by instructing them in their true purpose of marriage. Don't let your children get out of your house without helping them to understand what marriage really is. They are not just looking for a cute chick that is compatible to them, ok. They are looking for something far, far greater than some outward appearance. They are looking for the love of God being spread from one generation to the next. And they understand the relationship of Christ and the Church so that they go into marriage understanding that every word, every behavior, every attitude either rejects the gospel or embraces it.

You know, some are so used to speaking to one another in a dishonoring way. At least our children should understand how sinful that is. Parents need to repent before their

¹⁶ Matthew 6:22; Luke 11:34.

¹⁷ Proverbs 23:26-28.

¹⁸ Proverbs 6:32.

children and say, "I have just rejected the gospel in the way I just spoke to your mother." Wives need to say, "I have just defiled the love of God by my anger toward my husband and my refusal to respect him and submit to him and speak to him nicely."

So our children need to know. They need to understand that they are not just looking for a pretty face. But they are looking for a relationship in which God can be glorified. And that should be their overwhelming desire.

Let me give you a third application for those of you who are not married. Remember your upcoming marriage. Remember that some day you will most likely... You know, almost everybody gets married in this world. Unfortunately, only 50% stay married. And one of the reasons they don't stay married is because of the way they conduct themselves in their single years because of the defilements, the freedoms they think that they have, but that actually work to destroy their marriage.

And so you who are not married now, build it strong now. Keep your eyes from every wicked thing that we have... We have seen a... I am just going to call it a rash of marriages where the bride and the groom kiss each other for the first time at the altar. I think that is a sign of revival, I really do. I think that is a sign of something enormous happening.

I mean, when two single people would say, "We are going to preserve all of this for marriage."

Now let's not pretend that that makes you pure. Nobody goes into marriage pure. Let's dispel that falsehood because adultery is something of the heart. And so we all go in with enormous sins in this area, forgiven by the blood of Christ.

But at the same time this difficult aspect of it is so critical. And the command is there to protect us, to keep a semblance of purity there. So you young girls and young boys, I would just like to challenge you to do that. Do the same thing that Peter Bradford and Kelly Brown did. Do the same thing that so many couples have done recently. Don't get on that slippery slope.

And then, fourth application, consider the problem of jealousy. Consider the problem of the spirit of jealousy that is spoken of in Numbers chapter five.

When we were going through the Pentateuch, remember we stopped very briefly in Numbers five where God makes provision for jealousy in a marriage and he speaks of a spirit of jealousy of the husband towards her wife. She is off and he doesn't trust where she has been. And what you do about a spirit of jealousy and in Numbers five there is direction. God sets himself up as a guardian against jealousy in a marriage and he establishes ways for dealing with that.

And so we ought to, as we consider this, ask ourselves: Is there a spirit of jealousy in this marriage? Is there a spirit of jealousy? If there is set God in the middle and remove that spirit of jealousy through any kind of repentance or whatever might be necessary.

The last application is that we are very aware of the wisdom of God in this commandment. In this commandment he does so many things, so many marvellous things he does in it. But one of the things that we haven't really spoken of yet—and I would like to end with this—is that God in his wisdom has established a center of society called the marriage. And it is the beginning point, the center, it is the fountain, it is the beginning stream of everything that flows out of it. But God in his wisdom has come down and reduced so much to one relationship. Do you see that, how he has done that? How he has made it a place where love is preserved. He has made it a place where children are nourished and they see what love looks like. And he has given the family many commands so that they might have something right there in the center of the world that would have an effect on the Church and the society at large.

You know, the family was the first institution and it is the institution that feeds all of the others. And this is why the Lord Jesus Christ stood with wisdom and compassion and mercy and judgment. And he said, “What God has joined together, let not man separate.”¹⁹ And that means it ought not to be separated in any of its component parts from the thoughts and meditations of the heart, to the look of the eye, to the action of the hand, that nothing would dilute love in this world and that husbands and wives are charged with this great responsibility to preserve love in the world.

Do you see what a high calling your marriage is? Do you see how wonderful it is? Do you see what an exalted thing it is in heaven and on earth? Do you see how kind God has been to give you a marriage partner so that you might struggle with these things to declare the glory of God, that he would give you a spouse to help you identify the sins, that he would give you a spouse to help you through them, that he would give you someone who would give you an undiluted compassion toward you all the days of your life?

And so I pray that God would just give us a great attraction to this two word commandment, two little words dropped into the heart, scanning every part of it to purify it and that God would do that among us in this church and the he would establish for us mighty beautiful marriages that would preserve love in this world for many generations.

So we close with that summary statement in the book of Deuteronomy. “Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”²⁰

Lord, we pray that you would come and help us to love our wives and that our wives would love us and that we would be faithful stewards of these channels of mercy. Amen.

¹⁹ Matthew 19:6.

²⁰ Deuteronomy 5:29.