

7th Commandment Honor Chastity

Let us turn to our Bibles to Proverbs chapter 7. Proverbs chapter 7. Verses 1 through 5. Proverbs 7, 1 through 5. Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. My son, keep my words and treasure my commands within you. Keep my commands and live in my law as the apple of your eye.

Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart. Say to wisdom, you are my sister, and call understanding your nearest kin, that they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words. Let us pray.

In here, God, we are reading a short snippet of a longer section of the warning upon the violation of the seventh commandments. And herein, Lord, we live in a day and age, it seems we are more and more washed in such assumptions and practices, Lord, in our society. From politicians to big names to even pastors in churches across the nation, Lord, who've been caught in scandal after scandal, it seems, Lord.

These things, unfortunately, are made excuses of. They continue to be multiplied around us, God, and no one seems to be really caring about them. Help us in this regard, we pray, to honor chastity as this commandment urges us.

And that may we learn this anew and to do what we can as a church and as families and as individuals to maintain such purity in the family, in our own lives, Lord, and amongst each other as the best we can by your spirit upon us, we pray, amen. We must, of course, practice and preserve chastity in life and in marriage. And that begins with understanding the seventh commandment and the need of that instruction, for it is a widespread problem in churches across America, as polls show.

I've mentioned this, I think, a few times, not as much. It is referenced in my book that fornication and the like, unfortunately, it's way too high, even in Christian circles. We live in a culture saturated with violations of the seventh commandment, from movies to advertisement to music and billboards.

They joke about it. They make excuses for one another. And, of course, the laws reinforce this through no-fault divorce, for example.

As churches and as Christians, we need to be ever-vigilant, therefore rely upon Christ for more grace to preserve our family, our marriages, and our children in this increasingly vile society as they grow up therein.

What is the 7th Commandment?

What is the seventh commandment? So here, to go over what it is not, what is popularly understood as the seventh commandment, to show, in other words, the breadth thereof. The commandment here that we have is not about adultery only, not about marriage issues only or merely, not about pre-marriage issues as such only or merely, and certainly not external acts only.

That's not just what it's about, but covers all acts from the beginning of the heart to the end execution thereof in the hands and everything in between. We often think of the New Testament in this regard. I certainly did growing up as a Christian.

Matthew 5, 28, Christ tells them, I say unto you that whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. They, the Pharisees, were clearly making excuses on these matters and other violations that we know in the Sermon on the Mount there in chapter 5, 6, and 7. So Christ gets to the nub of the matter. And if misread, as I mentioned last week, it's easy to read this and think, oh, they must have missed that point in the Old Testament.

That's certainly not the case. In the Old Testament, we have the 10th Commandment. Don't forget about the 10th Commandment.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's. The misuse of apparel is also mentioned there in Proverbs 7, 10.

In this chapter, this long chapter here, There met him a woman of the attire of a harlot and subtle of heart. That's the Old Testament. The clothing, in other words, is significant.

The use of words violates the 7th Commandment, Proverbs 7, 21. With her much fair speech, she caused him to yield. With the flattering of her lips, she forced him.

She was alluring him on purpose. Use of the heart, not just the clothing, not just the words, but the heart in the Old Testament with respect to the 7th Commandment, Proverbs 7, 10. And behold, there met him a woman with the attire of a harlot and subtle of what? Heart.

Emphasizes there the heart, not just the clothing. The heart was behind the clothing. We know this often is the case.

In other words, the Old Testament teaching on this matter of the 7th Commandment is deep and wide. And so from this, we can summarize, it seems to me, the commandment is about honoring chastity. Honoring chastity.

You should not commit adultery, of course, implies honoring chastity. Chastity is the old word for chaste or purity. Before marriage and after marriage, during marriage, from the heart to the hands and all that we do, directly or even indirectly, we are called to fulfill this to the best of our abilities and support each other in this endeavor as well.

Of course, specifically, it's adultery. Unfaithfulness to your husband or wife is what's focused here in this commandment, as all the commandments highlight one particular sin that stands out amongst all the rest that could be labeled under that category. Last week, it was murder.

But everything that leads up to murder, damaging and harming people is also forbidden. And here, what stands out the most, of course, is adultery. Fornication is part of this.

That's before the marriage, as we typically use that word in pretty much a technical sense. We see this violation on TV, commercials, shows. Soaps had a lot of that back in the 60s, 70s and 80s on TV.

Easy access to everyone. Children can grow up watching this stuff. Unbiblical divorce, of course.

More and more, it's because you don't like your husband. He doesn't make me happy and things like that. You can see they've actually done the polls and studies on it.

It's not well known, unfortunately. That's the top five or six reasons why they divorced. Adultery, unfaithfulness is only one of five.

Everything else is, I don't like him anymore, my taste changed, he didn't make me happy, we didn't get along. They ruin not only the marriage, just in the abstract, but in real life, as we know, families. I think many of us know, at least somebody we know in this church, that children are scarred for life because of this.

Americans gave up on marriage long before the Supreme Court ruling, it seems to me, gave them excuses in this regard back in the 60s and 70s. This commandment, of course, is as broad as all the other commandments. Thoughts, words, and deeds related to this commandment are also forbidden towards this violation that God has given us.

What is Forbidden in the 7th Commandment?

Now, what is specifically forbidden and more broadly forbidden? That's the second point. What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment? So we talked about how broad it is and how it's about honoring chastity, both before and after marriage. The Old Testament overview here of the Seventh Commandment.

First of all, in the Old Testament, you have two large sections dealing with this commandment. In Deuteronomy, the book of Deuteronomy, we have all these case laws applied to Israel and its Old Testament form, the church and its Old Testament form there in Israel. Chapter 22, verse 13, to chapter 23, verse 14, covers a number of laws related to this, and other ones could be tied into that later, of course.

And then Proverbs, especially Proverbs. Now, again, these are the big places that stand out. There's all other references in the Prophets and the like to the Seventh Commandment, but these especially stand out.

It's the main theme, in fact, of chapters 1 through 9 of Proverbs. It gets hit several times through the first nine chapters. Chapter 2, verses 16 through 19.

Chapter 5, verses 15 through 20. Chapter 6, verse 32. Chapter 9, verse 13 through 18.

And chapter 7, what I just read a little bit of. The entire chapter is dedicated to this topic of the Seventh Commandment. Now, what is forbidden? The obvious here, question 72 of the Shorter Catechism.

What is forbidden in the Seventh Commandment? The Seventh Commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. That's pretty broad. That's a lot of things.

Of course, before marriage, that's fornication. After marriage, that's called adultery and breaking of the vows therein. In the Old Testament, the Tenth Commandment also overlaps to the Seventh Commandment, lust, inordinate desire upon another person.

Language itself is also forbidden. Proverbs 7:1, which I read a little bit earlier. With her much fair speech, she caused him to yield, and with flattering of her lips, she forced him.

Both the clothing and the words were used in a sinful way to violate this commandment and to bring about sin. Ephesians 5:3 through 4 unpacks some more details of this in the New Testament. But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness let it not be even named among you, as is fitting for saints, neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.

It was a problem not just in the Old Testament during the Jewish time, and in the New Testament as well amongst the Gentiles. Sometimes when I read the Bible, it feels like we're always picking on the Jews, but the Gentiles as well. They're just the central object, the Old Testament church.

We have the same problems in our own ways often, one way or the other. Here we have some details. This text in Ephesians 5 uses some particular words.

So filthiness, my translation, neither filthiness nor foolish talking should be found among you. Filthiness is dirty talk or obscenity, coarse joking or vulgar talk. So it's apparently a particular problem we have here because it talks about fornication and all uncleanness, which is very broad as well, tying it to the Seventh Commandment.

But rather, he continues here, give thanks. That is the positive overcoming the negative, of course, as we learned over and over again there in Sunday school class. Not fitting, that is, these things are not fitting, are not good, they're not appropriate and the like, because they are means, causes and occasions that what? Don't fit this commandment, coarse jesting, filthy talk and the like.

When protecting our kids, as a side note, let us not blow it out of proportion. When they run across these things, they hear it perhaps from a neighborhood kid, just say, no, we don't talk that way. If you blow up, the kids may overreact and think something's going on and use it against you, I think.

But of course, if they're doing it intentionally, then you might want to go a little harder on them. Often the kids learn these things because they didn't know any better. That was part of my experience.

I'm like, what is this going on here as a kid? I remember they, my parents like, ah, don't talk, no, that's not allowed in this house. Don't talk that way, no jokes like that. Now, the not so obvious parts of what is forbidden.

And we have here then various means, causes and occasions that what? Undermine and lead towards the violation of this commandment. Drunkenness is one of them. Again, Proverbs, Old Testament, trying to use a lot of Old Testament passages, Proverbs 23, 31.

Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it gives its color in the cup, when it moves itself aright. At the last it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women and thy heart shall utter perverse things.

This slides right into that danger of the drunkenness going into the violation of the seventh commandment, of the marriage vows and the like. And of course, what's interesting here is wine leads to other problems as well, not just that. You can see here how one type of means, in this case, and even a natural mean in the sense of it's not inherently wrong to drink, right? It's what you do with it that becomes the problem.

And this activity can lead to other sins, not just this violation. It's quite interesting how one thing in this world can go to all different kinds of directions, depending on perhaps our own predilections as sinners and our circumstances. So be aware of these things in our life.

And of course, the internet is a problem for all, but especially men, young men. And this is solvable insofar as you can simply turn off the internet, restrict the internet. There are ways of doing this that are relatively easy.

You can ask the leadership for this. They're called DNS and the like. It just shuts things, websites down, blacklisting and whatever else we have.

It should, unfortunately, be embedded in the internet, but it wasn't early on. It was just a wild, wild west web, and it still is in many ways. And if we're weak in this regard, we ought to be very honest about this so that we can take care of it and nip it in the bud early on.

Other considerations for youth, both male and female, is this less talked about or considered with respect to violating this commandment. The larger catechism talks about undue delay of marriage. Undue delay of marriage becomes a problem because it builds up.

1 Corinthians 7 becomes a burning, as it were, and it has to be dealt with. And marriage is the path that God named it for. It's not evil or dirty.

It's proper and right. But society, we make excuses sometimes or rely too about it, or things do catch up with us, and it does catch us off guard in our age as we get into our 20s and then our 30s, and it becomes too late to get married sometimes. Now, we're not all gonna be married, of course, but as we can, we should avoid undue delay of marriage.

It can cause problems. And of course, unchaste company is another example that is bad company, perhaps good manners. Careful who you hang out with, who your friends are.

You may be going to school, you have coworkers, that they're very nice, and you get along, and you're almost like a brother sometimes. They kind of, you get the same idea, you think the same way, but you realize they're unbelievers. They're not married, he's living with his girlfriend.

That could be a danger upon you, especially when you're younger, but not uniquely. We have to watch out for that for our kids and for ourselves. Now, Proverbs 7 is one example to teach the young boys, age 12, 13, to 14 and the like, of the dangers of playing around, fast and loose, and whatever else we may need to memorize to protect ourselves, because women can fall into this as well.

It's not just only a man thing, although it seems to be especially a man problem. Larger Catechism, Question 99, lay it down before you and apply it to these texts. Go through Chapter 7 here.

That's part of what I did, finding those passages. What are these different things that she's doing that lead to this sin? Her clothing, her words, her actions. She does it late at night.

My husband's gone. She creates the circumstances for these things to occur, or he does if you flip the tables in this matter, right? So that's what's forbidden.

What is Commanded in the 7th Commandment?

What is commanded in the Seventh Commandments? This is the third point.

Question 71 of the Shorter Catechism. I like to end on the positive. They haven't flipped on the Catechism.

What is required in the Seventh Commandment? The Seventh Commandment requires the preservation of our own and our neighbor's chastity. Isn't that interesting, right? In heart, speech, and behavior. And it gives some classical proof texts there.

1 Corinthians 7, as we know about marriage. Larger Catechism, Question 138, unpacks some more helpful details. Lots of proof texts in there.

So here's something that can be done throughout the week. I mentioned in Sunday School class and learning the Bible, use the systematic theology, use the confession with the proof texts, and read some of the proof texts every night as you go through each topic of discovery in theology throughout the week, for example. Larger Catechism, Question 138.

What are the duties required in the Seventh Commandment? The duties required in the Seventh Commandment are chastity and body, mind, and affections. Of course, mind, will, and emotions. Words and behavior.

And the preservation of it in ourselves and others. Watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses. Temperance, keeping of chaste company.

Modesty and peril, what you're wearing, right? Marriage by those who have not the gift of contingency, that they don't have the gift of singleness. Conjugal love. Cohabitation, gotta live with your spouse.

Diligent labor in our callings. And I'll talk about that. Shunning of all occasions of uncleanness and resisting temptation thereunto.

They're just like, I'm gonna cover everything else in this description of how to preserve the marriage and our chastity before we are married. So I wanted to drill into the one point here. Diligent labor in our callings.

What in the world? How does that tie into the Seventh Commandment? I remember reading that. I'm like, where did that? It's like, you're reading along, that makes sense. You know, avoid bad company, avoid bad words, control your thoughts, help one another, and be working hard.

Keep busy, right? Diligent in our callings and our duties before God. When it says diligent labor, it means diligent work, not necessarily a job, although that's part of it, but being a husband and the like. You've heard of the old Puritan saying, an idle mind is the devil's playground, or idle hands are the devil's hands.

So when you have a lot of too much time on your hands, you can get in all kinds of trouble. Ezekiel 16 talks about this. Verse 49.

Look, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom. She and her daughters had pride, fullness of food, an abundance of idleness. What do we have today, brothers and sisters, but an abundance of idleness? I know I feel it and see it myself.

That's why I memorized those idioms, excuse me, idiom sayings, those old adages from the Puritans. Neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy, and they were haughty and committed abomination before me. Therefore I took them away as I saw fit.

What comes to my mind is the old illustration of rich kids growing up with idle time and getting into trouble. Give them a job, keep them busy, keep them out of trouble. Second Samuel 11.4. David on the rooftop.

That's my note say. The text tells us he set himself up with idle mind and idle time. It happened in the spring of the year at the time when the kings go out to battle that David sent Joab his servant with him and all Israel, but David remained at Jerusalem.

That's not an accident. The author is telling us he set himself up for Bathsheba. Next is keep chaste company, pure company.

Proverbs 2.19. None that go unto her again, neither take they hold of the paths of life, that thou mayest walk in the way of good men and keep the paths of the righteous. If you want to avoid this path and going down the violation of the seventh commandment here, to keep the way of the good men, to keep the path of the righteous, godly peer pressure is very helpful. We want this.

This is why we want a Christian nation. We want that peer pressure because we know how weak we are in godly laws to prevent us from doing stupid things. Keep a pure heart.

This is clearly important, my son. Keep my words and treasure my commands within you. That's why I picked this section verses one through five.

These are means, causes, and occasions that reinforce and fortify us to fulfill this commandment. Keep my words and treasure my commands, what, within you. Keep my commands and live, and my law as the apple of your eye, that it's precious.

God's law is precious to us. Bind them on your fingers, write them on the tablet of your heart. By the fingers, he means the use of your hands.

What are you going to do with these things? Good things or bad things? That's what he means by bind them upon your hands. Not literally because he says in the next stick, it's called, write them on the tablet of your heart. Obviously, he's saying, memorize it, internalize it, obey, and believe it.

So when he's talking about the hands, he doesn't mean get a big ring and put the word of God on it. The Jews did that. As you recall, Deuteronomy, was it 4.6? 6.4, I think it's 6.4, I always get those stupid things.

That you walk by the day and by the night, and by the time you go into bed, and you teach your kids the commandments of God right on your forehead, and that's what they would do, the phylacteries. No, it may help you, I suppose. That works for you.

Write it down in your dashboard. Write the Bible verse, get it there, get it in your heart some way, somehow. Say to wisdom, you are my sister, and call understanding your nearest kin.

So this intimacy, it creates this proper relationship with the word of God that becomes like your family, precious to you. That's the picture here. That they what? That they, God's law may keep you from the immoral woman, or the immoral man, or the immoral thing, or whatever the uncleanness is in our lives, or tempting us.

It starts with the heart, in other words, and that's the heart of struggle. The mind, will, and emotions must be dedicated to purity. Starting with our new language, when what you speak is what you think, often it can become a feedback into your life, of course.

And so we ought to be careful. And that's why, although we have the translation here, immoral woman, harlot is fine. I'm using NKJV.

The KJV, as I recall, uses harlot, certainly does elsewhere. And that is helpful. If we had a male equivalent to use that as well.

Keep and treasure, bury it deep, that is the word of God within us. Proverbs 321, my son, let them not depart from your eyes. Keep sound wisdom and discretion.

Hammering it home over and over again in the book of Proverbs. And as a side note, to remind you, sometimes in Proverbs, when it says son, it doesn't mean the biological son as much as that which is a student being taught by the master who is like a father to him. But many cases, clearly Proverbs 7 is the young man, the teenage boy, control yourself, control your hormones, right? Bind them and write them upon our hearts, excuse me, memorize and commit them to ourselves.

Verse three, this is important, even daily. And therefore call wisdom part of your family. This leads us then here to duties towards one another.

This commandment requires duties towards one another because it takes two to violate this commandment, doesn't it? Often, there's other ways, of course, that can be violated as well. Church parishioners, we are called therefore to create an environment of truth and beauty in this regard. Consider our clothing, consider our language, consider our jokes, to be example to others, to kids and to teenagers and to all of us, in fact.

Parents with children, watch the kids, the company they keep, the shows they watch. Get them off those computers. If need be, lock down those phones.

You'll be amazed and surprised and horrified at the stalkers that are out there and have much easier access than you realize. I've read a story of this. I hadn't thought about this before.

It's been a while of this. It was an expose in which someone pretended to be a young girl and he found out how easy it was online to be stalked and then manipulated. And people have been manipulated with pictures that they send to the stalker because they thought they were trustworthy and they commit suicide.

It's horrifying, absolutely terrifying. The internet's very dangerous these days. Me open in your praise of good movies and literature, music.

Music's another problem. Get that rhythm and the tune. You don't even realize it sometimes.

Some of us grew up hearing this stuff and later on you're like, those were the words? Wow, I know I did. And criticize them as well. So the kids see, look, we don't want to watch this.

This is an attack on the family. This is a dangerous temptation or something, the music or whatever the case may be. And you yourself may have to stop watching things so that your children don't stumble.

It may not be especially a problem. I know it can be somewhat gray, well, the Bible obviously talks about fornication. It has stories of infidelity and things like that.

Well, that's true, but is it really? We all know they go too far sometimes. Other times they don't and that's fine. You may still not want to watch it because it may not be, as we say, the proper subject matter for a young kid to get comfortable with.

They'll be confused. And all these things with respect to our kids, to be patient towards them and teaching them these things. The husband and wife, of course, here near the end, take serious efforts to learn more about each other, to take care of one another, date nights and the like, to maintain that love and care as they are called, and therefore in fulfillment of this commandment.

Memorize 1 Corinthians 7, 3 perhaps is one thing you might want to do. Let the husbands render to his wife the affection due to her and likewise also the wife to her husband. And then for all of us, as we seek to reach out to the world around us and the growth of our church, that we will encounter confused Christians more and more as the younger men can, children here, adults, excuse me, can testify they grew up in a family not like ours anymore.

The expectations and Christian understanding of how things to be done, whether they do it behind the scenes is different. That's true. They were lying in the past.

That's true. But even the outward form, the way of speaking expectations aren't even there more and more in the younger generations. And so as they become Christians and come into our church, we will have to show them a better way and instruct them and it takes patience to teach them.

This is all new in some regards. Some of them don't even have, as we know with friends of ours, the parents who are even married. Their whole life, their parents were never married.

It's sad. That too is a violation of the Seventh Commandment. Yet in all these things, brothers and sisters, to keep our eyes on the Lord God, always to use the means of grace he has established for us, as well as practical providential means to uphold the Seventh Commandment, to maintain purity amongst one another in the church of God, and to never, of course, to turn our obedience in this regard into work salvation, but always to rely upon Christ.

For we will stumble, we will sin one way or the other, brothers and sisters. We must always flee to the blood of Christ Jesus to cover those sins. Let us pray.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God Almighty, you have blessed us with this holy union of marriage as we see in the giving of Eve to Adam as a paradigm for the rest of us. May we continue to carry on this tradition, Lord, as husband and wife, before the world, before our children, before one another, God, in faithfulness to you, but indeed for all of us, whether we are married or not, as singles, we have our responsibility to do what we can to maintain chastity and purity of life and of hearts. Give us more of your spirit, Lord, so that we can do these things together as the church of God.

By the blood of Christ, we pray for your glorious namesake. Amen.