

“Seventh Commandment”

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BIG SANDY, Texas—At our Bible study on Wednesday night, I continued with our series. The topic is the Ten Commandments. The presentation was titled “Seventh Commandment.”

I decided to discuss five main concepts in the presentation—and to quickly mention a sixth concept at the end of the study. (The scriptures that I briefly mentioned about the sixth concept at the end of the presentation are included in this article.)

Foundational scripture

■ Exodus 20:2—“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

Then, the Lord proceeded to remind the children of Israel about the Ten Commandments.

Old Testament lesson = After God delivered them from Egypt, He reminded them of His expectations from them.

New Testament lesson = When God offers His bountiful grace to New Testament disciples, He still has expectations of them (Romans 6:1-2, Ephesians 2:8-10 and Titus 3:4-8).

Seventh Commandment

■ Exodus 20:14—“You shall not commit adultery.”

Old Testament history of polygamy and concubines

■ Genesis 4:19—Here is the first mention in the Bible about a man having two wives—Lamech took for himself two wives.

■ Genesis 22:22-24—Here is the first mention in the Bible of the word *concubine*—Nahor (the brother of Abraham) and his wife had eight sons, and Nahor and his concubine had four sons.

According to *Strong’s Concordance*, the Hebrew word for concubine is *pileges* (*Strong’s* No, 6370), which is described this way: “Concubine, a female consort generally with lower status and fewer rights than a wife, with the function of giving social status

or pleasure to the husband; [at one place] this refers to a woman's male consorts (Ezekiel 23:20)."

- Ezekiel 23:20—"For she lusted for her paramours . . ."—Paramours is defined in *Oxford Languages* as "a lover, especially the illicit partner of a married person."
- Genesis 29:16-30—Jacob had two wives —Leah and Rachel.
- Genesis 30:3—Rachel gave Jacob her maid Bilhah to give birth to Dan.
- Genesis 30:7—Rachel gave Jacob her maid Bilhah again to give birth to Naphtali.
- Genesis 30:10-11—Rachel gave Jacob her maid Zilpah to give birth to Gad.
- Genesis 30:12-13—Rachel gave Jacob her maid Zilpah again to give birth to Asher.
- Judges 8:30—Gideon had 70 sons, because he had many wives.
- 1 Kings 11:1-2—Solomon loved many foreign women, including from nations of whom the Lord said: "You shall not intermarry with them, nor they with you. Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods."
- 1 Kings 11:3—Solomon had 700 wives and 300 concubines, and his wives turned away his heart.

New Testament history teaches monogamy

- 1 Corinthians 7:2—Each man should have his own wife and each woman should have her own husband.

Old Testament discussion about adultery

Bible students are aware that much of the Old Testament writings in the Torah were written toward a male perspective.

- Leviticus 20:10—If a man commits adultery with another man's wife, the adulterer and adulteress were both put to death.
- Leviticus 20:11—If a man lies with his father's wife, both of them shall be put to death.
- Leviticus 20:12—If a man lies with his daughter-in-law, both of them shall be put to death.
- Leviticus 20:13—If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them shall be put to death.

At this point in the Bible study, I diverted away from the Old Testament to make a quick comment about homosexuality and lesbianism. We know that the New Testament says that the wrong thoughts people have would be viewed the same as wrong actions (Matthew 5:28). However, I wanted to acknowledge that I congratulate people who are celibate—people who will battle wrong thoughts and feelings

that are within their mind as they avoid the behavior that they believe the Bible denounces.

Here is an interesting scripture to consider about that idea.

■ Matthew 19:12—Some people were eunuchs from birth, some people were made eunuchs by people, and some people were eunuchs by their choice as they moved forward toward the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now, back to the Old Testament comments about adultery.

■ Leviticus 20:14—If a man marries a woman and her mother, it is wickedness and all three shall be burned with fire.

■ Leviticus 20:15-16—If a man or a woman mates with an animal, the person and the animal shall be put to death.

■ Deuteronomy 22:13-19—If a man makes a false accusation about a new wife's virginity, he shall be fined 100 shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife for the rest of his life (with no access to divorce).

■ Deuteronomy 22:20-21—If a man makes a truthful accusation about a new wife's virginity, she shall be stoned to death.

■ Deuteronomy 22:22—If a man commits adultery with a married woman, both of them shall die.

■ Deuteronomy 22:23-24—If a man is accused of sexual assault with an engaged woman while they are in a city, both shall be stoned to death—since they were in a crowded area, she could not claim sexual assault.

■ Deuteronomy 22:25-27—If a man is accused of sexual assault with an engaged woman while they are in an isolated area, only the man dies—since they were in an isolated area, she could claim sexual assault.

■ Deuteronomy 22:28—If a man sexually assaults a virgin, he shall give the father 50 shekels of silver and be forced to marry the lady—not being permitted to divorce her all his life.

New Testament discussion about adultery

■ Matthew 5:27— "You have heard: 'You shall not commit adultery.' "

■ Matthew 5:28—"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her had already committed adultery with her in his heart."

■ 1 Corinthians 7:3-5—Romantic love in marriage should be by mutual consent.

Here is an important reminder—God got a divorce

Since the God of Israel got a divorce, people should not be quick to judge a divorce.

■ Malachi 2:16—"The LORD God of Israel said that He hates divorce."

■ Jeremiah 3:8—"Then I saw that for all the causes for which backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce."

May a divorced person marry again?

As I reached the conclusion of my time for the Bible-study presentation, I quickly mentioned the following scriptures.

■ Deuteronomy 24:1-4

■ Matthew 5:31-32

■ Matthew 19:3-10

■ 1 Corinthians 7:6-9—When Paul wrote to the unmarried, he gave his opinion (which ended up in the Bible)—"I say this as a concession, not as a commandment."

■ 1 Corinthians 7:10-11—When Paul wrote to the married, he gave a command from the Lord—"I command, yet not I but the Lord."

■ 1 Corinthians 7:12-16—When Paul wrote to the rest (those living with someone who "does not believe"), he gave his opinion (which ended up in the Bible)—"I, not the Lord, say."