



BULLEEN BAPTIST CHURCH

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SERIES : "10 DUMB WAYS TO MESS UP OUR LIVES"

November 27, 2005 Study 7 : "Not Taking Our Vows Seriously"

INTRODUCTION

TO THE SERIES

10 Dumb Ways To Mess Up Our Lives a fresh look at the 10 Commandments (See Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5) Note that they are not the Ten Suggestions! They are not arbitrary religious rules. They are not outdated curiosities that belong to an ancient and less sophisticated society. Whilst their introduction has a specific context, the 10 Commandments are not bound to a particular culture or time or nation.

They continue as the basic moral laws of creation for all people. If followed, they produce a healthy society by fostering proper relationships with God and with others. If ignored, they produce a mess in both our individual lives and our society as a whole.

Our task in this series is to understand what they mean and how to follow them in our lives and circumstances.

TO TODAY'S STUDY : *You shall not commit adultery.* Ex20:14

Let us define the word; the act of adultery is a married person having sex with someone other than their marriage partner.

The focus of this command applies to the marriage relationship. That it is the only sexually based sin in the 10 commandments does not mean that it is the only sexual sin! The NIV uses the words "sexual immorality" instead of the older translation "fornication." (eg. ICor6:9,13) as a term for sexual sins in general.

We will address these three questions in this study:

1. Why the stress on the marriage relationship?
2. What Does a healthy marriage look like sexually?
3. Guarding against Adultery.

A. WHY THE STRESS ON THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP?

1. MARRIAGE IS A COVENANT ... a DELIBERATE, CONSIDERED, COMMITTED relationship.

This was also the type of relationship between God and the people of Israel

Know that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who maintains covenant loyalty with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations. Deut7:9

Israel was to treat covenant agreements SERIOUSLY and recognise that a destruction of TRUST leads to the destruction of the relationship.

2. MARRIAGE IS A SYMBOL OF A GREATER RELATIONSHIP

We are familiar with the idea of marriage as a symbol for the relationship between God and his people in the NT :

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ... husbands should love their wives as they do their own bodies ... no one ever hates his own body, but nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church. from Eph5:25-32

We are less familiar with the same use of the symbolism in the OT :

Have you seen what she did, that faithless one, Israel, how she went up on every high hill and under every green tree, and played the whore there? for all the adulteries of that faithless one, Israel, I had sent her away with a decree of divorce; yet her false sister Judah did not fear, but she too went and played the whore committing adultery with stone and tree. Yet for all this her false sister Judah did not return to me with her whole heart, but only in pretence, says the LORD. Jer3:6-10

Israel was to take seriously ALL covenant relationships. Faithfulness to spouse and faithfulness to God are built on the same ethical foundation.

3. THE NATURE OF THE MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

A man is to leave his parents and "cleave" to his wife. (Gen2:24) Although biased toward the male in its setting in Genesis, the same is equally true for the wife. The parent / child relationship is secondary to husband / wife.

C6 declares the sacredness of human life. The PROTECTION of marriage follows in C7 - This is the priority human relationship after God. Nothing is more essential for the health of family, community and nation than that the relationship from which all others grow should be protected at its core.

B. A HEALTHY MARRIAGE, SEXUALLY.

Many believe that the Bible is obsessed by issues of sexual sin; in fact, that all aspects of sexuality are sinful! We take a moment out to stress that the real teaching of the bible is that sexual sin is so wrong because healthy sexuality is so right and that great harm comes from its abuse.

1. FOUR GENERAL PRINCIPLES

1. God created us as sexual beings and gives his blessing to intercourse. (Gen1:28) Our sexuality is basic (intrinsic) to our HUMANITY and a reflection of God's IMAGE in us. (Gen1:27)
2. Marriage is a gift from God to be received by us with THANKSGIVING. (1Tim4:3-4)
3. The WONDER and BEAUTY of sexual love is freely expressed. Eg. SoS 1: 1-4; 3:1-16
4. Older lovers are encouraged to REJOICE in the "partners of their youth"; to ENJOY each other and be CAPTIVATED by their love. (Prv5:18 -19)

2. FOUR SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES from 1Cor7 :2-5,

1. FAITHFULNESS : *"each should have his own husband / wife"*
2. PROVISION : *"fulfil marital duty (NIV) ("conjugal rights" NRSV) to each other"*
3. AVAILABILITY : *"the bodies of a husband and wife belong to each other."*
4. HARMONY : *"don't deprive each other except by mutual consent & for a short time"*

NOTE : each marriage partner is equal - both husband and wife have the same rights and responsibilities. For Christians, there are no biblical grounds for either neglect or abuse.

C. GUARDING AGAINST ADULTERY

1. HUMILITY : Never think, it can't happen to me.
2. CULTIVATE your relationship, in all its aspects, with your spouse
3. RUN : Never fight, when you can run. *"Flee from sexual sin"*. 1Cor6:18 See also Gen39:1-12
4. SENSITIVITY : Never ignore God's early warning system; your conscience. Learn to recognise and act on the first signs of conviction (guilt). If your conscience tells you "this is not right," listen!

A DUMB WAY TO MESS UP YOUR LIFE? Broken trust destroys relationships. It can be costly to our reputation, our honour, our families, our physical and mental health and our finances.

Can the mess be "unmessed?" Yes. Never easily, but yes. How?

The same way any wrong is righted. Accepting responsibility, asking for forgiveness, work at re-establishing trust.

Check out the Jer3 reading again. God is a "divorced spouse" through adultery and longs that his "wife" should *"return with a whole heart."*

God knows us completely; in him there are the resources and power so that our lives and relationships may be healed - not only for the one who has acted wrongly, but for those caught up in the resulting pain.