

Exodus 20:14 – The seventh commandment: adultery

Is a fish “free” when it lives within the sea, or when it escapes the sea and comes up on the shore? Within the sea, it is free to live the way God made it; on the shore, it will suffocate and die. God's commands are the “boundaries” within which we have true freedom. Outside of them, we become slaves of sin leading to death. Now we are studying the seventh of the ten commands, about adultery.

1. Families are from God

“Adultery” is when a man or woman is unfaithful to their marriage. It is when they break God's law for families. God designed and gave us the gift of sexuality and family life. He made Adam, and then made Eve for him to be joined with. He told us that we leave our parents and are joined in one life with our spouse (Genesis 2:24). If we choose to go a different way, then this is a sin. To step outside of God's pattern is rebellion. We can see the results of disobedience in the world; children without two parents, wives who are not provided for, street children, abandoned babies, the pain of jealousy and rejection, and horrible diseases. We cannot rebel without sad consequences.

2. Families are crucial in God's plans

We enter the world through families. In our families, we should learn about authority, about brotherhood and about service. It should be our first nursery and our first school. Jesus came into the world in a family, honouring the planned marriage of Mary and Joseph. He submitted to them (Luke 2:51). He honoured marriage when he attended the wedding at Cana (John 2:1-2). We must honour them too; our own marriage, and our neighbours' marriages. No school or government or village or clan can replace the family home.

3. How this command must be kept

This command forbids all sexual activity outside of a marriage. It forbids unfaithfulness in marriage, sex before marriage, divorce, polygamy, homosexuality, incest, bestiality and all such sins. These sins defy God and God will judge (Hebrews 13:4). We must avoid them. Our duty is also to love our neighbour. We must be careful in how we talk, how we dress and how we behave. Be careful what you allow your family to watch on television and be influenced by. Pay attention to your proper work; “the devil makes work for idle hands”. Jesus taught us that we must be pure in our thoughts (Matthew 5:27-30); this is where sin starts, at the roots. Watch your heart carefully!

4. The good news of someone who makes us clean

There is no-one who is clean in God's eyes. He knows our thoughts, words and deeds. He sees all our secret filthiness. The good news is that there is someone completely pure and faithful; Jesus Christ, the Son of God. On the cross, he was punished for all the uncleanness and filthiness of all of his people. He makes us new, gives us a new start and new life. He died to make us his bride and clothe us in pure white, and show us his love and faithfulness forever. Turn to him!