



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 18 – The Seventh Commandment

Puritan Catechism

57 Q. Which is the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment is, “You shall not commit adultery.”
(Exodus 20:14)

58 Q. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts ([Matt. 5:28](#); [Col. 4:6](#)), words ([Eph. 5:4](#); [2 Tim. 2:22](#)), and actions ([Eph. 5:3](#)).



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Defining Adultery: Sexual intercourse with someone who is married to another. The word also serves as a metaphor for idolatry or any other type of unfaithfulness.

Jesus on Adultery - Matthew 5:27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery’; 28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

Matthew 15:18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, sexual immoralities, thefts, false witness, slanders.



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Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 138. What are the duties required in the seventh commandment?

A. The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity [purity in conduct and intention] in body, mind, affections [desires], words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency [singleness], conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in all our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

[1 Thess. 4:4; Job 31:1; 1 Cor. 7:34; Col. 4:6; 1 Pet. 3:2; 1 Cor. 7:2, 35-36; Job 31:1; Acts 24:24-25; Prov. 2:16-20; 1 Tim. 2:9; 1 Cor. 7:2, 9; Prov. 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 3:7; Prov. 31:11, 27-28; Prov. 5:8; Gen. 39:8-10.](#)



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Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 139. What are the sins forbidden in the seventh commandment?

A. 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 or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks; impudent [immodesty, contempt or disregard for others] or light behavior [foolish]; immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews [anger, grudges], and 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 or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancing, stage plays; all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.



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References for Q. 139

Prov. 5:7; Heb. 13:4; Gal. 5:19; 2 Sam. 13:14; 1 Cor. 5:1; Rom. 1:24, 26-27; Lev. 20:15-16; Matt. 5:28; Matt. 15:19; Col. 3:5; Eph. 5:3-4; Prov. 7:5, 21-22; Isa. 3:16; 2 Pet. 2:14; Prov. 7:10, 13; 1 Tim. 4:3; Lev. 18:1-21; Mark 6:18; Mal. 2:11-12; 1 Kings 15:12; 2 Kings 23:7; Deut. 23:17-18; Lev. 19:29; Jer. 5:7; Prov. 7:24-27; Matt. 19:10-11; 1 Cor. 7:7-9; Gen. 38:26; Mal. 2:14-15; Matt. 19:5; Mal. 2:16; Matt. 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:12-13; Ezek. 16:49; Prov. 23:30-33; Gen. 39:10; Prov. 5:8; Eph. 5:4; Ezek. 23:14-16; Isa. 23:15-17; Isa. 3:16; Mark 6:22; Rom. 13:13; 1Pet. 4:3; 2 Kings 9:30; Jer. 4:30; Ezek. 23:40.



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Consequences for Adultery:

1. Death – Lev. 20:10 ‘If there is a man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, one who commits adultery with his friend’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.’
2. Second Death – 1 Cor. 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Heb. 13:4 Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled, for the sexually immoral and adulterers God will judge.



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John Calvin on Exodus 20:14 and Deut. 5:18:

Although one kind of impurity is alone referred to, it is sufficiently plain, from the principle laid down, that believers are generally exhorted to chastity; for, if the Law be a perfect rule of holy living, it would be more than absurd to give a license for fornication, adultery alone being excepted. Furthermore, it is incontrovertible that God will by no means approve or excuse before this tribunal, what the common sense of mankind declares to be obscene; for, although lewdness has everywhere been rampant in every age, still the opinion could never be utterly extinguished, that fornication is a scandal and a sin. Unquestionably what Paul teaches has been prevalently received from the beginning, that a good life consists of three parts, soberness, righteousness, and godliness, (Titus 2:12;) and the soberness which he commands differs not from chastity. Besides, when Christ or the Apostles are treating of a perfect life, they always refer believers to the Law; for, as it had been said of old by Moses, “This is the way, walk ye in it;” 59 Christ confirms this, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,” (Mt 19:17;)



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John Calvin on Exodus 20:14 and Deut. 5:18:

and Paul corroborates it, “He that loveth another hath fulfilled the Law,” (Ro 13:8,) whilst they constantly pronounce a curse against all fornicators. It is not worth while to quote the particular passages in which they do so. Now, if Christ and the Apostles, who are the best interpreters of the Law, declare that God’s Law is violated no less by fornication than by theft, we assuredly infer, that in this Commandment the whole genus is comprehended under a single species. Wherefore, those have done nothing but betray their disgraceful ignorance, who have sought to be praised for their acuteness on the score of their ridiculous subtlety, when they admitted that fornication is indeed condemned with sufficient clearness and frequency in the New Testament, but not in the Law. For, if they had reasoned justly, inasmuch as God is declared to have blessed marriage, it must at once be concluded, on the contrary, that the connection of male and female, except in marriage, is accursed. This is the argument of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where he contrasts two opposite things; “Marriage (he says) is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”



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John Calvin on Exodus 20:14 and Deut. 5:18:

We have already explained why, under this word adultery, every impure lust was condemned. We know how unbridled was the licentiousness of the Gentiles; for, although God never suffered all shame to be extinguished together with their purity, still respect for what was right was in a manner stifled, so that they evaded the grossness of the sin by ribaldry and scurrilous jests. At any rate, the doctrine of Paul was by no means understood, that those who indulge in whoredom “sin against their own body.” (1 Cor. 6:18.)

Since, then, the minds of all men were stupified by indulgence, it was needful to arouse them by declaring the atrocity of the sin, that they might learn to beware of all pollution. Nor are unbridled lusts only here condemned, but God instructs His people to cherish modesty and chastity. The sum is, that those who desire to approve themselves to God, should be pure “from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit,” (2 Cor. 7:1;) nor can we doubt but that Paul in these words would interpret the law, as he elsewhere exhorts, “that everyone should possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.” (1 Thess. 4:4, 5.)



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Charles Spurgeon on Exodus 20:14:

These commandments take a far wider sweep than the mere words. “Thou shalt not kill” includes the doing of anything by which life may be shortened as well as taken away. It includes anger — every evil wish and every malicious passion. And “Thou shalt not commit adultery” includes every form of unchastity and impurity.



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Matthew Henry on Exodus 20:14:

“Our chastity should be as dear to us as our lives, and we should be as much afraid of that which defiles the body as of that which destroys it. This commandment forbids all acts of uncleanness, with all those fleshly lusts which produce those acts and war against the soul, and all those practices which cherish and excite those fleshly lusts, as looking, in order to lust, which, Christ tells us, is forbidden in this commandment, Matt. 5:28.”



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Thomas Watson on Adultery:

God is a pure, holy spirit, and has an infinite antipathy against all uncleanness. In this commandment he has entered his caution against it; 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The sum of this commandment is, The preservations of corporal purity. We must take heed of running on the rock of uncleanness, and so making shipwreck of our chastity. In this commandment there is something tacitly implied, and something expressly forbidden.

1. The thing implied is that the ordinance of marriage should be observed. 'Let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.' 1 Cor 7: 2. 'Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled.' Heb 13: 4. God instituted marriage in paradise; he brought the woman to the man. Gen 2: 22. He gave them to each other in marriage. Jesus Christ honoured marriage with his presence. John 2: 2. The first miracle he wrought was at a marriage, when he turned the 'water into wine.' Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and his church. Eph 5: 32.



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Thomas Watson on Adultery:

In marriage there are general and special duties. The general duty of the husband is to rule. 'The husband is the head of the wife.' Eph 5: 23. The head is the seat of rule and judgement; but he must rule with discretion. He is head, therefore must not rule without reason. The general duty on the wife's part is submission. 'Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.' Eph 5: 22. It is observable that the Holy Ghost passed by Sarah's failings, not mentioning her unbelief; but he takes notice of that which was good in her, as her reverence and obedience to her husband. 'Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord.' I Pet 3: 6.

The special duties belonging to marriage, are love and fidelity. Love is the marriage of the affections. Eph 5: 25. There is, as it were, but one heart in two bodies. Love lines the yoke and makes it easy; it perfumes the marriage relation; and without it there is not conjugium but conjurgium [not harmony but constant wrangling]. Like two poisons in one stomach, one is ever sick of the other. In marriage there is mutual promise of living together faithfully according to God's holy ordinance.



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II. The thing forbidden in the commandment is infecting ourselves with bodily pollution and uncleanness. The fountain of this sin is lust. Since the fall, holy love has degenerated to lust. Lust is the fever of the soul. There is a twofold adultery.

[1] Mental. 'Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart.' Matt 5: 28. As a man may die of an inward bleeding, so he may be damned for the inward boilings of lust, if it be not mortified.

[2] Corporal; as when sin has conceived, and brought forth in the act. This commandment is set as a hedge to keep out uncleanness; and they that break this hedge a serpent shall bite them. Job calls adultery a 'heinous crime.' Job 31: 2: Every failing is not a crime; and every crime is not a heinous crime; but adultery is 'a heinous crime.' The Lord calls it villany. 'They have committed villany in Israel, and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives.' Jer 29: 23.



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Thomas Watson on Adultery:

Adultery is sin against each Person of the Trinity –

The greatness of the sin lies in this: that it is a great dishonour done to God. God says, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery.' The adulterer sets his will above God's law, tramples upon his command, affronts him to his face; as if a subject should tear his prince's proclamation. The adulterer is highly injurious to all the Persons in the Trinity. To God the Father. Sinner, God has given thee thy life, and thou dost waste the lamp of life, the flower of thine age in lewdness. He has bestowed on thee many mercies, health, and estate, and thou spendest all on harlots. Did God give thee wages to serve the devil?



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Adultery is sin against each Person of the Trinity –

It is injurious to God the Son, in two ways. As he has purchased thee with his blood. 'Ye are bought with a price.' I Cor 6: 20. Now he who is bought is not his own; it is a sin for him to go to another, without consent, from Christ, who has bought him with a price. As by virtue of baptism thou art a Christian, and professes that Christ is thy head, and thou art a member of Christ; therefore, what an injury is it to Christ, to 'take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot'? I Cor 6: 15. It is injurious to God the Holy Ghost; for the body is his temple. 'Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you?' I Cor 6: 19. And how great a sin is it to defile his temple!

Read more from Watson on this topic here:

https://www.mountainretreatorg.net/classics/ten_seventh.html