

Name: _____



Advanced Bible Correspondence Course
Lesson 41A: The Law of God - Seventh Commandment

Q. 108. WHAT DOETH THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT TEACH US?

ANSWER: THAT ALL UNCLEANNESS IS ACCURSED OF GOD (A); AND THAT THEREFORE WE MUST WITH ALL OUR HEARTS DETEST THE SAME (B), AND LIVE CHASTELY AND TEMPERATELY (C), WHETHER IN HOLY WEDLOCK OR IN SINGLE LIFE (D).

**(A)LEVITICUS 18:28; (B)JUDE 23; (C)I THESSALONIANS 4:3-5;
(D)HEBREWS 13:4, I CORINTHIANS 7:7**

Holy matrimony

God also protects marriage. One of the most marvelous wonders which God has left for man after the fall, as a flower from lost Paradise, is marriage. It may well be considered as a softening of the pain of the punishment that God imposed on man and woman after the fall. Although Jesus Himself was not married, He also highly honoured marriage as an institution of God. He performed His first miracle at a wedding feast (John 2).

In a good marriage, love between man and wife can grow to a very rich and tender relation. That is a wonderful comfort in all the difficulties of life.

God repeatedly uses the very marriage as an image of the relationship between Christ and His church. The Song of Solomon, in the Old Testament, describes married life, also in the affectionate and tender physical communion of husband and wife, with a view to the affectionate relationship between God and His people. Paul wrote: *“For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church”* (Ephesians 5: 31-32). And to John on Patmos heavenly bliss is described as the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

On the other hand, God compares unfaithful desertion of Him and the serving of idols with adultery and fornication (Jeremiah 3:1).

These images clearly show how highly God esteems marriage. The Catechism therefore speaks appropriately of holy wedlock. This holiness applies to everything pertaining to husband and wife living together in their family. The family ought to be holy; that is, to be kept separated from sin. But this holiness extends itself also to the intimate intercourse. Paul wrote: *“Marriage is honourable (this means virtuous) in all, and the bed undefiled.”* (Hebrews 13:4). Sanctified by prayer, the marital union can be enjoyed as an expression of deepest mutual love, as a tender, holy gift of God. Sexuality as such is a holy gift of God, who created man as male and female, also in their physical distinction: *“Male and female created He them”* (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, marriage is called an institution of creation.

Marriage threatened

Marriage is being threatened. By what? First of all, by all kinds of indecency. The images mentioned in the books of Jeremiah and of Revelation make it clear that adultery is a very serious sin, which leads to much disruption. Therefore God in His holy law has condemned adultery as a violation of the married state. With this we must not only think of the act of adultery. Christ said: *“Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart”* (Matthew 5:28). Therefore God condemns all uncleanness in thoughts, words, gestures, and deeds. We must be enemies of this sin and are called to live in a chaste and modest manner. This chastity or modesty does not mean prudishness, where all thoughts and talk about sexuality are forbidden. No, the word “chaste” or “modest” is an indication of a pure, clean life, also in the enjoyment of love, after the principle of God’s law.

The physical aspect in marriage

According to God’s institution the intimate, affectionate union of man and wife is only allowed within the marriage state of husband and wife: *“Thy desire shall be to the husband”* (Genesis 3:16). All other forms of sexual expression are thereby condemned as sin against God’s law. This applies to all sexual relations before marriage and outside of marriage, as well as sexual relations between men together or women together.

To the worst degeneration of the heathen peoples in Canaan the extramarital and homosexual relationships belonged, which were even encouraged in worshipping their idol Astarte, the goddess of fertility, during their religious festivities in and around their temples. These abominable sins were a temptation for the people of

Israel. Therefore God gave the command that all those people must be destroyed. The country was to be a holy country, in which the people of God must live holily, separated from sin and from the temptation to sin.

Homosexuality

Paul condemns all forms of homosexuality as a sign of complete degeneration in a culture in which God has been abandoned, a degeneration which has very serious consequences in regard to health. He even states that sins in this particular area are a punishment for abandoning God. The man who continues to refuse to serve Him, God gives over to sin, with all its devastating results. Here we think of venereal diseases and, in our time, of AIDS. Paul writes: *“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves. (...) For this cause God gave them up to vile affections: for even their woman did change the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet”* (Roman 1:24, 26-27).

In connection with this it is necessary to point out the difference between feelings of erotic attraction to for people of the same gender and the expression of these feelings in sinful acts. The first situation could be a matter of disposition or the result of disorders in the psychical development; although it must also be said here that this development can be the result of the influence of a degenerate culture, which in the name of extreme tolerance accepts all manner of sin. God did not create man in this way: *“So God created man in His own image in the image of God created He him: male and female created He them”* (Genesis 1:27).

The homosexual disposition is a serious psychological handicap, just like other psychical and bodily handicaps. It must not be viewed as a punishment upon a personal sin, but must be seen as a result of the fall in Paradise, by which the image of God has been marred. Each of us carries the scars of the fall in Paradise.

Both homosexuals and heterosexuals are called upon to fight against their sinful inclinations. Also in view of their situation, Christ says to them: *“Take up the cross and follow Me”* (Mark 10:21). He, who in faith, by grace, seeks refuge in the all-atoning blood of Christ and to the Spirit of God, who renews the heart, receives strength for this warfare. For such a homosexual, there is room in the kingdom of God and one day he will be delivered from all his sinful inclinations and will again perfectly reflect the image of God. However, in God’s Kingdom, there is no room for the homosexual and the heterosexual who do not repent.

Questions:

1. What shows clearly that God esteems holy matrimony so highly?

2. Is sexuality bad or something inferior? Why not?

3. When, according to God's commandment, may the gift of sexuality only be used?

4. Why is homosexuality not permitted?

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: *"Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come and his wife hath made herself ready."* – Revelation 19 :7.

We want two things to take us to heaven; *a title to it*, and *a meetness for it*. Our only *title* to heaven is the blood and righteousness of the Son of God – that blood which "cleanseth from all sin," and that righteousness which "justifies us from all things from which we could not be justified by the Law of Moses." Nothing unclean or defiled can enter heaven. This is God's own testimony: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, nor maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). But besides the title, there must be also a *meetness* for this heavenly city, according to the words of the apostle: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Colossians 1:12). Whilst here below, then, we must learn to sing some notes of that joyous anthem which will issue in full, uninterrupted harmony from the hearts and lips of the redeemed in the realms above, when that glorious company will every cry, "Alleluia ! Salvation and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God." If we are to sit down among those blessed ones who are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb, not only must we be "arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," but we

must have had “the kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans 14:17) set up in our hearts.

Taken from: "Ears from Harvested Sheaves" by J.C. Philpot