

“RESPECT FOR MARRIAGE”

Exodus 20:13

INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness of the Seventh Commandment is like a sparkling jewel shining its light on the special covenant relationship that God intended for himself with his own people. This relationship is compared to a marriage of mutual love and faithfulness. It highlights the idea of the permanence of the relationship undergirded by the dual concepts of love and covenant. God's intention was this his people be like a “virgin bride who gives herself willingly, and exclusively to her husband (Jer 2:2) and thereby becomes his delight” (Is 62:5).

Yahweh is pictured as the caring, jealous protector, a God who fights against other gods when his people exhibit the behavior of an unfaithful spouse, forsaking the one and only true God for worthless idols. Like a loving, jealous husband, Yahweh does not tolerate his people whoring after other gods, for in doing so they are committing adultery just like a woman who is being unfaithful to her husband (Jer 3:6-9; Hosea 2-3).

The marital bond as the pristine focus of man and woman connected is the most dynamic of all human relationships is symbolized by the covenant bond between God and humankind. Adultery is the violation of the unique marriage relationship just as spiritual adultery (idolatry) is a violation of the covenant of love and fidelity that Yahweh has with his people. In the Hebrew Bible the frequency of the prohibition of adultery is second only to idolatry. Adultery was considered to be a deplorable sin, not only against the people involved, but against God as well. David's wretched cries expressing tearful repentance over his act of adultery bear this out: “Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned” (Ps 51:4).

-Taken from The Perfect Ten by Michael G. Moriarty

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think about the last movie you saw. What perspective towards sex did that movie promote?

Read Exodus 20:14 and Matthew 5:27-30

2. Read these verses and try to come up with a biblical dictionary definition of “adultery.”
3. What is God's design for marriage? (Consider the concept of “covenant”) How does God's design differ from the world's understanding of marriage?
4. In today's culture, more than half of all marriages will end in divorce. Why would this statistic undoubtedly grieve the heart of God? Is divorce ever permissible?
5. As we understand God's design for marriage, how does this commandment have relevance in our opposite gender relationships?
6. The previous commandment showed us how hate is the pathway to murder. In the same way, lust is the pathway to adultery. (Note that “lust” for men tends to physical and sight oriented while for women it tends to be more emotional/attachment oriented) Read the following verses and try to glean some helpful principles, lessons, and applications.
 - 1 Thess 4:3-8
 - Ephesians 5:3-7
 - Mark 9:47
 - 2 Timothy 2:22
 - Genesis 39:9
 - Psalm 119:9,11
 - Job 31:1
 - Philippians 4:8
7. How are we to understand and apply Jesus' words in v.29-30?
8. What are some things that convicted you today?