



The Ten Commandments – Part 10
Exodus 20:14
GCSP – 09/12/2009

Five down and five to go... We have covered the first five of God's Ten Commandments in nine weeks. The final five should only take four weeks. My plan is to combine at least two of the remaining five into one sermon as the Spirit leads, but I will be taking these in a little different order than they appear in the text, so don't be alarmed and think I am skipping one or more – we will cover the remaining five.

What typically happens when somebody tells you to not think about a certain topic? – You will struggle mightily to not think about that topic, right?

I find myself in a pretty serious dilemma tonight with the commandment we will study. If we are not very careful we could find ourselves committing the very sin we are commanded to not commit during the course of this sermon; and I could inadvertently spark the commission of that sin.

We will be temporarily skipping over the sixth commandment and dealing with the seventh tonight – **you shall not commit adultery**. The problem we face is that Jesus expanded the definition of adultery to not only the physical act of sex outside of the marriage bed, but also to include any lustful thoughts we have toward another person who is not your husband or wife.

So you see the dilemma. How do I preach about lust and adultery without sparking lustful thoughts in your mind?

So let's pray right now before we get started.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Exodus**.

Exodus 20:14

So there you have it plain and simple – **You shall not commit adultery**.

How many of you have seen a rodeo before, whether in person or on television? I would have to say that the most dangerous event in rodeo is bull riding. Brahma bulls typically weigh in at over a ton and they want absolutely nothing to do with a human sitting on their backs. Their massive and powerful necks alone are enough to throw most people off.

When a cowboy is thrown off a Brahma bull what do they immediately do, assuming they can get off the ground? – They run for the nearest fence and jump to the other side. That fence represents safety. That fence represents the difference between life and death sometimes.

The fence is not there to restrict or restrain the cowboy is it? The fence is there to restrict and restrain the bull. The fence is there to protect not only the cowboy but

everyone else who is in the vicinity. The fence is a barrier between the cowboy and that which would destroy him.

This is a very vivid and very accurate picture of what God's commandments are; they are a barrier between us and that which would destroy us. They put a restraint on our flesh that wants what it wants at any cost.

Most of us avoid commands. We don't like being told what to do unless we are agreeable to the command. Have you ever considered why this is so? Why do we resist being told what to do? – Because our flesh cares nothing about tomorrow and it cares nothing about the well-being of anyone else. Our flesh is supremely selfish and always demands satisfaction right now! Left unrestrained, our flesh will sacrifice everything for immediate gratification.

Our flesh is also extremely rebellious. If we see a sign that says "Wet Paint" what we immediately want to do? We want to touch it to find out. If we see a sign on a door that says, "Do Not Enter" we at least want to peek inside to see what the fuss is all about. And I don't know about you but when I am traveling down the highway and see some barricades and a sign that says detour, my natural inclination is to ignore it, especially if I do not see any workers. I don't ignore the sign but I want to.

In the book, "The Magicians Nephew", one of C.S. Lewis's Chronicles of Narnia, two children, Digory and Polly find themselves in the ruins of a once great castle. In the midst of these ruins they see a beautiful golden bell that has been untarnished by time. Lying beside the bell is a golden hammer and a sign. The sign cryptically says:

*Make you choice adventurous stranger,
Strike the bell and bide the danger,
Or wonder till it drives you mad,
What would have followed if you had.*

Polly shrinks away and wants to leave immediately but Digory is overcome with insatiable curiosity. Before Polly can stop him he picks up the hammer and strikes the bell. It produces a clear, sweet note but instead of fading it grows louder and louder until it becomes deafening. The building begins to shake and collapse and the two children barely escape with their lives. Through a series of circumstances that follow, the impulsive decision brings tragedy beyond anything young Digory could ever have imagined.

Because of the rebellious nature of our flesh, and our choice to not subdue our flesh as we are commanded in Scripture (and it is a choice), we live our lives with the attitude that "I can do what I want to do; it's my life. I'll go where I want to go and live the way I want to live. It's none of God's business to command me to do or not do certain things; that's for me to decide."

That's the attitude of a cowboy who decides to stay inside the fence with the 2,000 pound uncontrollable Brahma bull who wants nothing less than to stomp you to death under his feet. That's viewing the fence as an unnecessary restraint in your life rather than God's love protecting you from imminent danger.

This is how we must look at the Ten Commandments and this is how we must look at **"You shall not commit adultery."**

So allow me to start by defining adultery. Webster defines it as "voluntary sexual intercourse with someone who is not your spouse." The usage of the Hebrew wording throughout the Old Testament defines it the same way. Any form of sexual promiscuity outside of the bounds of marriage is adultery and/or fornication in God's eyes.

And before you think God is a cosmic killjoy realize that He created sex. Read **Proverbs 5:18-19** and the **Song of Solomon**, or **Song of Songs** as it is called in some Bibles. God created sex and He created it to be a joy and an unmatched physical pleasure. But He created it to be an intimacy that is to be shared by one woman and one man, under the bond of marriage, for life. God's perfect plan for each one of us is that we experience sexual pleasure with only one person for as long as you both shall live after the marriage has taken place.

God has put this fence in place for your protection. Countless lives have been ruined by people ignoring this command to not commit adultery. Marriages are destroyed. Children are damaged and sometimes abandoned. Abortions, the legal killing of a precious baby, are performed by the thousands every day. Physical abuse and murder are often the result of discovered adultery.

Maybe a lesser known consequence, but just as devastating, is the deep seeded lack of trust that germinates in the mind. Even if a couple gets married after premarital sex, the thoughts of if he or she did it with me with no concern, would they do it with someone else down the road?

In my years of counseling and of observing, the marriages that have the greatest chance of lasting forever are those that are based on God's principles. Couples who have had sexual experiences with one or more other people almost invariably have problems, and ultimately break up.

There is an exception to this rule, and that is what happens after conversion. The Bible says that at the moment of our salvation we become a new creation; old things are passed away and all things become new. What happened in your life prior to genuine salvation is of no consequence to God and He can and will create in you a clean heart and a renewed mind.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **Ephesians**.

Ephesians 5:22-33

The marriage relationship is compared to Christ's relationship to the church. If we believe that it is okay to violate the bonds of marriage, and thus be unfaithful to the command of sex only being lawful between husband and wife, then we are also saying that it is okay for Jesus Christ to be unfaithful to the church; the church He willingly suffered and died for. Does that make any sense at all?

How can we justify indulging our fleshly appetites beyond what God has ordained knowing this truth?

Jesus Christ not only suffered a cruel death on the Cross to offer us forgiveness of sins and an eternal home in heaven, but He also died to be able to present a holy and blameless church without spot or wrinkle to His Father in heaven. Christians are called the bride of Christ in God's Word, and any one of us being unfaithful to the command of not committing adultery is tantamount to saying it is okay for Jesus to walk away from His bride and join together with another woman.

Do you see the picture presented to us here?

As long as we are talking about Jesus here, let's uncover the next layer of what adultery means by seeing what He has to say.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Gospel of **Matthew**.

Matthew 5:27-30

Jesus has expanded the meaning of adultery to go beyond the physical act and to show us that even the thoughts in our mind constitutes adultery. And quite honestly that only makes sense. Sin is in your heart long before it ever manifests itself in your actions.

How do we deal with this? How do we protect ourselves from committing adultery in our hearts? I mean, you can't turn on the television, pick up a magazine, or even walk around in public without being confronted with overtly sexual images. What this world has deemed appropriate for women to wear today (or more aptly, not to wear) is insane. Does Jesus really mean we have to pluck our eyes out and cut our hands off to have victory over lustful thoughts?

Of course that is not what Jesus is calling us to do. But He is telling us to take drastic measures when they are called for. He is telling us to be proactive in protecting ourselves from being in the position to commit the sin of adultery.

Job said, "**I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I gaze at a virgin?**" (**Job 31:1**).

That word gaze means to consider closely or to dwell upon. God is not saying you have to avoid looking at other women – that's impossible if you have working eyes (and women these principles apply to you as well so don't disengage your brains because I'm talking more directly to the men). But God is saying that we must not dwell on other women or fix our eyes on parts of her anatomy that fuel the fire so to speak.

We need to join Job by making a covenant with our eyes to not gaze on other women. Turn away as soon as you catch yourself heading down the path of gazing. Fix your attention and your focus elsewhere. Memorize this verse and repeat it over and over again every time you need the reminder.

Stay away from the magazine racks, the Victoria's not so Secret catalogues, the swimsuit editions of your favorite sports magazines, the Internet porn, the racy movies, etc., etc. Make a covenant with your eyes to not gaze at anyone except your wife.

And wives you have a huge and indispensable part in all of this. If you want your husband to rejoice in you as **Proverbs 5:18** says, and if you want your husband to be exhilarated with your love as **Proverbs 5:19** says, then make sure to hold and keep his attention. Give him every reason and every possible help and assistance for him to fix his gaze only on you.

Turn with me in your Bibles to the Book of **1 Corinthians**.

1 Corinthians 7:3-5

I trust I do not need to go into any more detail than Paul has already done. Keep the home fires burning; don't be prudish when it comes to the intimacy of your home. God created you to enjoy one another, so be about the business of doing just that.

Solomon said, "**Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life**" (**Proverbs 4:23** – NIV). Solomon adds on to what Job said by not only telling us to make a covenant with our eyes but to guard our hearts above all else.

If you are going to guard something you will sometimes put up barricades, or lock what you are guarding away in some safe and secure enclosure. We need some barricades; we need some safeguards if we are going to be successful in keeping our hearts from lust and adultery.

Don't willingly put yourself in a position to fail. An alcoholic cannot keep a bottle of whiskey under his bed. A junkie cannot keep crack cocaine in his medicine chest. If you struggle with lust and adultery you cannot have easy access like HBO and Cinemax available on your television; you cannot have unfiltered access to view porn on the Internet; and you cannot tempt yourself allowing other enticements to be around you.

Don't have other women in your home with you alone, don't go to lunch with other women alone, and don't even play the games of casual flirting. If someone is coming on to you put a stop to it or walk away. Don't let your ego get in the way and enjoy it for even an instant.

And let to even go so far as this: Be careful with perfumes and colognes. What is your motivation for wearing them, especially if you are not going to be in the presence of your husband or wife? The primary purpose of perfumes and colognes is to attract. Who are you attempting to attract?

Guard your heart.

The problem with all of this is the world has a polar opposite view. It's not an easy task to find any TV show or movie today that does not promote and celebrate adultery. Almost all of them are riddled with seduction, immorality, and flirtation; besides the hard bodies and revealing apparel.

Hollywood makes it all look so romantic, exciting, fulfilling, and even funny. They surround every scene with laughter, beautiful music, and idyllic settings. At the same time they remove all the shame, deceit, betrayal, and ugliness.

The world says if you're going to believe the Bible, that's okay as long as you don't think you have to follow it word-for-word. Someone recently told me they were debating this issue with someone who said you have to have some wiggle room when it comes to the Bible. No, you don't. The Bible is God's Word and He doesn't need your help in retooling what He says.

Beloved, you cannot live your life being partially obedient to God's Word. You cannot pick and choose what you are going to obey and what you are going to wiggle around with. God demands complete obedience, and again, He demands this for your benefit and for your self-preservation.

God knows how destructive sex outside of marriage is. He knows the heartache it will cause. He knows the toll it will take on your life even if you don't see it right now. He knows your life, your current and potential future ministry, and your effectiveness as a witness and disciple of Jesus Christ will be torn to shreds if you succumb to the sin of adultery. The fence is your friend.

When I was the associate pastor at a church with my brother-in-law, he was counseling a man who committed adultery. My brother-in-law asked me to do a little biblical research for him. He asked me to make a list of all the good recorded in King David's life after his adultery with Bathsheba. So I found the passage where David committed adultery and I got a pad of paper and pen out and started reading. Outside of the fact that God produced both Joseph and Mary from the family line of David to be the earthly parents of Jesus, there is nothing good in David's life – at least nothing good is recorded.

David's life was nothing but a series of heartaches and turmoil after committing adultery. All of the untold blessings that God lavished upon David came before Bathsheba. Now obviously many of the Psalms that David wrote that we benefit from today came during this time in his life, and David did not lose his eternal home in heaven, but sexual sin had an immense and lasting impact on the rest of his earthly life.

So what will be the results of walking through the door called desire?

- You will grieve the One who redeemed you
- You will drag the name of Jesus Christ through the mud
- You will have to look your Lord in the eye one day and give an account of your actions
- You will inflict untold pain on your spouse
- You will lose respect, love, and trust
- You will hurt any children and grandchildren you have
- You will destroy your credibility and integrity
- You may lose your spouse and family forever
- You will shame those who love you
- You will lose the respect of others and your own self-respect
- You will form memories and flashbacks that will plague any future intimacy

- You could contract any number of diseases
- You could cause an unwanted pregnancy and even be party to an abortion
- You could invoke lifelong shame and embarrassment

Are all of these and more worth the momentary pleasure?

If I were to ask all of you what the difference between a successful marriage and a failed marriage was, I may get several answers. But if you had time to evaluate all of the possible answers I believe you would find that genuine and lasting commitment is one of the primary ingredients, if not the primary ingredient.

And why is commitment lacking in the vast majority of marriages and relationships, because most people are looking to be served instead of looking to serve. In a word, we are selfish. And as I have repeated over and over again, the opposite of love is selfishness.

Selfishness will lead you to commit adultery, because genuine love would not ever allow even the possibility of all these consequences we talked about tonight to come into the life of the one you love, let alone into your life.

Beloved, run to the fence; hide behind the protection of God's commandments. Make a covenant with your eyes and guard your heart above all else.

But what if you have already gone too far? What if you have ignored the safety of the fence?

- Make the decision to confess and repent and do so right now
- Accept God's forgiveness and bury your past in the past
- End any wrong and sinful practices immediately
- Thank the Lord for His forgiveness and restoration

Let's pray.