

# Sermon 76, What Is Forbidden in the Seventh Commandment, Exodus 20:14

**Proposition:** The seventh commandment forbids all sexual sins against love, providence, and life.

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- II. Sins Against Love
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## **Introduction**

Dearly beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, we come this morning to the sermon you've all been waiting for: What is forbidden in the seventh commandment. All you have to do to see an instance of something forbidden in the seventh commandment is to walk around town, or turn on the television. We are surrounded by the breach of this one; we ourselves, and our fellow Americans, truly have eyes full of adultery and cannot cease from sin. In Hell, everything is pornographic and nothing is exciting. So says Peter Kreeft, and he is exactly right. Precisely because this commandment is so big, and we are so sexually broken, there are many ways to organize it. I have chosen to present it under the three headings of sins against providence, sins

against love, and sins against life. All of these sins, particularly in their sexual dimension, are violations of this commandment. And if, like me, you have broken this commandment many times, don't despair. God is a cleansing, forgiving God. Trust Him for salvation from sin, also from sexual sin.

### **I. Sins Against Providence**

The first set of sins against this commandment is this: Sins against providence. These are sins relating to the sex God has given you, in both senses of the word. Many people despair over being sexed male or sexed female. But far, far more despair over their marriage or their singleness. These, my friends, are not what we traditionally think of as adultery. But they are doubtlessly sins against providence, with a sexual dimension.

#### **A. Transgenderism**

The first of these is the obvious one, the one that the president has declared to be the civil rights issue of our time. Yes, I'm speaking about those people who used to be called transsexuals, but are now referred to as transgender or simply as trans. Here is the thing: God made us male and female from the beginning. That "sex assigned at birth" is not a tyrannical imposition from an angry obstetrician; it is a good gift from a loving Father who looked at you and said "You are my beautiful daughter" or "You are my manly son." To reject, regret, or to attempt to change through actions, clothing, surgery, hormones, etc. all of the things that make up the total package of your masculinity or femininity is a sin against the providence of Almighty God.

That is true even if you feel otherwise, have felt otherwise for a very long time (even your whole life), and even if people have told many times that you seem more like the opposite sex than your own.

To get a sex change surgery, to take cross-sex hormones, or to cross-dress is a sin against the providence of God that made you to be exactly who you are. Your feelings have nothing to do with it; God's word to you in nature is clear.

#### **B. Despair Over Singleness, Divorce, Widowhood**

But brothers and sisters, for every transgender person, there are many people who are stuck in despair over singleness. These people like their birth sex; they just wish they could find an opposite-sex partner. It could be that you have never been married, and you are getting tired of looking. It may be that you are divorced, even divorced against your will, and you consistently regret that loss. It may be that you are widowed, and you don't know how you're going to go on. Your marriage was the most meaningful thing in your entire life, and without it, you are at a loss.

Brothers and sisters, outrage and despair over singleness is a sin against God's providence. Maybe you are not getting any bedroom action and you wish you were. Your whole body might ache, either in the memory of it or the anticipation of it. I have been separated from my wife for 10 whole days, and it has been awful. I've missed her the whole time. I am not speaking to you as one who thinks that it would be easy to be single or widowed, never mind divorced! But though it's not easy, we are talking about the law here and what the moral requirements are. And the moral requirements are clear: If you're single, you may never have sexual contact or sexual intercourse or really any form of sexual gratification beyond flirting.

That's what the seventh commandment says. That is a hard place to live. But it is a good place to live, because its opposite is an evil place to live.

### **C. Bitterness Within Marriage**

Or you may be married, but also have a terrible or non-existent sex life. If that's the case, you may be bitter. In fact, of course, your bitterness against your spouse may well be the cause of your terrible sex life. But the fact remains: failing to love and cherish and sexually service one another due to sin is itself a sin. It is a sin against God's providence in pairing you with this particular person. Maybe she's fat and ugly. Maybe he's dirty and crude. There are lots of off-putting things about every human being, and if you let yourself focus on them I guarantee you'll wreck your marriage in a matter of months.

So in order not to commit adultery, in order to live chastely, you need to invest in the marriage or the singleness that God has given you. That is required in this seventh commandment against adultery.

## **II. Sins Against Love**

But sins against providence are not the only kinds of sin that arise from the breach of this commandment. The big half-dozen that I've listed here are all major breaches of God's command against adultery.

### **A. Adultery**

And with that, let me say that yes, the worst breach of this command requiring chastity is to violate your marriage covenant and have sexual intercourse with another married person. This, so-called "double adultery" that violates two marriages at once, is the worst kind of sexual sin. It is an awful, heinous, wicked sin. Obviously, you should not do this sin. Whether the adultery is heterosexual or homosexual, engaging in sexual activity with someone you're not married to when at least one of you is married is the definition of adultery. God hates this sin.

### **B. Rape**

A variant of adultery is the sin of rape, i.e., sexual violence that attempts to forcibly penetrate another person's body. This sin is a cross between murder, theft, and adultery. It is evil and heinous, and God hates it. He hates it even more when it is directed against a child. By the way, all of these sexual sins are wrong between consenting adults, and they are far more wrong when one of the partners is underage. Better for the child rapist to have a millstone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea than for him to face the wrath of God Almighty against his vicious crimes.

### **C. Fornication**

Fornication is properly sexual contact between unmarried consenting adults; though not so heinous as rape and adultery, it too is a wicked sin and one that no Christian has any business engaging in.

#### **1. Once or Repeated**

This sin can be a one-night stand, or a long-standing relationship called "shacking up" today or "concubinage" in the past. God does not care what the tax benefits are. He does not say "It's not

fornication if it's done to preserve health insurance and pension benefits." Sexual contact between unmarried people is a sin, whether they do it once or every night for thirty years.

## **2. One Partner or Many**

The same goes for the number of partners. Engaging in a twosome is wrong; how much more a threesome, foursome, or orgy of polysexuality! I think our culture has, to some extent, led us to believe that if some sexual practice is sufficiently perverse, then this commandment somehow no longer applies to it. Nothing could be further from the truth.

## **3. Bisexuality**

While homosexuality is not actually a particular class of sin under this commandment — rather, there is homosexual adultery and homosexual fornication, as well as sins of effeminacy on the part of men and false machismo on the part of women — I am going to take a second here to take a swipe at bisexuality. This increasingly popular category of “sexual orientation” (whatever that is) is a direct contradiction of God’s word about adultery. To say that one is “bisexual” is to say that fornication and adultery are not sins. It is to say “I am wired to need at least two partners, one of each sex. I am emphatically not content to keep myself to one spouse so long as we both shall live.” Bisexuality, in one sense, is a greater sin than fornication or adultery, because it is a philosophical justification of those sins. Plenty of fornicators and adulterers would agree that what they are doing is wrong, or at least not ideal. But the bisexual claims that it is right to commit adultery and fornicate because “that’s who I am.” In other words, like “queer,” “gay,” and other identity markers, this one in particular stands against all God’s commands regarding sexual faithfulness.

## **D. Pornography**

And now I find myself preaching against my own besetting sin. Brothers and sisters, I still remember the day I, as a thirteen-year-old, turned on the computer on Mom’s desk and went online to find a dirty picture. I found a picture of a woman lying on her back, wearing a shirt and combat boots but no underwear or pants. I saw a naked vulva and masturbated to it. I was hooked. I felt terrible. That whole day I lived under a cloud of guilt and shame. It was awful. We went to the farmer’s market in LaPorte that afternoon to sell our homemade bread. But I was just simultaneously in this cloud of guilt and titillation. I don’t have a clear memory of when I did it again, but I’m sure it was soon. Throughout the rest of my teen years, I lived a double life — eager, faithful Christian on Sundays and weekdays too, always in church, reading the Bible and praying every day, passionate about theological learning and evangelism and obedience to Jesus — and occasionally, a few times a week when the house was quiet and mom was gone, logging on (at first through dial-up) and finding some scantily clad women to masturbate to. The crazy thing is that I never got caught in the act. I was caught masturbating behind the door of my parents’ bedroom once, but never caught looking.

I told my mother at the age of 19 while she was cutting my hair. I was home from college for the summer, and she asked me point-blank whether I was using porn. I said yes, and the world stood still. It was one of the best days of my life. My parents surrounded me with love and care, and let me know that I was still their beloved son and they wanted to help me fight this sin.

I kept fighting with little success for the next decade and more. Every few weeks at most, I would return to the scantily clad, impossibly perfect women offered in so many corners of the Internet. The longest time away that I ever racked up was during my wife's pregnancy with our first children, twins. I think I stayed away for four months straight during that period. And then I was back after it.

If God had not had me in church, praying, and reading the Bible, I know this sin would have taken over my life completely. Even as it was, with extremely faithful church attendance (before Covid, I think I missed church fewer than ten Sundays in 30 years) I was still wrapped in the clutches of this beast.

In October 2020, I embarked on a new program of hard lockdown for all my devices. I cannot go on the Internet except to a whitelisted group of sites: Gmail, my bank, Google Drive. This has done more than anything else I've ever done to help. I've prayed and fasted weekly with my brother for a year; I've had my brother-in-law be my accountability partner and control my ethernet cable in my college days; I've prayed weekly with an older man (also during college) and with a fellow pastor more recently. By God's grace, I've seen some progress. I've also seen that I am far from perfect in this area even with such extremely strict controls. My most recent fall was to skim televised operas on YouTube for two hours, looking for sexy dancing and scantily clad singers. And yes, I found some, though I did not masturbate to it.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus said that whoever looks on a woman with lust has committed adultery with her in his heart. I have committed adultery with tens of thousands of women. In principle, I'm no different from a man I recently heard about who said he spends \$40 a pop on morning-after pills for all the women he sleeps with — and that he has to spend that amount 10-15 times per month.

So is pornography — written or visual material designed to be sexually stimulating and titillating — wrong? You bet. Every porn film ever made is simply crime scene evidence. Every dirty picture ever taken should be destroyed. Porn dehumanizes women and turns them into meat for male gratification. It's true. I know, because I've done it. Porn powers trafficking, rape, the illicit and secret filming of women, and more. It deadens relationships, destroys motivation, and makes people miserable. The federal government should ban pornography and grind into dust any ISP that allows it, any website that hosts it, any production or distribution company that sells it. And yes, it should fine the johns like me who are the end users for our first offense, and rapidly progress upwards from there. I personally would not object to a world in which the producers and marketers of porn films were crucified. That said, I would not prosecute porn stars because by and large, they were sexually abused as children.

Anyway, all that is to say that pornography is unspeakably evil. I know, because I've used it. Don't do it, brothers and sisters. And if you do, talk to me. We will help each other.

### **E. Fantasizing**

Sexual fantasies were a staple of my teenage years too. By the grace of God, getting married has almost entirely liberated me from these. What am I talking about? Simply sitting or lying somewhere (often bed) and imagining the very sexy things that you would do with an imagined

perfect partner. This too is a form of looking at a woman to lust — and even if it's an imaginary woman, it's still wrong.

#### **F. Masturbation**

The same goes for masturbation, which is the deliberate stimulation of your own sexual organs to produce a sexual climax. I can tell you right now that the orgasm produced by masturbating is nowhere near as powerful as the orgasm produced by giving your wife a good time. Of course, if you disagree with me, there is no way to compare your experience and my experience. The bottom line here is that your sexuality is for God and your spouse. Therefore, masturbation is a sin. You weren't given reproductive organs so you could flush your seed down the toilet (men) or stick dildos into your girl parts (women). You were given reproductive organs so you could (gasp) reproduce — something masturbation will never allow you to do.

So brothers and sisters, all of these sexual sins are forbidden. They are off-limits for the Christian. If you have sinned them, don't give up. But do go to Jesus for help and forgiveness. He will forgive you Himself, but He will most likely only help you through your brothers and sisters. Without them, you will never kill porn.

### **III. Sins Against Life**

Well, the sins against love, the various corruptions of sexuality that actually destroy human love (even, perhaps, in the name of love) are not the only sins covered by this commandment. It also forbids sins against human life. You see, sexuality is intimately (pun intended) related to reproduction. The two go together like male and female. There are two different kinds of sins against life that I want to cover in this sermon because they are violations of the seventh commandment.

#### **A. Contraception**

The first of these is contraception. Yes, I'm going there. So hang onto your hats, people. You don't usually get a science lesson in my sermons, but there's a first time for everything.

We are not going to get into the question of whether all contraception is wrong. I have my opinions on that; so do you and the pope. I simply want to point out to you that the most popular forms of contraception in this country are not simply "preventing pregnancy." They are, or can be, abortifacient. What that big word means is simply that they can and regularly do kill babies.

Most Christian couples, men and women alike, do not know this. But just to confirm it, I cleared this information with both of our in-house nurses at the local Women's Resource Center, where I volunteer.

##### **1. The Pill Is an Abortifacient**

Let's talk about the pill, as in the birth control pill, for a minute. The pill contains small amounts of estrogen and progesterone. Take one a day, and it will regulate your menstrual cycle to do two things: prevent the release of an egg, and make the lining of the uterus hostile to the implantation of a fertilized egg. Now, here's the thing: Does the pill prevent the release of an egg every single time? The answer is "Of course not." And thus, there is a chance that a sexually active couple will fertilize an egg every once in a while. Now, you believe that life begins at conception. There is no other coherent belief. But if life begins at conception, then that's a baby with human

rights in there. But you are taking the pill, and the pill's second stage of action is to make the uterus hostile to the fertilized egg so that it cannot implant. In other words, you are killing your child from time to time when you take the birth control pill. It's barbaric, it's evil, and it's something that Christian should not engage in. The pill may be as common among women as porn viewing is among men; neither one is acceptable for a Christian.

Now, you're probably wondering how often the pill might be an abortifacient. Different studies suggest that the pill prevents pregnancy 91-99% of the time. So that means that if you run 100 monthly cycles, you will most likely let an egg through on one of them. In other words, you're probably looking at something like a minimum of one abortion every ten years. You may consider that acceptable; the Ten Commandments and God Almighty do not.

## **2. An IUD Is an Abortifacient**

But this second method is certainly a complete disaster from a moral point of view. I'm talking about an intrauterine device, a small metal or plastic piece, sometimes dosed with hormones, that's stuffed into the uterus so that it cannot sustain a pregnancy. At least some versions of this make no effort at all to prevent ovulation. That means that if you're wearing this thing, you're still dropping an egg every month. Best case scenario, one of those eggs is getting fertilized once in a while, trying to go into the uterus, and getting ejected to die because the uterus can't sustain a pregnancy with that metal piece in there. Ladies, if you have worn an IUD at some sexually active point in your life, you may have been getting up to 6 abortions a year.

This is sickening. It is horrific. It is certainly hypocritical on the part of many Christian families to engage in this and then turn around and try to vote and talk pro-life — at least as hypocritical as yours truly preaching against lust and then going and looking at dirty pictures. Brothers and sisters, I need you to be clear on this: the pill and the IUD can and will cause abortions on a regular basis. Christian people should never use them. If you call yourself pro-life, then I beg you in the name of God: Do not use abortifacient birth control! That means do your homework. Find out what the birth control you're considering actually does. Don't assume that "It's not marketed as an abortifacient so it must be OK." That is what is popularly known as lying to yourself.

## **3. All Hormonal Birth Control Is Abortifacient**

The fact of the matter is that all hormonal birth control makes the womb a hostile environment for the fertilized egg. It is not appropriate for any Christian to take such birth control, because it will cause an abortion at some point.

### **B. Assisted Reproduction**

And, while I'm at it, let me denounce much of assisted reproduction and the basics of IVF as sins against God's law here as well. Natural revelation tells us, I believe, that IVF is not appropriate for human beings. But I am here to preach special revelation, and the three things I have listed here are utterly off-limits for the Christian.

#### **1. Generation of Extra Embryos**

IVF works by fertilizing a ton of eggs and then trying to implant a bunch of the strongest ones so as to beat the odds — because the odds are overwhelmingly that any particular try won't work.

It's like photography: since most photos are bad, I'll just take a thousand. There's got to be a good one in there. However, making a bunch of people who will spend their entire lives as frozen embryos and then be thrown out to die is not right. It is the sin of murder, the sin of playing God, the sin of taking God's gift of reproduction and turning it into a product we can purchase for ourselves. Talk about commoditizing something!

Cue the sad couples who say "But we are doing this for love. We want a little baby so much!" Bosh. I respect your misery, but it does not legitimize playing God. At most, you are allowed by the law of God to make only the embryos you can use. Every embryo you make needs to be given a chance at life.

## **2. Surrogate Pregnancy**

But the second thing that this commandment forbids is surrogate pregnancy, or any kind of "rent-a-womb" business. Besides the fact that this is slavery, and preys on poor women who need money, it is also a violation of the marriage covenant. The generation of this new life is something shared between me and my wife; farming the baby out to grow inside another mom for 9 months is a violation of that intimate marital union. The main people who are in favor of surrogate motherhood are entitled gay men. A moment's thought should show you this practice ought to be all kinds of illegal. It's not. It's perfectly legal in the US. But it's still heinous.

## **3. Bespoke Human Lives**

The final thing that we are against as Christians is any kind of bespoke human beings. This is a fancy name for slavery. Anyone who makes a designer baby, a test tube baby, a baby for himself and his gay lover, is nothing more than a slave trader. Rather than the gift of new life given through unreserved self-giving of two parents to one another, babies for gay dudes are new life stolen from its rightful parents and created, Frankenstein-life, for the gratification of slaveowners posing as parents.

Brothers and sisters, we've talked about a lot of sin. It's been a degrading sermon just to hear about this stuff. What now? If you're guilty, as we all are, go back to Jesus. He cleanses. He heals. Trust Him as your Lord and Savior, and fight sexual corruption with the power of His salvation. It's hard. But it can be done. I'm living proof of that. Amen.