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Do Not Commit Adultery

5: 18

Do not commit adultery DIG: This mitzvah has to do with purity. Why is adultery treated so prominently and given such severe punishment in the TaNaKh? How was it viewed as an attack on the nation's relationship with ADONAI? How is sex like fire? What is the difference between love and lust? How can you tell the difference? How is adultery related to idol worship? How did Yeshua restate the seventh mitzvah?

REFLECT: Have I been unfaithful to my spouse? Am I involved in pornography? Are lust and a wandering eye affecting the relationship with my mate? Do I take that second look? Am I conscious of what I am looking at? Am I aware that others, co-workers or family members, are following my eyes? What is my witness in this area?

The reason this mitzvah is regarded as such a serious offense is because it most closely parallels our relationship with God. The sin of adultery uniquely strikes at the heart of a committed relationship, and thus, opens the door to spiritual adultery with ADONAI.



You shall not commit adultery (Deuteronomy 5:18). Adultery was clearly a very serious offense in ancient Isra'el. **The mitzvah** that supports **the seventh mitzvah** made it a capital offense for both parties involved (**Leviticus 18:20, 20:10; Deuteronomy 22:22**). The prophets attack it as a social evil (**Hosea 4:2;**

Jeremiah 7:9, 23:10; Ezeki'el 18:6ff, 22:11, 33:26; Malachi 3:5), and use it as a metaphor for **Isra'el's** spiritual **adultery** (see the commentary on **Jeremiah, to see link click [At - Unfaithful Isra'el](#)**).

Now all human societies, including **Isra'el's** ancient Near East neighbors, have sanctions to protect whatever marital arrangements are customary there. But why was **adultery** treated so prominently and given such severe punishment in the TaNaKh? The nature lies in the nature of **the Ten Words** (see **Bk - The Ten Words**), in which this **mitzvah** is combined with the central importance of the family in **Isra'el**. As moderns, we have difficulty understanding this context of the family and society because we have largely consigned **adultery** to the realm of private morality. In **Isra'el**, however, **adultery** was anything but a private concern. **Adultery** was a crime against **YHVH** inasmuch as it was a crime against the relationship between **God** and **His people Isra'el**. Any attack on the stability of the family unit was a potential threat to the nation's relationship with God.¹⁷⁴

You shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).

The body is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body. God raised up the Lord, and He will raise us up too by His power. Don't you know that your bodies are parts of the Messiah? So, am I to take parts of the Messiah and make them parts of a prostitute? Heaven forbid! Don't you know that a man who joins himself to a prostitute becomes physically one with her? For the Scriptures say: The two will become one flesh; but the person who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

Therefore, **run from sexual immorality (see Genesis 39:12)! Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the fornicator sins against his own body. Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who lives inside you, whom you received from God? The fact is, you don't belong to yourselves; for you were bought at a price. So use your bodies to glorify God (First Corinthians 6:13-20 CJB).**

We live in a **sex**-saturated society today. Sins that used to be kept in the dark are now flaunted in public. Our sense of shame has been replaced with brazen defiance. Norms that used to be accepted are now being challenged; people living abnormal lifestyles now want to be accepted as normal. **Sex** sells everything today. It is in every industry, all the time, year after year, day after day, every minute, every second. We cannot escape it. Like Lot in Sodom and Gomorrah, we are swimming in

an ocean of **sexual** excess and perversion while trying to stay clean. **Sex** crimes are at all-time highs, while infidelity, divorce, and perversion are now commonplace. We are obsessed with **sex** to a degree perhaps never seen before in the world.

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** that **Your** love is better than life (**Psalms 63:4**) and better than the love of anyone else. **God** says to **Isra'el**, **For your Maker is your husband - Adonai-Tzva'ot is His Name - the Holy One of Isra'el is your Redeemer. He will be called God of all the earth. (Isaiah 54:5)**. In the B'rit Chadashah scriptures Paul writes to followers of **Yeshua**, **"For I betrothed you to one husband, to present you to Messiah as a pure virgin" (Second Corinthians 11:2b)**. Praise you that everyone has a fantastic lover- **You!** May we never take **Your** love for granted for **You** have said, **"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord!' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21)**. **"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who sees the Son and trusts in Him may have eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day." (John 6:40)**. May we love **You** back with more than mere words; but with actions that show our trust of **You** is with our whole heart for we desire to use our money, our thoughts and our time to **Your** glory. **You** are wonderful! In the name of **Your** holy **Son** and the power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

We have the seventh **mitzvah** exactly because **sex** is **God's** idea. Your generation didn't invent **sex**. **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh (Genesis 2:24)**. The **mitzvah**, **"You shall not commit adultery,"** is **God's** response to our obvious abuse of **His** great gift of **sexuality**. **He** recoils at the thought of a woman leaving her home in the middle of the night to sleep with her neighbor's husband. **He** is disgusted at prostitution. **He** is angry with the teenager who seeks to satisfy unrestrained lust. The seventh **mitzvah** is **the LORD's** desire to protect us from ourselves.

ADONAI approves of **sex** within the confines of a marriage. **Adultery** is the abuse of this great gift. Like fire, it can be used for good or it can destroy. Fire in my fireplace can be a good thing. It warms my family and can cook our food. But fire in my living room can destroy both my house and my family. The same can be said for **sex**. Within the confines of marriage **sex** is a good and godly thing. But outside of marriage it can destroy your family. When Paul wrote the church at Corinth he reminded them that **since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband**

should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of sexual self-control (First Corinthians 7:1b-5).

When **Yeshua restated** the seventh **mitzvah** in **Matthew 5:27-28**, **He** broadened it, just as **He** had the sixth, to include thoughts. **You have heard that it was said, "Do not commit adultery." But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.**

Looking at a woman lustfully does not cause a man to commit **adultery** in his thoughts. **He** already **has committed adultery in his heart**. It is not lustful looking that causes the sin **in his heart**, but the sin **in his heart** that causes lustful looking. The lustful looking is but the expression of a **heart** that is already immoral and adulterous. The **heart** is the soil where the seeds of sin are embedded and begin to grow.¹⁷⁵ The point that **Yeshua** made is this: the fact that you may not follow through and act upon your thoughts does not make you guiltless.

*The Biblical standard is simply this: you shall not lust in thought, word, or deed. Faithfulness to your marriage partner is mandatory. This is the believer's ethic of **sex**. You may not agree with it. The world certainly doesn't like it. You may choose to reject it. But as a believer, you cannot repeal it or revise it.*

The word **adultery** comes from the Hebrew word which means *adulteration*. The term was first used when **the Israelites** were worshiping idols, thereby *adulterating* the true worship of **God** with godless idols. They had perverted that which was originally pure and clean. That's what **adultery** is. It is when we wipe our feet on the pure and clean love that **God** has given us. When we understand this deeper meaning of **adultery**, faithfulness and commitment in marriage makes sense; anything else seems unreasonable.¹⁷⁶

What does **the** seventh **mitzvah** have to say to those who are not married? The New Covenant uses the term **adultery** to refer to **sex** outside of marriage. It uses a different word for **sex** between two unmarried people: **sexual immorality (First Corinthians 5:1, 10:8; Galatians 5:19; Ephesians 5:3)**. And the prohibition against **sexual immorality** is just as strict as it is against **adultery**. Many unmarried people today believe that they are in love, but they are actually in lust.

Once the **sex** starts, they cannot tell the difference. **Sexual immorality** refers to premarital relations and **adultery** refers to extramarital relations, but the message is exactly the same. If you have no discipline in your **sex** life *before* you get married, you will have no discipline in your **sex** life *after* you get married. **God** doesn't make mistakes on **His** counsel regarding **sex** in our lives.

Do you take that second look? Your eyes will see what they see. You can't do anything about that. But once you see something provocative, you don't have to take that second look. It's the second look that will get you in trouble. King David was not at fault for seeing Bathsheba bathing. He could not have helped noticing her, because she was in plain view as he walked on the palace roof. His sin was taking that second look, dwelling on the sight, and in willingly giving in to the temptation. He could have looked away and occupied his mind in other ways. The fact that he had her brought to his chambers and committed **adultery** with her showed the immoral desire that already existed in his **heart** (see the commentary on [the Life of David Dc - David and Bathsheba](#)).

*A popular proverb goes, "Sow a thought and reap an act. Sow an act and reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character. Sow a character and reap a destiny." That process perfectly illustrates the point that, no matter where it ends, sin always begins when an evil thought is sown in the mind and **heart**.*¹⁷⁷

In the 1920s American society whispered, "Follow your libido," in the 1960s it boldly pronounced, "If it feels good do it," and in the 1980's our society screamed proudly, "Love the one you're with!" Today, it's, "Do you want to hook-up." But why was it wrong then, and why is it wrong now? You can't swim in the toilet and come up smelling like a rose. Thousands of years ago Moses claimed that **YHVH** gave him a command and he wrote: **You shall not commit adultery**. And this **mitzvah** came out of the holy nature and character of **ADONAI Himself**. Since you and I are created in the image of **God**, this **mitzvah** is written for our own good. If we follow **God's** blueprint for living, we can prevent a multitude of health problems. But wrong choices always have their consequences. The explosion of pregnancies outside of marriage, in addition to the proliferation of AIDS and STD cases today proves that **God's** plan is meant to insure our happiness and well-being.¹⁷⁸