

Name: _____



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

Uncleanness within marriage

There can also be made mention of uncleanness with married life. This happens when intimate marital intercourse is no longer an expression of a tender mutual love, but only serves to gratify one's own sexual lusts. It is a form of uncleanness not outside but inside of the marriage, which destroys many marriages, often without the outside world noticing that anything is wrong. The wife is then often the victim of her husband, who abuses his authority over his wife, whom God has given him. Then this authority is not used to lovingly protect the woman as God commanded: *"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour to the wife, as unto the weaker vessel"* (1Peter 3:7). The authority of the man over the woman is then being abused in an egoistic self-love and lust. What a hidden sorrow this can be, especially for many married women!

Intercourse before marriage and living together without being wedded

Intercourse *before* marriage is also in conflict with God's commandment. Marriage is a God-given form of social life which can only be dissolved by death. God wants to protect this marriage through His commandments. Only within marriage does He want to be room for the most tender and intimate communion between *one* man and *one* woman. This is not to take place within a relationship which can still be dissolved because there is not yet any sort of legal bond of matrimony which obliges to unbreakable faithfulness.

Any form of living together before marriage is therefore also in conflict with God's law, even though the government sanctions this form of living together legal. God also protects marriage and marital bliss with this commandment.

Christian sexual instruction

Of great importance is Christian upbringing where questions and problems in this area can be discussed in an open and honest way. Parents who are uncomfortable with this can make good use of Christian literature about the perception of sexuality. Reading this material together as parent and child can sometimes create an opportunity for good conversations.

An upbringing is inadequate in which these questions and discussions are under taboo. Forbidden fruit always tastes good. It arouses the senses to an unhealthy curiosity, that leads to seeking gratification in a way and through means which are not in accordance with God's holy law, such as: experimenting with one's own body in the form of self gratification, sinful contacts, even in secret or open conversations with others and unwarrantable literature. An open, honest and healthy instruction, in which God's Word and prayer together have a place can prevent, with God's blessing, much sin and psychological damage. The same applies to the reading of Scriptures, praying and open discussion together of young couples in the days of courting and engagement. By these means young couples can be strengthened in the struggle against sin and learn to wait for the time God gives them to express their most tender feelings in marital union.

Dissolving of marriage

Marriage can only be dissolved through death or adultery. Paul wrote: *"The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord"* (1Corinthians 7:39). An illegal divorce and a second marriage after an illegal divorce are adultery and forbidden by God in the seventh commandment.

However, sin also affected marriage, so that a situation can arise where one of the married couple is not to blame for the divorce where the other party has committed adultery or where a man leaves his wife or a wife her husband due to the fact that the latter became a Christian and the first one refuses to live any longer with him or her. Then the adulterer and deserter is guilty and not the other party, and therefore the non-guilty spouse is free to marry again. Paul says: *"If any brother have a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which has an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. (...) But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases"* (1 Corinthian 7: 12-13, 15)

Marriage with an unbeliever

If one of the two married persons becomes a Christian and the other one remains a heathen they are permitted to live together as a married couple. However, this does not imply that it is permissible to marry a non-Christian ! In His Word, God says in no uncertain terms: *“Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?”* (2 Corinthians 6:14)

As a motive for such a marriage, it is said that possibly in this way an unbeliever can be brought to conversion. However, then they underestimate the power of unbelief and they willingly and knowingly expose themselves to temptation to sin and unbelief. Practice also teaches that such marriages often fail or lead to apostasy. Paul said: *“God hath called us to peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? Or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?”* (1 Corinthians 7: 15-16).

The church may never permit an illicit marriage. Neither must she solemnize a marriage ecclesiastically that has been by the civil government but which is not allowed by Scripture. However, if the legal authorities have performed such a marriage, the church is not required (unless it is a same-sex marriage) to press for dissolution and renewal of the original marriage, because such a separation is also adultery. Then such a marriage must be recognised after confession of guilt has been made.

Questions:

1. *When is there abuse of sexuality within marriage?*

2. *In what situations may a marriage be dissolved through divorce?*

3. *Why is having intercourse before marriage not allowed?*

Evaluator: _____

Meditation: *I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.* (Romans 7:9).

Would you read the best experience of a true believer in Christ ever written? I believe it is here in this chapter. Try your own: judge of others by this. If we are taught by the same Spirit, our experience will answer to that of Paul in the following particulars:

A sense of *sin* will be revived in the conscience, which no human palliatives or lulling opiates can any longer hush to silence. You will so see, and be sensible of its dread and terror, that you will confess yourself to be totally destroyed by it, and that your case is desperate.

This is effected by *the law*, “for by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20. “When the commandment came” – that is, when the purity and spirituality of the holy and perfect law of God comes into your heart and conscience, then you see that it requires truth and perfection of obedience in the inward parts as well as in the outward life. You see you have it not: you find it impossible for you, a sinner, to fulfil God’s holy law.

Then you *die*: you become as a dead man. Seeing the exceeding sinfulness of sin in you, and the dreadful curse of the law hanging over you, all hope of life forsakes you. Sin and the law live within you; they pierce your soul to the quick. The law adds strength to sin. You can no longer flatter yourself that your state is good, that you can do any thing to bring yourself upon good terms with God; you have now done with all works of righteousness to that end; you can have no more hope from your obedience to the law, than from your transgressions against it: you see sin in all that you are, and in all that you do.

But the hand of the Comforter is in all this. His loving design is to bring you to live by the faith of the Son of God. Instead of looking to your own righteousness, and living by it, you are to live wholly and solely upon His life and by His righteousness. But while “alive without the law,” and striving to fulfill the law, you overlook Christ, slight His righteousness, and think it better to trust your own than His. Now the Spirit keeps alive sin and the law in you for this very purpose, to make you wretched in self and happy in Christ. All experiences that do not effect this are vain. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. Romans 10:4

Taken from: "A Spiritual Treasury for the Children of God" by W. Mason