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# The Seventh Commandment: Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery

*by: Ronald L. Dart*

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In the early days of printing, every letter of a document had to be set in place by hand into the page layout for printing. It was an incredibly laborious process. They used something like tweezers and set each little letter of type in place along a line and locked it in place so that they could print. It's hard to imagine how tedious it would have been to set type in place for the entire Bible and get it right at the same time. They had to put every single letter of the Bible in place one at a time.

## **The 'Wicked Bible'**

As you might expect, they didn't always get it right, and one of the more interesting examples turned up in a 1631 edition of the King James Bible that had been ordered by King Charles. He had ordered one thousand copies of the King James Bible that he wanted to get out to people.

The Bible that had been put in place for him was pretty much correct, except for the omission of one little three letter word. The word was 'not.' That might not have been such a big deal if it hadn't been for where that word was supposed to have been put in the type. It was in Exodus 20, in the seventh commandment, which then read, "Thou shalt commit adultery."

Well, all the wags dubbed it the 'Wicked Bible' and King Charles, who was not in the least amused, ordered them recalled and destroyed all 1000 of them. But the way those things go, you never can get them all and there are still 11 copies of the 'Wicked Bible' in existence and the mind boggles to think what a copy of that Bible would be worth on auction today?

## **The Age of Recreational Sex**

Actually, it seems to me to be a Bible for our age. The age of recreational sex. The symbol that we could use could be the 'Wicked Bible'.

It seems worthwhile, in the light of this, to ask a simple question. Why did God outlaw recreational sex? Because sex surely is fun and exciting. Was it because, as a teenager is apt to ask his dad, "Ah Dad, you never want me to have any fun." Is that the reason God said, "Thou shall not commit adultery?" Or do you suppose He said that, because there are consequences for individuals, and for society, if sex is not kept within certain boundaries.

### **Wrong Uses of Sex**

One of my first clues to this, came in of all places, in a Navy V.D. film. I had the film library at one place and I'd sometimes sit back there, and I would put those films in the projector and run them and one of them that I had watched was a venereal disease film, to teach sailors to be careful and to not get sexually transmitted diseases. They called them venereal diseases. Today, for some reason, that got to be pejorative and they changed it to 'sexually transmitted diseases', so I guess we'll go with that.

In the days before they knew what was causing it, I saw in the film, hundreds of babies went blind, not long after birth, because of the presence of a gonorrhoeae bacteria in the birth canal. That was because mother had been infected with gonorrhea, by a sex partner, whether it was the one that conceived the child, or not, it didn't matter. If mama had gonorrhea, the gonorrhoeae might have been present in the birth canal and the result was, a child that was born had those bacteria in its eyes that would eventually cause it to go blind.

By the time I saw the film, they were then putting silver nitrate, I think it was, in the baby's eyes at birth to prevent blindness.

The film was warning about other problems besides the problem with babies. At the time I saw the film, there may have been six or seven significant venereal diseases. They listed them for you and showed symptoms and pictures which were daunting to say the least.

Then, there were six or seven significant venereal diseases. Now, there are over 50 and they are a lot more dangerous than a, excuse me, doze of clap, as sailors used to call it.

How dangerous? Oh, have you ever heard of AIDS or HIV?

### **AIDS in Africa**

Take a look at Africa. Did you know that there are over 13 million orphans in Africa because of AIDS alone? Many of those kids have AIDS. They got it from their parents and they will die from it as well. Thirteen million! How many people have died of AIDS in Africa? Well, I could give you the sum total of the figure but let me see if I can help you understand the impact of AIDS on Africa. Those who have died of AIDS in Africa are the combined population of these American cities: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, San Diego, Detroit, Dallas, Phoenix, San Antonio, San Jose, California and Baltimore, Maryland. That many people have died of AIDS in Africa. The population of Los Angeles equals the children who have died of AIDS in Africa.

This is not a problem we can solve with a little silver nitrate in the eyes or a shot of penicillin in the behind.

Now, can we perhaps begin to understand, why God said, "Thou shall not commit adultery?" The spread of AIDS in Africa is primarily from heterosexual promiscuous sex. Oh yes, the same things are going on in your country. The only difference is the numbers are a lot higher in Africa.

### **Did God Create Sexually Transmitted Diseases?**

Now this raises a troubling question, did God create sexually transmitted diseases as a trap for man? Is it a kind of punishment to man for having too much fun? Is that the whole idea that God created man, and then in a mischievous moment, He said, "Let's put some venereal diseases in the population so that if men sin, we can get them?" I don't think so. That doesn't sound like the God you read about in the Bible.

I think STDs are an example of what can happen when viral and bacteriological strains are given an indefinite life in which to mutate and change. I'm not an expert in this area at all, but your body is teaming with bacteria, right now. Try not to panic, most of them are harmless and some of them are even good for you.

When we have sex with another person, we trade some bacteria with our partner every time and bacteria mutate in the lifetime of a man or a woman and they may change a bit, but the strains we exchange between one man and one woman won't survive us. We will never hurt another human being because they won't go beyond our family, and the chances are that if we started off clean, in the end, there still will not be a problem because the bacteria will not have had time to change beyond certain limits.

However, if we add additional people to the mix and we give those strains of bacteria indefinite life, immortal life as it were, they can go on and on for 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 years or longer. If we allow the bacteria that kind of time to change and to mutate, all bets are off.

Now I can't tell you that's how STDs originated, just take it as an analogy to what might have happened, in a realization that God didn't create these things. Man, by his sins, created these things.

Think about this, if we could somehow manage worldwide monogamy for a generation or two, we could wipe out all STDs, including AIDS. They would be gone, over, finished, disappeared. Now does that give us a message or not?

So why blame God for it? It's our problem. We created it. God told us how to avoid it.

### **Why Did God Say, "Thou shall not commit adultery?"**

So why did God say, then "Thou shall not commit adultery?" Perhaps, at the highest level: It's the children! Children have to be protected from the stupidity of adults. At another level, it's about our personal health. And at another level it is the health of society.

No one knows yet, what the final impact of AIDS will be on the African continent, on African society, and in civilization.

So yes, society has an interest in putting a damper on extramarital recreational sex. There was a time when we realized that, but society has completely lost control. So, what do you suppose God had in mind that we have lost sight of? We are going to talk about that.

### **God Created Man and Woman**

"The LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept." Genesis 2 verse 21, "And God took one of Adam's ribs, and closed up the place with flesh, {22} And the rib that God had taken from man, He made a woman and He brought her to the man. {23} And Adam said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

This is really interesting because the way this is presented to us is, that woman is man, that little rib that God took from Adam, that was what he used to make woman. In fact, everyone who is born into this world has the potential from the earliest time in the womb, to go either direction, either to male or to female, because essentially, we are the same kind of creature. We just have a minor difference or two.

This is now "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She was taken out of man." {24} "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh. {25} And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed."

### **God Created Marriage**

"Therefore," He says, "A man shall leave," a man singular, "leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife," singular, "and they shall be one flesh." What he is talking about here is, one man, one woman, for life.

They were naked. They were not ashamed. There was not a thing in the world wrong with the natural attraction between a man and a woman and the things that would naturally come out of them being naked together.

And thus, was created, the basic unit of society, the family. And provision was made for the spinoff of a new family from an old family, for there was no intention to keep these families into great, huge, growing clans where everybody lived together, and it was communal living. No, no, no! A man is to leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they were to become one flesh.

### **Why A Family?**

But why a family? Why marriage? Why do they need to cleave together? One man, one woman, and stay together for life? It is for the children, of course!

Why should we care about the children? Well, a society that doesn't care for children will not survive. A culture that corrupts their children doesn't deserve to survive, and there are many ways to corrupt children. They can be corrupted sexually and there is a terrible wave of that going through our society and everybody's wringing their hands about it as though they didn't realize that there's nothing new under the sun. Children have been corrupted sexually, generation after generation after generation as long as there has been man.

They are the weakest and most vulnerable part of society and the easiest to actually exploit. Human beings have exploited them from time immemorial.

They can also be corrupted by hatred, as the Palestinians are allowing their children to be corrupted by hatred of the Israelis, to where they hate the Israelis more than they love life. If someone can't see that as corruption, they are blind indeed.

### **What Did Jesus Say About Marriage and Divorce?**

For the Christian, we want to know what Jesus had to say about marriage and subsequent divorce?

At the beginning of Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said this in Matthew 5 verse 31, "It has been said, 'Whoever will put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement,' {32} But I say unto you, that 'Whoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication,' which basically means sexual uncleanness of all kinds, "causes her to commit adultery and whoever shall marry her, who is divorced, commits adultery."

Pretty strong stuff! Jesus does not allow divorce because you just don't feel right. Jesus doesn't allow divorce because you're not happy in your relationship. If, one or the other of the partners has committed sexual immorality, Jesus will allow divorce with the right of remarriage. Otherwise, No Go!

The Pharisees challenged Jesus on this issue, you'll find this challenge in Matthew chapter 19, and verse three. I suspect they had heard what Jesus had said in the Sermon on the Mount about divorce.

Jesus said, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" The Pharisees wanted to know and {4} "Jesus said, "Haven't you read, that He which made them at the beginning, made them male," singular, "and female," singular, and {5} "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife and they two shall be one flesh?""

So, they are no more two, they are now one. You can't take one and make it three, four, five or six. It is supposed to be two made one.

Then Jesus said this in verse 6, "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." Now that is pretty absolute.

What came back to the Pharisees was, no exceptions, no nothing. It was Jesus' way He put it to them initially.

So, they said, {7} "Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement and put the wife away?"

Now this is a valid question, and it's not as though they invented this thing out of Moses, it is based on Deuteronomy 24 beginning in verse one. Here's what Moses had to say, "When a man has taken a wife, and married her, and it comes to pass that she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some matter of nakedness in her." What that means, in simplest possible terms is, sexual uncleanness, fornication in New Testament terms. In other words, she has had sex with another man.

"Then let him write her a bill of divorcement, give it to her in her hand, and send her out of his house. {2} When she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife."

So, there was the possibility of remarriage after divorce, because of sexual sins.

Verse 3, "If the latter husband hates her and he writes her a bill divorcement and gives it into her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies, which took her to be his wife."

Okay, the woman is free again. Verse 4, "Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled."

He cannot take her back. If he got rid of her once because of sexual immorality and she had gone out and married another man and he died, he is not allowed to take her back after she has been defiled, which basically means that she has been with another man.

"For that is an abomination before the LORD and you shall not cause the land to sin, which the LORD has given you for an inheritance."

### **Bed Hopping**

Now this is really interesting, because when you go back and look at this law, it seems to have been designed as much as anything else to prevent, what shall we say, bed hopping, a woman going from man to man to man to man, back and forth. The whole idea was the stabilization of marriage. God did not want, in society, women moving from man to man to man or men moving from woman to woman to woman. People were to settle down in their relationships and stay there and if the relationship was broken for a justifiable reason, it had to be formally broken and then there were certain laws about where you went from there. It was a stabilizing of society.

Now how did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' question. He said in Matthew 5 verse 8, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

Now this is a really interesting Scripture. When you read Deuteronomy 24, the awareness, grows on you. that what you're dealing with here is that someone has come up with a question in law, what do we do about this? And the judgment is handed down by the judges, and in this case by God. and He says, "When sin has entered the picture. This is what we're going to do, you can put your wife away for this cause, you cannot put her way for that cause and if she is put away, you cannot ever take her back again." So that was the decision that was made.

Jesus said, "Because of the hardness of your heart, because sin has entered into the picture, we are going to do these things. But this is not what God wants."

What does God want? Oh, what was said, "One man, one woman, for life!"

Jesus went on to say, {9} "I say to you, whoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, commits adultery and whoever marries her, which is put away, commits adultery."

In other words, once a marriage is broken by sexual sins, you can put the person away and remarry. Otherwise, marriage is for life! So, in the end, Jesus accepted Moses' provisions, but He appealed to the original intent of God in marriage. Why? It's for the children!

### **Effects of Family Breakdown on Society**

So, what happens to a society when families begin to break up? When the institution of the family begins to break down? Divorce is becoming so common in our country that some 50% of all kids are being raised in single-parent homes. These children have more difficulty in school, more behavior problems, more negative self-concepts, more problems with peers and more problems getting along with their parents. Is there any reason why we should be surprised at this? It is like slapping yourself in the forehead and saying, "Wake-up!" Why would you be surprised when the kids have problems when their parents have gone through a divorce? Children are frightened and confused by the breakup in the family. They are confused by the separation and alienation of the two most important people in their world. They tell us that children commonly think they are the cause of the problem when the family breaks up. "It's all my fault. My parents would be together if it weren't for me."

Sometimes children assume the responsibility for trying to reconcile the problem and healing the breach. Often, they tell us, sacrificing themselves in the process.

What is it in children that will cause a normally selfish kid, who says "Give me that," to turn around and sacrifice himself to keep his parents together? What does the child know that parents don't?

Divorce can affect the health of a child, his mental health, his emotional health, his physical health. Altogether this body of children is growing up in our society in single-parent homes who don't have a father or don't have mothers together, working to help them be all that they can be, are coming up short, because society has failed them.

We have come to a terrible pass in our society. You know, it's been said, that those who cannot learn the lesson of history are condemned repeat it.

### **What Did Jeremiah Have to Say?**

I often find myself going back to prophets like Jeremiah and reading. Now you may think, when you read a prophet like Jeremiah, that he just talking about Jerusalem many years ago and it has absolutely nothing to do with the end time. I will tell you, Jeremiah is describing what was going on in his society, his civilization, at that time, and it is written down so that those of us at the end of the ages of the world, can take warning from what has happened before.

In the fifth chapter of Jeremiah. "God says to Jeremiah, "Run you to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see if you can find a man, or anybody, that executes judgment and looks for the truth and I will pardon the whole city." {2} They say, "The LORD lives," and in the process they are swearing falsely." They lie through their teeth. {3} "Oh LORD," Jeremiah replies, "Are not your eyes upon the truth, you have stricken them, and they haven't grieved. You have consumed them, but they won't receive correction, they have made their faces harder than a rock and they refused to return.""

God is not happy with us. Things are not working. What are we doing wrong?

Jeremiah having observed this, says this, {4} "I said, "These are the poor people, they are stupid and they are foolish. They don't know the way of God and the judgment of God." {5} "I know, I'll go to the great men and I will speak to them, because they have known the way of the LORD. They've known the judgment of their God. But NO, they have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds, {6} Wherefore, a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evening shall spoil them. A leopard shall watch over their cities. Everyone that goes out of there should be torn in pieces because their transgressions are many and their backslidings are increased. {7} How shall I pardon you for this?" God says. "Your children have forsaken me and sworn by them that are no gods; when I had fed them to the full, then they committed adultery and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses. {8} They were like fed horses in the morning. Everyone neighed after his neighbor's wife."

I'll tell you, this is an apt description of our own country, our own people, right now and this is what the LORD says, {9} "Shall I not visit for these things?", saith the Lord, "And shall not my soul be avenged on a nation as this?"

### **Woe Be to The Pastors**

Well, we are a nation just like the nation in Jeremiah's day, but how did we get there? That's the problem. I think the blame lies in the place that many, perhaps do not consider.

Jeremiah 23 lays the blame, ""Woe be to the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" saith the LORD. {2} "Therefore thus saith the LORD God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people, you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not visited them, and behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings," saith the LORD."



What God said to them at that time, and it echoes all the way down to our day, is that the spiritual leaders have failed the people.

Jeremiah continues in verse nine to say, "My heart within me is broken because of the prophets. All my bones shake. I'm am like a drunken man, and like a man that wine has overcome, because of the LORD, and because of the words of his holiness. {10} For the land is full of adulterers."

Now I do want you to get me wrong, I'm not really at this moment talking about the pedophile priests, or the non-Catholic ministers who get involved with little boys or little girls or more often, perhaps with another man's wife. It happens because we are all human.

What I'm talking about is the fact that the pastors, the preachers, have not caused people to hear God's Word and that it means what it says. They have somehow done away with the Law. They have somehow told people that 'grace' is all you need. You don't have to worry about the Law. You don't have to look back at what the Bible says is right and what is wrong and as a consequence, they have undermined the moral basis for our society, the very standards of right and wrong. We have to take the responsibility back to the people who should have told us.

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*The late Ronald L. Dart was a Christian evangelist whose teachings still inspire thousands of people around the world. His legacy spans decades. For more information about the teachings of Ronald L. Dart, visit [RLDEA.com](http://RLDEA.com) where you will find booklets, articles, sermons, Bible studies, and books by Mr. Dart.*

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### **Discussion Questions**

1. Some people think that today recreational sex is more common than in years past. Do you really believe that idea is true, or is it that it is more accepted as norm than in days past?
2. Have Christians failed in being honest about the temptations of sex, and being open about why it is important to keep it in the confines of what God intended it to be?
3. What do you think about the statement that just a couple of generations of monogamy could wipe out all STDs?
4. Didn't God warn us about plagues that would come upon us if we strayed from His Commandments?
5. What do you think about Mr. Dart's point of the three reasons God told us to not commit adultery? (Children, personal health, and the health of society)
6. What, in your opinion, would be the best way to teach the importance of not committing adultery to our children?

7. Has marriage lost its value even among God's churches?
8. How can we set the example of why marriages are valuable, important, and Godly? It is not the job of society to set the example; it is God's people who are to set the example.
9. Do you agree with Mr. Dart that one of the major problems "is that the spiritual leaders have failed the people?"
10. Or is one of the problems that the members place too much responsibility on pastors, preachers, and/or ministers to teach God's laws/Truths, instead of taking responsibility on themselves?