

God's commandment – Do not commit adultery

What we can learn from the woman caught in adultery? Are we willing to give grace to a fellow sinner, or will we simply be the like Pharisees? This story opens with the scribes and Pharisees levelling a test at Jesus' feet. Jesus sat in the women's court of the temple, teaching the people. Seeking to entrap Jesus, the scribes and Pharisees burst into the women's court and threw a married (or betrothed) woman before Him. They "caught" her in the act of adultery and seized her. Consider the specific test they were putting forth: "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now the Law of Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" And now we press the question that is so rarely asked whenever this story is read. Who is this woman? The answer may surprise you. She's you. She's me, And she's us. We have all been "caught" in our sins. By the same token James said that if you break one commandment, you've broken them all.(James 2:10) That places all of us, men and women alike, on the same moral level. We have all sinned. If every Christian would have eyes to see this truth, we would humbly eliminate all self-righteousness from our hearts. In short, we are all made of clay; we all have the tendency to sin. With one devastating statement Jesus demonstrated that the Law wasn't wrong, but if everyone saw the Law for what it was, we would understand that we are *all* guilty. Including the self-anointed, puritanical (strict in moral or religious outlook), moral guardians known as the scribes and Pharisees ... and those who follow in their footsteps.

It's interesting that John 8 opens with a group of men wanting to stone a woman, and it ends with a group of men wanting to stone Jesus. When people's hypocrisy is exposed, the typical instinct is to kill the person who did the exposing. And that's exactly what Jesus did in this scene. Self-righteous men exposed an adulterous woman. A merciful prophet exposed the hypocrisy of religious leaders. It's hypocritical for sinners to want to harm other sinners because of sin. According to Jesus, only the guiltless could rightfully carry out such a righteous sentence of justice. Unfortunately, this same judgmental attitude lives in the hearts of many self-righteous Christians today. These are those who clearly see the evil in others while being blind to the evil residing in their own hearts. In the mind of God, righteousness and justice are grounded in grace. Whenever grace is removed, we are left with the heartless hypocrisy of Pharisaism. In this story, Jesus Christ didn't overturn the Law. Instead, He re-established righteousness on the basis of grace.

He essentially said to the woman, "Don't sin like this again." Not because she might be stoned. But because grace had rescued her—and she now possessed a new identity as a beautifully loved child of God. Jesus is the Prophet who is greater than Moses. While the Law demanded execution, Jesus re-established righteousness on the basis of grace. Don't misunderstand. Adultery is a grievous sin. Whether it takes the form of adultery, slander, or abusive words in a fit of rage, or jealousy, or gossip, or lying (pick your sin), God doesn't ignore it because sin harms the people He created. Yet a person who brings correction to those who hurt others ought to do it with no hint of self-righteousness in their hearts, knowing full well that they are equally fallen and capable of much worse(Gal 6:1-5) If a person lovingly confronts another human being using a Christlike attitude, they will experience more hurt by bringing the correction than the person they correct. Why? Because they know how clay-footed they themselves are. And because they are humble, they realize just how precarious they themselves are in living a holy life.

Grace ushers in forgiveness, but it also empowers us to walk in a new way. Holiness, then, is built on the experience of grace, not on the fear of the Law. He's in the business of saving and releasing us, while at the same time calling our sin for what it is: self-centeredness. As mere humans, none of us has the capacity to correctly judge the human heart. If you have received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you are set blessedly free from condemnation. Not only can you not be condemned, you can't even be indicted. Why? Because you are in Christ, and He's lawful. Because God has placed you in Christ, making you holy and blameless in His sight, Jesus has called you to a new creature life. A life no longer marred by sin, but baptized by grace—just like the woman caught in the act of adultery. Thus He says to you ... and to us ... Go and sin no more". I have written a new identity and a new future for you in the dust and dirt of this life. Keep your body *and* your mind from being unfaithful.

Why is adultery a sin? What does the bible say about adultery? God's commandments forbid adultery. "You shall not commit adultery"(Exodus 20:14) God ordained marriage at the beginning,(Matthew 19:4-6) To leave your spouse for another person, it is adultery in God's eyes. "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery"(Matthew 19:9) Adultery is not just physical, but can happen in your mind, with the internet, magazines, TV, movies, or people. "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart"(Matthew 5:27, 28) The Ten Commandments also forbid lust. "you shall not covet your neighbor's wife,"(Exodus 20:17) Adultery begins in the heart before it becomes physical. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies"(Matthew 15:19) Marriage is sacred. "for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous"(Hebrews 13:4) The path of the adulterer leaves ugly wounds and scars. "Can one walk on hot coals, and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbor's wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent"(Proverbs 6:28-29) What warning for committing adultery? "Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonor he will get"(Proverbs 6:32:33)

How can we avoid adultery?

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The Bible list of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. These two verses list nine fruits or results of the Holy Spirit at work in the life of an individual. But before this list is another list called the works of the flesh.(Galatians 5:19-21) This list describes characteristics found in an individual who is not being led by the Holy Spirit. The works of the flesh are important to understand because they represent major weaknesses that every Christian must overcome and remove from their life. This first work of the flesh focuses on one of the primary causes of divorce. Adultery includes lingering thoughts as well as actions, that are disloyal to one's spouse. It happens when marriage union seek sexual and emotional fulfilment outside the marriage. This work of the flesh destroys and makes what should be a fulfilling marriages relationship. To understand why adultery is so tempting, we first have to tackle some of the many lies that society has used to excuse unfaithfulness to one's marriage vows. It makes human beings out to be like animals with uncontrollable sexual urges. "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.(Colossians 3:5)

The key to preventing adultery is to both strengthen your marriage and be aware of the possible threats to marriage. Don't let others define your marriage. And use biblical instruction and guidelines! Marriage can provide the greatest possible human joy available to us. We can have the most fulfilling sexual relationship imaginable within marriage, *if* we work at it. Watch for early warning signs and *talk*. Adultery hides in secrets and temptations, and is often caused by greed. Anything that you consider keeping as a secret from your spouse is an automatic red flag that needs to be discussed. Many marriages are in trouble for lack of some basic, healthy boundaries. Despise and hate adultery because of its consequences. Adultery, whether in thought or deed, weakens and can destroy a marriage and a family unit. It also thoroughly degrades what God intends us to learn from the marriage.

2 Samuel 11-12 tells the story of how King David, committed adultery. No one is immune to the fleshly temptation of lust: We must never think we have reached a spiritual condition, where we can no longer be tempted to sin. We must always stay in a close relationship to God, so that He strengthens us to resist temptation. Stay in the will of God: "Second Samuel Verse 1 says that it was, "the time when kings go out to battle" However, where was David? He had stayed behind. Many times, we are most vulnerable to temptation when we have strayed out of God's will. Do not let sin dwell in your mind: As David was idly walking around on his roof, he saw a woman named Bathsheba bathing. Instead of turning immediately away, fleeing sexual immorality, and seeking the face of God, he lingered and let sin take hold of his heart. Once the sin in his heart had taken hold, he acted upon it, sinned with Bathsheba, and she became pregnant.(II Samuel 11:2-5) If we allow sin to linger in our thoughts it will inevitably take root. Do not try to cover up sin; repent and seek God's forgiveness.(II Samuel 11:6-13) David tried "clean up his act," to cover his sinful behavior and had her husband killed to cover his sin. Although David could have confessed and repented at this point, he try cover up. An important lesson to be learned from this is that one sin leads to another, sin often worse, if the sinner does not confess to God and repent of the sinful conduct.

Joseph was victorious over sexual temptation: Now Joseph was well-built and handsome, and after a while his master's wife took notice of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he refused. "With me in charge," he told her, "my master does not concern himself with anything in the house; everything he owns he has entrusted to my care. .. How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?" And though she spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go to bed with her or even be with her. One day he went into the house to attend to his duties, and none of the household servants was inside. She caught him by his shawl and said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his shawl in her hand and ran out of the house.(Gen. 39:7-12) How the devil will use people we come into contact with, to defile us, if possible, that is, if we yield to sexual temptation. Sooner or later, for many, a person like that evil woman, who might be more subtle, will try to seduce you. Pornography is a major source of sexual temptation and has led to broken homes, criminal acts and damned souls. Christians must stay on our spiritual Guard at all times. We are in a spiritual war! Sexual temptation can be powerful. David tried to gratify his sinful nature with no apparent resistance, while Joseph was Single when he had that Sexual Temptation. Joseph literally ran from sexual temptation and immorality to seriously resist sin. "Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body.(1Cor. 6:18

God will even forgive Adultery: 2 Sam.12:1-15 tells us that Nathan, confronted David with his sin. King David's heart was broken when he realized how he had sinned against God and grieved God's heart. David repented, asked for God's forgiveness, and was forgiven.(Ps51:4,17) Today, God offers that same forgiveness. God's grace is available to those who will humble themselves and trust in Christ as your Savior and Lord. When one comes to faith in Jesus Christ by confessing and repenting of sin, God is faithful to remove the guilt, shame, and future penalty that sin carried with it. Jesus has paid the price for our forgiveness by His death, burial and resurrection. God will freely pardon your sins and give you the power to overcome temptation, by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

One of the most common sins throughout the entire world is sexual immorality, it all began with sexual temptation, that the devil has been tempting people bringing pain and reproach, as well as *spiritual death* upon them. Christian is to *flee* from sexual immorality. Keep yourself pure! Don't covet what you do not have. Do not give the devil an opportunity. Guard the thoughts you ponder. Pray, find way back into God's presence thru broken heart and a humble spirit. Saturate your mind, meditate with God's word. Do not get drunk on wine, Seek God as your healer!

What is spiritual adultery?

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Spiritual adultery is unfaithfulness to God. It is having an undue fondness for the things of the world. Worshipping other gods, idols and in ways God hasn't called for. "For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols, and even sacrificed their sons whom they bore to Me, passing them through the fire, to devour them"(Ezekiel 23:37) Spiritually adultery is analogous to the unfaithfulness of one's spouse: "But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you, Israel, have been unfaithful to me," says the LORD.(Jer 3:20) God accuses Israel, of spiritual adultery because of their unfaithfulness to His covenant love.

The Bible tells us that people who choose to be friends with the world are an "adulterous people" having "enmity against God"(James 4:4-5) The "world" here is the system of evil under Satan's control (John 12:31; Ephesians 2:2; 1 John 5:19). The world system, with its contrived and deceitful scheme of phony values, worthless pursuits, and unnatural affections, is designed to lure us away from a pure relationship with God. Spiritual adultery, then, is the forsaking of God's love and the embracing of the world's values and desires (Rom 8:7-8; 2 Timothy 4:10)

Spiritual adultery includes any form of idolatry. In the Old Testament, the children of Israel tried to mix the worship of other gods such as Baal with that of God.(Judges 3:7;1 Kings 16:31-33; Jeremiah 19:5) In doing so, Israel became like an adulterous wife who wanted both a husband and another lover.(Jeremiah 9:2; Ezekiel 6:9) In the New Testament, James defines spiritual adultery as claiming to love God while cultivating friendship with the world. The person who commits spiritual adultery is one who professes to be a Christian yet finds his real love and pleasure in the things that Satan offers. For believers, the love of the world and the love of God are direct opposites. Believers committing spiritual adultery may claim to love the Lord, but, in reality, they are captivated by the pleasures of this world, its influence, comforts, financial security, and so-called freedoms.

The concept of spiritual adultery against God is a major theme throughout the Old Testament (Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:20; Ezekiel 16:15-19). This theme is illustrated especially well in the book of Hosea. The prophet's wife, Gomer, symbolizes the adultery of the children of Israel (Hosea 2:2-5; 3:1-5; 9:1) God commanded Hosea to go and buy back his errant wife out of slavery and restore her as his wife! What a picture of God's love for His wayward people! Hosea's commitment to Gomer symbolizes God's faithful, patient love with His erring people.

Jesus said, "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other"(Matthew 6:24). The Bible exhorts us, "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world"(1 John 2:15-16). "As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance. But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: 'Be holy, because I am holy'(1 Peter 1:14-16). Spiritual adultery is like trying to straddle the fence with one foot in the world and the other heaven. We cannot have both. The love of the world is primarily an attitude of one's heart, and we can cast away worldliness by cultivating a new affection. To avoid spiritual adultery, "set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"(Colossians 3:2)

Don't Be Deceived! "But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.(2 Cor. 11:2-4) Apostle Paul had just compared the church to a virgin, "For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as a chaste virgin* to Christ" The mention of this seems to have suggested to him the fact that the first woman was deceived and led corrupted by the tempter, and that the same thing might occur in regard to the church which he was so desirous should be preserved pure. We all know the account of how the serpent(here refers to Satan) deceived Eve. He told her lies to get her to doubt God's word. He twisted the commands of God a little to make it seem unfair. And finally, he flat out denied the punishment. Eve bought the lie and ate the forbidden fruit. That Satan had seduced, thus demonstrating that the most holy ones were in danger of being led astray by temptation. Satan adapts his temptations to the character and circumstances of the tempted. Hence, all should be on their guard. Through his subtlety tempter always employs cunning and art to accomplish his object. The battle that is going on is for control of our minds.

If Satan can control our minds, everything else will follow. The mind is corrupted when the affections are alienated from the proper object, and when the soul is filled with unholy plans, and purposes, and desires. Paul was afraid that they would lose this beautiful simplicity and artlessness of character and manner; from simple and single-hearted devotedness to Christ, from his pure doctrines; from that simplicity of mind and heart; from simplicity in dress and manner of living; from the simplicity in worship which the Lord Jesus commended and required. The goal of Satan's deception is to keep people from worshipping God. Every pastor should be concerned that his flock will be enticed away from the truth. Beware of Satan's deception which is designed to lead us from devotion to Christ. To resolve conflicts, turn from all spiritual adultery and humbly entreat God's grace. Submit to God, resist the devil, and repent of all your sins. Stop judging others and submit to God's Word. If we are single minded focused on Christ, then we will be devoted to Him and want to worship Him and give Him the glory for everything. "Beware, lest your hearts be deceived and you turn away and serve other gods and worship them"(Deut.11:16) Though people are deceived and worship false gods, there will be no excuse for them on the Day of Judgment.