

# AM Exodus 20:1-21 "You shall not commit adultery"

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, our scripture reading this morning is taken from the book of Exodus and chapter 20. For those of you who are visiting, we have been, when I've been coming down to speak, we've been going through the Ten Commandments, and we come to Commandment 7 this morning and Commandment 8.

Commandment 7 we find in verse 14 of Exodus 20 that says, You shall not commit adultery, and that's what we're going to look at this morning.

And then this evening, God willing, we'll look at verse 15, the Eighth Commandment that says, You shall not steal. These Commandments come to us.

Moses is at the Mount Sinai, and he has, or is receiving these Commandments from God. We're going to read from verse 1, as we've always done, down to verse 21.

And I'm reading from the English Standard Version. Hear the word of God. And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

[ 1 : 18 ] You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in the heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male servant or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day.

[ 2 : 45 ] Therefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and made it holy. Remember your father and your mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbour's.

Now when all the people saw the thunder, and the flashes of lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood afar off and said to Moses, You speak to us, and we will listen.

But do not let God speak to us, lest we die. Moses said to the people, Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.

[ 3 : 54 ] The people stood afar off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness, where God was. Amen, and may God bless the public reading of his word this morning.

Now before... Now if you have your Bibles, can you turn back with me to the book that we read a moment ago in the passage, in Exodus chapter 20.

And as I say, we're going to look at this commandment, that we have in verse 14. Just these five words, in the English version it says, You shall not commit adultery.

Two things, that it's said, that the church rarely publicly, talks about, are sex, and money. For different reasons, they are deemed embarrassing subjects, touchy subjects.

And yet we live in a world, I'm sure you'll agree, that is obsessed, obsessed, with both, of these things. In preparation for this, I googled two words.

[ 5 : 11 ] I googled the word, sex, and I googled the word, God. Sex came up, returned, 4.3 billion times.

Biblical God, came up, 176 million times. I'll do the maths for you.

It tells us that, 2.5 million times more, people, or material, is available, about sex, than it is about, the God, of the Bible.

Sex is very much, on people's minds. And surprisingly, and surprisingly, for many people, they might believe, contrary to this, that the Bible has, much to say, about, sex.

We're coming this morning, to look at this, seventh commandment, in verse 14, you shall not, you shall not, commit adultery. This commandment, as with all the commandments, we have seen, was given, primarily to, the people, of God.

[ 6 : 33 ] The Christians, of their day, the people, of Israel. But we've also seen, that the commandments, these ten commandments, are given, for all people, as God's design.

Now this seventh, commandment, that we're going to look at, comes on the second, tablet, of God's law. We saw the last time, that the first, tablet, of God's law, Moses was given, two tablets, and we looked at that, the last time.

But if we assume, that the first tablet, contains, the first four, commandments of God. They are to deal, they deal with, those first four commandments, deal with, our relationship, with God.

And then when we come to, commandments five, down to ten, they actually deal, with our relationship, with our neighbours.

And our neighbours, when the Bible uses, the word neighbour, it doesn't just mean, the person living, next door to you, it means every other, single person, that you and I, interface with, in our lives.

[ 7 : 49 ] So the first, tablet focuses, on our obligation, to God. We are to worship, God alone. We are to respect, his name. We are to respect, the way, to worship him.

And we are to, respect his day. We saw that, already. When we come to, the second tablet, the focus moves, as it says, onto our relationships, with the people, that we interface with, each day of our lives.

The Lord Jesus, summed that relationship up, and said, that the law of God, hangs on these two commandments, love the Lord, your God, and the second, your neighbour, as yourself.

So we are, when we come to, the second tablet, of God's law, we have already seen, that we are to respect, authority, commandment number five.

We are to respect, life, do not murder, that was commandment six, we saw the last time. And now in commandment seven, and eight, which we will look at today, we are to respect, sexual purity, and we are to respect, people's property.

[ 9 : 07 ] Commandment seven, and commandment eight. Now as we come to, commandment seven, there is so much, that we could say about this, and we could probably be on, commandment seven, for a number of weeks, but we'll try to cover, the material this morning.

I want us to look, at three things, about, commandment seven, if, allowed. First of all, I want us to think about, the seriousness, of this seventh command.

Secondly, I want us to think about, the spiritual nature, of this command, number seven. And then I want us, thirdly, if time permits, to think about, the safeguards, the safeguards, that we can put in place, in our lives, to ensure, that we don't commit, this sin.

So the seriousness, of the seventh command, the spiritual nature, of the seventh command, and then the safeguards, against this sin. Then firstly, the seriousness, of this, command.

Why does God, focus, his people's attention, on this prohibition? He, could have said, Moses, could have recorded, the words, do not commit, fornication.

[ 10 : 30 ] That's an, all encompassing, term, that the Bible uses, for a variety, of sins, and it would have, covered, this sin, of, adultery. So why, does God, single, this sin, adultery, out, in commandment, seven.

The reason, that this sin, is so serious, is because, it is, the sexual sin, that intrudes, into, or violates, the marriage, relationship.

It is, the sexual sin, that intrudes, into, the institution, and the covenant, of marriage. Now, what is it, what does it, mean to, commit adultery?

The simple answer is, that adultery, is marital, unfaithfulness. It is strictly, defined, as a sexual, relationship, between, a married man, and a woman, who is not, his wife.

Or, between, a married woman, and a man, who, is not, her husband. In other words, the two people, or the two persons, involved, in adultery, are not married, to each, other.

[ 11 : 56 ] And at least, one of them, is married, to somebody else. And so, adultery, is a specific, form, of sexual, immorality, that directly, violates, the marriage, bond, or covenant, or union, between one man, and one woman.

And we'll see, some of that, as we go. So the primary purpose, the primary purpose, of this command, is actually, to protect, marriage.

But the second purpose, involved, is to remind us, and it might not be, absolutely, obvious, but it's to remind us, that sex, and sexual relationships, find, their rightful place, only, within marriage.

Now there are many, other sexual sins, that the Bible outlines. Sex, before marriage, for example. But adultery, is the most serious, of sexual sins, because it violates, the trust, between a husband, and a wife, a married couple, and the sexual purity, of that, relationship.

And in 2022, today, in Dumfries, we need to remind, ourselves all, that marriage, was instituted, and ordained, by God, himself, back, at the start, of creation.

[ 13 : 41 ] It is a creational, ordinance, instituted, by God. It wasn't man's, idea.

It's not to be, amended. It's not up to us, as human beings, to amend. what a, biblical marriage, is. It was God, who said, that it was not, good, that man, should be, alone, back in the garden, in Genesis. Adam, and Eve, two, literal, historic people, were brought, together, by God.

Eve, was presented, to Adam, as a wife, or as a bride, is always presented, to her husband, in the marriage ceremony, that we, operate today.

Eve, was brought to Adam, as a bride. Adam, and Eve, were joined, together. They were married. They were married. And the Bible, tells us, that they became, one, flesh.

[ 14 : 54 ] flesh. We often, talk, about, our partners. But actually, when the Bible, talks about marriage, it doesn't talk about, a partnership.

It talks about, two people, becoming, one, flesh. And that's why, the Bible, has much to say, about, anything, that would, tear, that, marriage, apart.

Because the two people, when they're married, become, one, flesh. There was a physical, union, between, Adam, and Eve.

And there was a spiritual, union, between, Adam, and, Eve. And when we come, to the New Testament, and Christ's, teaching, on marriage, and divorce, Christ himself, reinforces, and rubber stamps, the fact that, marriage is God's idea, and there's a covenant, relationship, that should be, protected, at all, costs.

If you have your Bibles, can you turn with me, to Matthew chapter 19, and verses 4, through to 6, so that you see, what I'm saying is, hopefully not just, my ideas, but comes, from the word of God.

[ 16 : 19 ] Matthew 19, and verse 4 to 6, the Pharisees, are trying to catch, the Lord Jesus, out again, the religious leaders, and the scribes, and the religious, intelligentsia, of his day, are trying to catch him out, and the Pharisees, in verse 6, come up to him, and, they tested him, by asking, this question, is it lawful, to divorce, one's wife, for any cause?

They're talking about divorce. And he answered, have you not read, in the Bible, in the scriptures, that he who created them, from the beginning, made them male, and female, and said, therefore, a man shall leave his wife, the father, and his mother, and hold fast, to his wife, and the two, shall become, one flesh.

So they are no longer, two, but one, flesh. What therefore, God has joined together, let no man, separate.

The marriage bond, in other words, is so serious, that it's likened, to the bond, that exists between, God, and his people, between Christ, and, his church.

And so, when God's people, sinned, and were unfaithful, to God, the terms, that God used, in the Old Testament, so often, was that they had committed, spiritual adultery, because they had, separated themselves, from that, covenant relationship, that God had, has with, his people.

[ 18 : 12 ] You see, God has, covenanted himself, to his people, and he expects, us, to give, ourselves, unreservedly, and wholeheartedly, to him, alone.

And that's why, the very first, commandment from God, says, you shall have, no other, gods, before me.

He wants that, sole relationship, with, his people. You know, if you've been to, a marriage ceremony, you'll know, that, there is, certain words, that so often, are said, at a marriage ceremony. The notary, asks the man, George, in this case, George, for example, do you take, this woman, to be your wife?

To live together, in holy matrimony. To love her, to honour her, to comfort her, and to keep her, in sickness, and in health, forsaking, all others.

[ 19 : 23 ] for as long, as you both, shall live. Can you imagine, if, the bridegroom said, yes, I do, except for, Annie.

Can you imagine? Can you imagine? There has to be, an unequivocal, wholehearted, devotion, to, our spouses.

The seriousness, of marriage, or the seriousness, of the sin of adultery, is reinforced, because, marriages, are the relationship, that God has designed, to build his, society.

Now I know, in any congregation, and throughout life, I'm speaking, I'm speaking, by and large, about marriages today. People, who are not married, can equally, be in covenant, and are equally, in covenant, with God.

But we're specifically, addressing, the subject, of marriage, today. Marriage, relationships, are foundational, to an ongoing, society.

[ 20 : 48 ] And adultery, is an attack, on the foundations, of God's, society. That is how serious, it is. It was God, who told Adam, to, cleave to his wife, so that they, could be fruitful, and multiply.

Now, sex, within marriage, is celebrated, not only, for, the procreation, that can come, from the marriage, but sex, within marriage, is to be enjoyed, also.

It's to be developed. And it's in order, to protect, that joy, that God, has given us, this, commandment.

Sex is good, in its rightful, place. And its rightful, place, is, solely, within, marriage. You see, in committing adultery, men, and women, try to extract, that sexual activity, and that sexual, enjoyment, outside, and away, from marriage.

And they do that, for selfish, motivations, and gratification. And so, adultery, is a serious, attack, on God's, institution.

[ 22 : 23 ] And it seeks, to destroy, actually, the foundation, bricks, that God, has laid, for society. Now, I've labored, that point, because, we live, in a society, where, marriage, is under, attack.

It is devalued, and we're, surrounded, by the wreckage, by and large, of people, deciding, to jettison, the idea, of a biblical, marriage.

So, that's the seriousness, of the commandment. Secondly, I want us, just quickly, to think about, the spiritual nature, of this, command.

Do not commit, adultery. When we looked, at the commandment, about murder, and not to murder, we saw, that Christ, took that command, and warned, that murder, was an act, of the heart, even, if we did not, actually, commit, that physical, act, of murder.

And so, in like manner, and in like fashion, the Lord Jesus, says, and we'll look at the verses, in Matthew chapter 5, Christ has taken, adultery, and he points again, to the root cause, of adultery.

[ 23 : 47 ] It comes from, our hearts. Turn with me, if you will, to Matthew 5, in verse 27 to 30, to see this. Matthew 5, verses 27 to 30.

The Lord Jesus, again, on the Sermon on the Mount, is expounding, the law of God, and he's saying, you have heard, verse 27, you have heard, that it was said, you shall not, commit adultery. He's referring back here, to Exodus, and to Deuteronomy, chapter 5. He says, you have heard, that it was said, you shall not, commit adultery, but I say, to you, that everyone, who looks, at a woman, with lustful, intent, has already, committed adultery, with her, in, his heart.

Then he goes on, to say these things. He says, if your right, eye, causes you to sin, tear it out, and throw it away, for it is better, that you lose, one of your members, than that your whole body, be thrown into hell.

And if your right, hand offends you, causes you to sin, cut it off, and throw it away, for it is better, that you lose, one of your members, than that your whole body, go into hell.

[ 25 : 14 ] What the Lord Jesus, is saying then, in the Sermon on the Mount, is that our hearts, your heart, my heart, and my mind, and your mind, are the battleground, of temptation.

In Matthew 15, verse 19, the Lord Jesus, says these words, and we looked at these before, a very critical passage, he says, for out of the heart, come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, and slander.

He actually covers, all the commandments, virtually in there. Yeah? We're looking at, commandment seven. It's there. Out of the heart, comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, and then as we shall see tonight, theft.

And he covers off, commandment eight, and commandment nine, and commandment ten, as we shall see. But the sin, of adultery, what he's saying, the sin, of adultery, has its roots, in our heart. That's where it starts. Our hearts, all of our hearts, naturally, are inclined to sin. We have that bias, to go away from God, and to go towards sin, and indulge sin.

[ 26 : 48 ] And that temptation, the Lord Jesus says, comes through what we see, initially. But it's what we do, with what we see, that can lead to the sin.

It's when we look, that verse says, with lustful intent, that there is a problem.

The Apostle James tells us, these words, he says, that each one of us, is tempted, when he is drawn away, by his own desires, and enticed.

Then when desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is full grown, it brings forth death. You see, when temptation comes to us, there's nothing wrong, with temptation itself.

But when we yield to it, and when we, in the words of James, are drawn away, by it. When we see temptation, when we look, as the Lord Jesus says, with lustful intent, and when we don't turn away, that's when the problem, starts.

[ 28 : 26 ] You see, most adulterous relationships, don't start with sex. They start within our hearts. And then a growth process, begins to take place.

You think of, the archetypal, adulterous relationship, in the Old Testament. That would be, between David, and Bathsheba.

You remember David, and we could spend a whole, sermon on this itself. But David, he looked down, from a balcony, on a woman Bathsheba.

And he saw her bathing. And instead of, turning away, averting his eyes, David took the lust for her, into his heart.

And there his wicked desire, was conceived. You see, David allowed that look, to grow into lust.

[ 29 : 31 ] And it gave birth to sin. And sin led to more sin. And before he realized, what was happening, his sinful passions, and desires, had taken over.

And were driving him. And he was out of control, at that point, with lust. And it was like, a runaway train, in his life.

And he couldn't put, the handbrake on, at that point. You see, he looked, and he liked, when he saw Bathsheba.

And it should have stopped there. Shouldn't it? But he lingered. And then he lusted. And he had lost it, at that point.

And that's what sin, and temptation does. It starts small, but it grows. And before you know it, in your own life, if you're anything like me, you're then out of control.

[ 30 : 44 ] And it has taken over. Your passions, and your emotions. You see, David's glance, as somebody said, became a gaze.

He looked her up and down, thinking what he could have, and what he could do. You see, it's all so different, or it should be all so different, in marriage, shouldn't it?

Marriage should be, and is intended to be, about love. About sacrifice. About duty. About care. Not so with David.

He didn't say, I love you, Bathsheba. What he said was, I love me, and I want you. That's the difference, between love and lust.

And you know, the thing is that, when it comes to ourselves, we think, don't we, that we know ourselves.

[ 31 : 54 ] We know our limits. We think. And we can control our emotions. We think. And we control our passions. But our hearts, the Bible says, are desperately wicked, and deceitful, and unfathomable, the Bible says.

And it's easy to get out, of control. You see, this command, do not commit adultery, is not just addressing, the physical act, of committing adultery.

It's got, it's not just addressing, the outward action. It's addressing, our inward thoughts, and our hearts, and our lusts, and our passions. It covers the desires, of our heart, and the deeds, of our body.

And we are forbidden, to lust. And giving into lust, the Bible says, is like, playing with fire. And the writer, to Proverbs, says these words, can a man, or a woman, scoop fire, into his lap, and his clothing, not be burned?

So we've looked, at the seriousness, of adultery, that it intrudes, upon God's covenant, of marriage. We've looked, at the spiritual nature, of it, that adultery, starts within our hearts.

[ 33 : 20 ] No matter, what age we are. No matter, what age we are. But finally, and we'll try, to be quick with this.

What are the safeguards? What are the practical things, that we can put in place, in our lives, so that we do not, fall into, this sin? As I said, most adulterous, relationships, don't start with sex, but they start, in the heart.

And therefore, as Christians, we are to be careful, about, our hearts. The psalmist, says, that we are to, guard our hearts.

Because out of it, are the issues, of life. What does he mean? We guard our eyes, we guard our hearts, I submit to you, by guarding our eyes.

What we look at, what we watch, what we read. We live in a very, visual age, don't we?

[ 34 : 21 ] We are bombarded, by images, and advertising, and material, that is, that, that, offers, all, gratification, to us, if only we will do, and give in to it.

It's incessant, around us. It's difficult, to watch a TV program, without, seeing sex. It is idolized, it's promoted, everywhere.

So we guard our hearts, by, guarding our eyes. Job says, that he made, a covenant, with his eyes, an agreement, with his eyes, not to do, certain things, not to watch, certain things, for us.

And that's why, the Bible says, if your right eye, we've read that, if your right eye, causes you to sin, tear it out, and throw it away. That's what we call, spiritual, mortification.

Put it, to death. Stop it. Turn the telly off. Do not watch, what's on your computer. Stop looking, at the wrong things.

[ 35 : 30 ] Kill sin, in your life. Or as one of the Puritans, says, be ever killing sin, or sin, will be killing you. Put it to death.

Therefore, secondly, practice godly disciplines. Be faithful in prayer, in Bible reading, in fellowship, in service to others.

Practicing these godly disciplines, will go a long way, in protecting you, from the sin of adultery. You see, we can't go into it, because time's gone, but David, shouldn't even have been, on the balcony. He should have been out, serving, with his fellow soldiers, but he was idle. And he was back, at the palace, and he should have been fighting, when kings go to war.

He shouldn't even have been there. David should have been at war, when he was caught out. He should have been serving others, and not himself.

[ 36 : 39 ] And that's why the Bible says, watch that you enter not, into temptation. Thirdly, commit by God's grace, to marital faithfulness.

In other words, remind yourself, of the vows that you took. If you're married, perhaps you need to, renew, your commitment, in that area.

Or at least, remind yourself, of your vows. And if you're not married, and you're here, you can commit yourself, to keeping sexually pure, until such a time, as you may get married.

That's what Joseph, in the Old Testament, did, wasn't it? When he was, tempted by Potiphar's wife. Listen to these words. He had risen, to a great height, in Potiphar's household, and his wife, liked the look of him, and wanted to commit adultery, with him.

She was a married woman. He wasn't. And Joseph's words to her, where no one is greater, in this house, than I am. My master, has withheld nothing, from me, except you.

[ 37 : 55 ] Because you, are his wife. How then, could I do, such a wicked thing, and sin, against, God?

Adultery, is, not only a sin, against your neighbour, but it's a sin, against God. Fourthly, seek to meet, each other's needs, if you're in a marriage.

If you're married, seek to meet, each other's, physical, and emotional, and spiritual, and sexual, needs. Don't neglect, your spouse.

Because that could lead, to temptation, in other areas, for them. Fifthly, be honest with them. Be honest with each other.

don't hide, don't hide things, from each other. If you're, if you establish, a pattern, of hiding, little things, from your spouse, you're setting yourself, up, for hiding, bigger things, later on, which could lead, to the sin, of adultery.

[ 39 : 08 ] And then finally, perhaps, well, perhaps most importantly, flee, temptation. Don't you, see, how far you can go, in a certain situation.

Peter thought that, in the New Testament. Oh, I can handle temptation. It'll be okay. I'm up to it. I'm spiritually, mature enough. I can go into that situation, and I can handle it.

No, you can't. And he didn't. And he fell. As soon as you know, that you are in, an inappropriate conversation, or a compromising situation, like Joseph was, with Potiphar.

He fled. He got out of there. He didn't wait about, and think, well, you know, hmm. He fled. And the apostle, tells us, to flee, temptation, and to flee, youthful lusts, that are not confined, just to youths. He didn't linger there, thinking that he could handle it. It may be, that you have, fallen in this area, and you've sinned in this area, and you've committed adultery, maybe physically even, if not in our minds, as the Lord Jesus says.

[ 40 : 39 ] But I have to say to you, this morning, as I would say to myself, it's not, the good news is, that it's not the unpardonable sin. And there is forgiveness, as we said, as we sung, in our psalm, with God.

And God calls us, as sinners, as he did, the woman, who was caught in adultery, in John 4, in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus said to her, as he would say to us all, those of us who have fallen in this area, go, and sin, no more.

Repent, because there is forgiveness, with our Father. Now, I've laboured, and I've gone, way over my time this morning, but, the seriousness of this sin, is that, it attacks marriage.

There is a spiritual aspect to it, it comes to us all, what we watch, what we look at, what we read, what we open our minds to. Our heart, gravitates towards those things.

So let's, guard our hearts, by what we watch. And then, hopefully I've given you, some things to, just, allow us, to, safeguard, against, this sin.

[ 42 : 10 ] We're surrounded by, this, everywhere. And we need to cleanse, our hearts, and we do that by, godly, discipline.

So let's commit to doing that. Whether we're married, or whether we're not married, applies to us all. May God help us to do so, for his name's sake. We're going to sing, then, in closing, the hymn that, verse my ex rodzica, after my heart, we will seren from you.

So let's go ahead, a\*\* of my heart.