

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT – Part 3

Exodus 20:14

By Andy Manning

Today we're concluding our discussion of the seventh commandment.

Our text is **Exodus 20:14 (CSB)**. "Do not commit adultery."

In this discussion on the seventh commandment we have learned that the word adultery means **"voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than their legitimate, lawful spouse."**

But we also learned that if you want to keep the seventh commandment, it is not enough to simply avoid sexual intercourse outside of marriage.

Jesus taught that adultery includes every form of sexual activity outside of marriage.

Everything from actual adultery, to simply lusting after another woman in your heart.

The bottom line is that God created the gift of sex for a very specific context, and that context is marriage between one man and one woman. Any time you take sex out of that context, whether your behavior is visual, mental, physical, or emotional, it is violation of the seventh commandment and a sin against God.

So far in this study on the seventh commandment we've accomplished three main things.

First, we have identified sixteen ways that a person can break the seventh commandment.

Al Mohler wrote, "Jesus makes clear His expectation for His people. The commandment stands against adultery with our eyes, with our brains, with our imagination. The command is about our attention,

the totality of who we are. So, Jesus sets the bar higher, giving us a heightened standard. You cannot fantasize about this sin. You cannot enjoy the thought of this sin. Jesus says that lust and adultery are the same sin.”¹

Second, we defined the positive aspect of the seventh commandment.

The goal is not merely to avoid the physical act of adultery, but to reserve all sexual activity for your marriage.

Receive all sexual gratification from your spouse alone – mentally, physically, visually, and emotionally.

Third, we identified sixteen reasons adultery is immoral; sixteen reasons to repent of it and to avoid it: It disobeys God. It defeats marriage. It decimates God’s gift of sex. It disadvantages children. It dishonors God. It distances you from God. It deteriorates your health. It decreases your influence. It debases you. It drains your resources. It disciplines you. It damages you. It destroys two souls. It distorts the picture that marriage is intended to portray. It dirties God’s house. It discourages your spirit.

HOW CAN I OVERCOME SEXUAL SIN?

Today we’re going to talk about how to overcome sexual sin.

We live in a sex-saturated, sex-obsessed culture.

Is it possible to live a sexually pure lifestyle?

Is it possible in the twenty-first century to live according to God’s standard of sexual morality?

Is it possible, in the digital age, to avoid pornography?

Is it possible to keep your eyes and your mind pure when there is so much sexuality and immodesty everywhere you look?

¹ Al Mohler, *Words from the Fire*, p. 141

Is it possible to keep your marriage bed pure and undefiled?

Yes. Whether you are a teenager, a single adult, or married, you can be sexually pure. Here's what you need to do.

1. Make a commitment to God's standard of sexual morality.

What is God's standard again?

Reserve all sexual activity for your marriage.

Receive all sexual gratification from your spouse alone – visually, mentally, physically, and emotionally.

That means chastity if you are single, and fidelity if you are married.

Make a firm commitment. Have you done that? Have you made a firm decision to live according to God's will for your sexuality? If not, then that's the place to start.

Romans 12:1 says, "Therefore, brothers and sisters, in view of the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your true worship."

The first step is to present your body as a living sacrifice – completely dedicated to God's will – holy and pleasing to God.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 says, "19 Don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, 20 for you were bought at a price. So glorify God with your body."

The first step is to make a commitment to glorify God with your body.

2. Avoid temptation.

Look at **Romans 13:14**. “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

To put on the Lord Jesus Christ is to commit to imitating Him, and involves imitating His purity.

But to do that, you must make no provision for the flesh. In other words, avoid temptation.

Sometimes the only the way to overcome temptation is to avoid it.

The only way to stop eating ice cream every night is to stop buying it and storing it in the freezer, because if it is there you will cave every time.

Proverbs 5:8 says, “Keep your way far from her. Don’t go near the door of her house.”

Many people decide to repent of sexual sin, but they don’t decide to avoid temptation, and so they keep falling back into their sin.

It’s not enough to commit to not sleeping with her; you must keep your way far from her; don’t go near the door of her house.

You can’t break up with sin and keep hanging out with temptation.

You must stay away from both of them.

Mark Driscoll said, “Sexual purity requires both a passionate want to and a plan for how to.”

It’s not enough to decide to be sexually pure. You need a plan to avoid temptation.

This will mean different things to different people.

You might get rid of cable TV.

You might need to get rid of Netflix or Amazon Prime.

You might need to get some accountability software on your computer like Covenant Eyes.

You might need to stop going to certain places, or stay away from certain people.

You might need to cancel some of your magazine subscription. Even if they are not pornographic, if they are filled with tempting images they need to go.

If you are **married**,

it is a good policy to avoid being alone with a person of the opposite sex other than your spouse.

Don't go to lunch alone with a person of the opposite sex.

Don't travel alone with a person of the opposite sex.

Don't have meetings alone with a person of the opposite sex.

As a pastor, I don't counsel women alone. If you are a woman and you need someone to talk to, you can't talk with me alone; you'll have to talk with one of the mature godly women in our church.

Don't talk about your marriage problems with a person of the opposite sex.

Avoid close friendships with people of the opposite sex.

There are other things you can do to avoid temptation if you are married.

Don't have separate bank accounts.

Share a credit card account. Or give access.

Share a cell phone. Or give access.

Share an email address. Or give access.

Share a Facebook Account. Or give access.

Why?

Because these things make it easy for you to keep secrets from your spouse, and secrets are the seeds that grow into full-grown sexual sin.

It's important to bring your life out into the light for your spouse to see.

Avoid secrets. *Only bad things grow in the dark.*

If you are **single**,

one of the best things you can do to avoid temptation is to avoid dating until you are ready to get married.

That means not dating when you are in middle school and high school, and maybe not even until after college.

Why? Because dating leads to romance, and romance leads to sexual temptation.

When you give your heart to someone, your body wants to follow.

So avoid dating until you are ready to look for a spouse to get married.

Pastor Mark Driscoll said, "Too many are spending their single years dating, relating, and fornicating, not worshiping and waiting."

One of the best examples of running from temptation is the story of Joseph. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. He became the slave of an Egyptian named Potiphar, and Potiphar's wife was very attracted to Joseph, and she tried

repeatedly to convince him to sleep with her. On one occasion she found Joseph alone, she tried to seduce him.

Listen to what happened in **Genesis 39:12**. “She grabbed him by his garment and said, “Sleep with me!” But leaving his garment in her hand, he escaped and ran outside.”

Joseph didn't hang around and have coffee with her. He ran from temptation. That's what we have to do.

3. Decide to do whatever is necessary.

Sexual sin is not something that you can easily overcome.

There's only one way to defeat it. You have to get radical. You must decide to do whatever is necessary, no matter how extreme.

Listen to what Jesus said in **Matthew 5:29-30**. “29 If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of the parts of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.”

Does Jesus really want you to gouge your eye out and cut your hand off? No.

This is a figure of speech called hyperbole (an exaggeration to make a point).

The point Jesus is making is that there is only one way to overcome sexual sin: You have to be extreme. You have to go all out. You have to decide to do whatever it takes.

Look at **Colossians 3:5**. “Therefore, put to death what belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desire, and greed, which is idolatry.”

To overcome sexual sin you must put it to death. You have to kill your sin. You have to smother it; to choke it out.

You can't be nice to sexual sin. You can't be friends with sexual sin. You can't have a live and let live relationship with sexual sin. You have to kill it. It is destroy or be destroyed.

If you are struggling with sexual sin, then God is going to put thoughts in your mind of things that you need to do to kill your sin.

And your first thoughts are going to be, "That's too radical. That's too big of a change. That's too big of a move. People will ask questions. I'll look weird. I'll miss out on so much."

Don't listen to those negative thoughts. Do whatever is necessary to kill your sin.

You might need to get rid of the TV. You might need to get rid of the internet at your house. You might need to quit your job, or even move away to get away from temptation. You may need to confess your sin to a friend and ask him or her to pray for you and keep you accountable. You might to quit going to the gym, or quit going to the beach.

Whatever it is, deal with sin as harshly as necessary.

If you are not willing to do whatever it takes, you will not do enough.

4. Get married.

Marriage is not the cure for sexual temptation, but it can help by giving you a God-honoring outlet for your sexuality.

When you are single, you must be completely chaste. You have no outlet. And God enables some singles to do that for their entire lifetime. But most singles don't have the ability to be chaste forever. And in that case you need to get married.

1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (CSB) says, “8 I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them if they remain as I am. 9 But if they do not have self-control, they should marry, since it is better to marry than to burn with desire.”

Don't rush into marriage. Don't get married in a hurry.

But if you are burning with desire, if you are struggling to stay pure, then maybe it is time to get married.

5. Believe that you can change.

Sexual sin is highly addictive – fantasies, wayward glances, pornography, masturbation, fornication – these are all very addictive.

And when you try to stop sinning, you will likely fail at first. In fact, you will likely fail a lot at first. Addictions are hard to break.

At this point many Christians give up because they come to believe that change is impossible. Purity is impossible.

Don't believe that.

That's exactly what the devil wants you to believe. If he can get you to believe that change is impossible, then you will give up.

Here's the truth. You can change.

Philippians 4:13 says, “I am able to do all things through him who strengthens me.”

In **Matthew 19:26b** Jesus said, “... with God all things are possible.”

If God can transform Saul from a murderer of Christians into a Christian preacher/missionary/martyr, then he can transform you.

If Jesus can raise the dead, and give sight to the blind, and open the ears of the deaf, and cast out demons, then He can transform you.

Remember this. Change is extremely difficult, and usually takes time.

Rarely does God zap a person and instantly change them.

Usually change occurs over an extended period of time as a person wrestles with sin until they finally destroy it.

You have to learn to fight sin. For a long time, you've been giving in to sin. You haven't been resisting. Now you have to resist, and then fight sin.

And because you're new at this, you're probably going to lose at first. A lot.

But if you keep fighting, and don't give up, and don't get discouraged, eventually your faith and obedience muscles will grow, and your spiritual skills will develop, and you will defeat sexual sin.

6. Purify your mind.

Sin always begins in the mind. First you think it, then you do it.

So to overcome sexual sin you must defeat it in your mind.

Romans 13:14 (NIV) says, "Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh."

If you continue to think about sin, then you will eventually sin.

Thomas Watson wrote, "Thinking of sin makes way for the act of sin. Suppress the first risings of sin in your heart."²

So how do you purify your mind?

First, when a sinful thought enters your mind, get rid of it. Flush it out.

The only way to do that is to think about something else.

² *The Ten Commandments*, p.159

I recommend that you memorize a key verse that you can think about when you have illicit thoughts.

Second, be careful about what you put in your mind.

Be careful what you feed your mind.

We are what we eat.

Be careful about the shows you watch on TV, and the songs you listen to, and the things you read.

If you intentionally feed your mind sin, then you will eventually act out.

Philippians 4:8 (NIV) says, “Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.”

Colossians 3:2 says, “Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”

2 Corinthians 10:5b says, “... we take every thought captive to obey Christ.”

If you put filth in your mind, then it will come out in your life.

If you put God’s word in your mind, then it will come out in your life.

7. Develop the fear of the Lord.

One of the most important things you can do is to develop a virtue called the fear of the Lord.

Proverbs 16:6b says, “... one turns from evil by the fear of the Lord.”

Thomas Watson wrote, “Labor to get the fear of God into your hearts. As the embankment keeps out the water, so the fear of the Lord keeps out uncleanness.”³

Thomas Watson wrote, “Bernard calls holy fear, *janitor animae*, ‘the door keeper of the soul.’ As a nobleman’s porter stands at the door, and keeps out vagrants, so the fear of God stands and keeps out all sinful temptations from entering.”⁴

So what is the fear of the Lord?

Thomas Watson wrote, “To fear God is to have Him always in our eye. He who fears God imagines that whatever He is doing, God looks on, and as a judge, weighs all His actions. To fear God is to have such a holy awe of God upon our hearts that we dare not sin. The fear of God will make you forsake sins which can neither be heard nor seen by men. The fear of God destroys the fear of man.... The greater noise drowns out the less; the noise of the thunder drowns the noise of the river; so, when the fear of God is supreme in the soul, it drowns all other carnal fear.”⁵

The fear of the Lord is to believe that God is watching your every move, and that He will hold you accountable for what you do.

The more you fear God, the more motivated you will be to avoid sexual sin.

8. Grow your love for God.

Look at **John 14:23a (NIV)**. “Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching.”

Obedience is motivated not only by the fear of the Lord, but also by love for God.

If you love God you will obey Him.

So if you have an obedience problem, then you have a love problem.

³ *The Ten Commandments*, p.161

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

If you are struggling with sexual sin, then it means that you love sexual sin more than you love God.

So the cure for sexual sin is to grow your love for God so that it becomes much bigger, much heavier than your affection for sin.

Grow and nurture your love for God so that it becomes the dominant passion and obsession of your life.

Mark Driscoll wrote, “Before you cheat on your spouse you have to cheat on God first. You won’t break the seventh commandment if you keep the first commandment. If you make sex your God, then you will commit adultery. You can’t walk with Jesus into adultery.”⁶

How do you grow your love for God?

It’s not a secret, and there’s no shortcut.

You have to make Sunday worship a priority.

Get in a Home Group.

Develop the habit of a daily quiet time.

Listen to sermons.

Read Christian books.

As you love God more and more, you will sin less and less. As your love for God increases, your sin will decrease.

Thomas Watson wrote, “Chrysostom compares God’s word to a garden. If we walk in this garden, and suck sweetness from the flowers of the promises, we shall never care to pluck the forbidden fruit.”⁷

⁶ Mark Driscoll, Sermon, *Do Not Commit Adultery*

⁷ *The Ten Commandments*, p.161

9. Guard your eyes.

Mark Driscoll said, “Sexual sin starts with your eyes which then recruit your hands.”

This is usually how sexual temptation occurs. It start with the eyes, then it grows in the mind, and then it bears fruit in your actions.

To overcome sexual sin you must guard your eyes.

Job 31:1-2 (CSB) says, “1 I have made a covenant with my eyes. How then could I look at a young woman? 2 For what portion would I have from God above, or what inheritance from the Almighty on high?”

Here’s what it means to guard your eyes. *Decide that you will only have eyes for your spouse.*

Here’s what that looks like practically. *When you look at someone other than your spouse, keep your eyes above the neck.*

One of the best ways to guard your eyes is to develop the habit of *bouncing your eyes*.

Anytime you spot something that attracts you sexually, bounce your eyes away.

If you are like most people, then your habit is to stare when you see something sexually attractive. That’s sinful. That’s called lust, and eventually it will work its way out into your actions.

Develop a new habit of bouncing your eyes away.

For example, if you are driving and notice an attractive woman jogging on the sidewalk, bounce your eyes to the other side of the road.

10. Realize that you are vulnerable.

One of the reasons that many sincere Christians fall into sexual sin is that they think too highly of themselves.

“I would never commit adultery. I would never have sex before marriage. I would never do this. I would never do that.”

We all think we’re better and godlier and stronger than we are. We think we are invulnerable.

And the problem with thinking that you are invulnerable is that you won’t set up safeguards, and guardrails, and boundaries.

You won’t be careful to avoid temptation. You won’t be careful about what you watch, and where you go, and who you spend time with. You won’t be careful to pursue God with all your heart.

You will open yourself up to temptation and then fall into sin.

Then you will ask, “I don’t know how it happened.”

1 Corinthians 10:12 says, “So, whoever thinks he stands must be careful not to fall.”

Romans 12:3 says, “For by the grace given to me, I tell everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he should think. Instead, think sensibly, as God has distributed a measure of faith to each one.”

Proverbs 16:18 says, “Pride comes before destruction, and an arrogant spirit before a fall.”

King David was one of the most godly men who ever lived. God called him a man after God’s own heart. But King David committed adultery. Don’t make the mistake of believing that you are stronger than King David.

11. Avoid drugs and alcohol.

The Bible says to avoid intoxication, and this is one of the reasons why.

Many people have fallen into sexual sin because they got intoxicated, and they lost the ability to make wise decisions and ended up doing something they will regret for the rest of their lives.

Ephesians 5:18 says, “And don’t get drunk with wine, which leads to reckless living, but be filled by the Spirit.”

In other words, don’t be controlled by drugs and alcohol.

Why? They lead to reckless living.

You will do things that you will regret.

Instead, be filled, or be controlled by the Spirit. Let God’s word control you.

In order to overcome sexual temptation you have to be alert at all times.

This is why the Bible commands us to be alert over and over again.

1 Corinthians 16:13 says, “Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong.”

1 Thessalonians 5:6 (NLT) says, “So be on your guard, not asleep like the others. Stay alert and be clearheaded.”

1 Peter 5:8 says, “Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour.”

You must be alert to effectively live the Christian life; always on guard; always ready for spiritual attack.

You can’t do that if you are under the influence of drugs and alcohol.

12. Stay busy.

Why did King David commit adultery?

One reason is that he was relaxing at home when he should have been leading his men in battle.

His army was at war, but he was relaxing out on the roof of his palace, and that's when he noticed Bathsheba bathing on her roof.

He looked; he lingered; he entertained evil thoughts; and then he took action.

But it all started because David was idle. He wasn't busy doing what he should have been doing.

I'm sure you've heard the saying, "Idleness is the devil's playground." That's Biblical.

Thomas Watson wrote, "Take heed of idleness. When a man is out of a calling, he is ready to receive any temptation."⁸ Too much leisure is not good for anybody.

To avoid temptation, get to work.

It's not good to be too busy, but it is good to be busy.

Busy yourself in ministry; in church activities; in personal growth projects; in home improvement projects; in raising your kids.

13.Nurture your marriage.

One of the best ways for a married couple to avoid sexual temptation is to nurture their marriage.

In other words, if you are fully satisfied with your marriage, you will not be tempted to meet your needs outside of marriage.

⁸ *The Ten Commandments*, p.160

Ecclesiastes 9:9 (CSB) says, “9 Enjoy life with the wife you love all the days of your fleeting life, which has been given to you under the sun, all your fleeting days. For that is your portion in life and in your struggle under the sun.”

Proverbs 5:18-19 (CSB) says, “18 Let your fountain be blessed, and take pleasure in the wife of your youth. 19 A loving deer, a graceful doe—let her breasts always satisfy you; be lost in her love forever.”

Thomas Watson wrote, “To avoid fornication and adultery, let every man have a chaste, entire love to his own wife.... It is not having a wife, but loving a wife, that makes a man live chastely.... He who loves not his wife is the likeliest person to embrace the bosom of a stranger.”⁹

Strive to fall in love over and over again.

How do you do that?

Being in love just means that you find each other irresistible.

People don't really fall in love or out of love. They grow in love, and they grow out of love.

You grow in love by making each other feel good over and over again until you find each other irresistible.

And you grow out of love by making each other feel bad over and over again until you can't stand each other.

So make it your goal to fall in love, over and over again.

Fight for that “in love” feeling.

Don't settle for friendship; don't settle for peace; don't settle for roommates; or teammates; fight for that loving feeling.

⁹ Ibid., p.161

To avoid sexual temptation you need to work on having a fulfilling sex life with your spouse.

Woody Allen said that “sex is the most fun you can have without laughing.”

Mark Driscoll said, “Marriage couples fight for fidelity with freedom and frequency.”

Let me give you **7 secrets to improve your sex life.**

- 1) First, women use sex to get romance; men use romance to get sex.
- 2) Second, women can't get enough romance; men can't get enough sex.
- 3) Third, men are thinking about the destination; women are thinking about the road.
- 4) Fourth, men are microwaves, women are crock-pots.
- 5) Fifth, when is a man ready to have sex? In 7 seconds. That's all it takes physically.
- 6) Sixth, what does a man have to be doing to be ready for sex? It doesn't matter. Any time, any place, he's ready.
- 7) Seventh, a woman has to be worked up for sex. Sex at night begins first thing in the morning. She won't be ready unless you've taken out the garbage, filled the car up when it is on "E" in February, complimented her, and shown her affection.

14. Live with the end in mind.

Mark Driscoll said, “Define your life forward and then live it backward. Look down the road. What do you want for your future? I want to grow old with my wife; be friends with her; hold her old, wrinkled hand; I want to hear our grandkids running around the house; at Christmas time I want to see her smile

and have joy. All the decisions I make along the way need to be decisions that lead to that end. Shortsightedness will damage your future.”¹⁰

CONCLUSION

Exodus 20:14 (CSB) says, “Do not commit adultery.”

If you are living in sexual sin, would you make a commitment to repent today?

For the rest of you, would you make a commitment to put a plan in place to safeguard your purity?

In John 8 a woman was caught in adultery, and the religious leaders asked Jesus what should be done with her. He forgave her. But He also told her, “Go and sin no more (Jn 8:11).”

Forgiveness is available, but you must be willing to repent and commit your sexuality to God.

¹⁰ Mark Driscoll, Sermon: *Do Not Commit Adultery*