

Biblical Theology by Dr. Chuck Baynard

Lesson 42 (HCLD 41)¹

Preparation: Begin and end each study time with prayer. Pay particular attention to the background reading and pray over each passage asking God to reveal Himself to you.

Background Reading: Read all the Scripture verses in footnote # 1 & 2.

Question: Which is the seventh commandment and what are the duties required in the seventh commandment?

Answer: The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14). The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections,[1] words,[2] and behavior;[3] and the preservation of it in ourselves and others;[4] watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;[5] temperance,[6] keeping of chaste company,[7] modesty in apparel;[8] marriage by those that have not the gift of continency,[9] conjugal love,[10] and cohabitation;[11] diligent labor in our callings;[12] shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.[13]²

Sexual purity is closer to the heart of God than any other thing we might assign to the realm of man alone. Angels don't marry and God is one, we only find sexuality in mankind. However as Jesus explained in Matthew, God intended from the beginning that it was to be one woman and one man for so long as they lived.

We see the havoc brought into the lives of humans when this is violated. It is equated with idolatry in our relationship to God and violation of the first table of the law. It is around the marriage bed and that undefiled that God sets the illustration and revelation of His relationship to man.

I think most of us can understand the extension made by the Westminster Divines here and would not hesitate to grant they have properly laid the foundation for this head by adding the indications I began with here that it has a direct relationship to our relationship with God and points to the first table.

I find it interesting they continually point out that which we ourselves are to avoid, we are also to insure others avoid. In other words we have the responsibility to meddle in the affairs of our sisters and brothers in Christ. This is quite correct and fits Christ's directions in Matthew eighteen for reclaiming an errant brother. However in the modern world we would say such affairs among adults is not the business of anyone else and indeed count it not as admonishment in righteousness, but interference into the

¹ Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 41

Q108: What does the seventh Commandment teach us?

A108: That all unchastity is accursed of God,[1] and that we should therefore loathe it with our whole heart,[2] and live chastely and modestly,[3] whether in holy wedlock or single life.[4]

1. Lev. 18:27-28
2. Jude 1:22-23
3. I Thess. 4:3-5
4. Heb. 13:4; I Cor. 7:1-4

Q109: Does God forbid nothing more in this Commandment than adultery and such gross sins?

A109: Since both our body and soul are temples of the Holy Ghost, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy; therefore, He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words,[1] thoughts, desires,[2] and whatever may entice thereto.[3]

1. Eph. 5:3-4; I Cor. 6:18-20
2. Matt. 5:27-30
3. Eph. 6:18-19; I Cor. 15:33

² 1. I Thess. 4:4; Job 31:1; I Cor. 7:34 2. Col. 4:6 3. I Peter 2:3 4. I Cor. 7:2, 35-36 5. Job 31:1 6. Acts 24:24 7. Prov. 2:16-20 8. I Tim. 2:9 9. I Cor. 7:2, 9 10. Prov. 5:19-20 11. I Peter 3:7 12. Prov. 31:11, 27-28 13. Prov. 5:8; Gen. 39:8-10

private affairs of another. Such an interpretation we see vividly portrayed in the US Military's policy of don't tell, don't ask concerning homosexuality in the military.

God has always demanded purity of thought and deed. We have always been responsible for the actions of our brothers and sisters in Christ and required to admonish the one in error. Love demands no less than telling another they are in danger and pointing to the safe path of the Lord. As we are told in the Scripture to flee sin, we see here we are to resist temptation. If we were to put a body to Satan I am positive it will appear as the perfect person of the opposite sex of the one who is seeing him. More godly people fall into this trap than any other. Yet how foolishly we see Christian men and women set themselves up for the fall by entering into temptation by putting themselves in intimate contact on a daily basis with one of the other gender. Many a faithful pastor has found that his limit was reached in personal counseling.

God so created the two to be attracted one to another. Perhaps in the beginning to insure that the world was properly populated. Nonetheless the natural attraction of the flesh does exist, and is to be constantly guarded against. We need to pay particular attention to the admonishment not only to resist, that is take an active proactive stance in protecting self, we are to watch our own words, deeds and dress that we don't tempt another.

We find the negative commands included are a mirror of the duties required. However in the extension here the Westminster Divines put teeth into the freedom demanded by the Sodomites that attack the church, not from without, but from within the church. I believe this is akin to the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet and referenced by Christ. Surely nothing could be viler than the most unclean thing on earth to stand in the place from which God's word of truth is to be proclaimed. Yet denomination after denomination seems to fall victim to this heinous crime against God, doing that which should not even be imagined.

Notice that how the list contains the speaking or listening to vile communications. Pray tell then how a court of the church can even discuss homosexuality when the words of the discussion themselves are a violation of God's law. To even consider this as proper or as the devil would have us word it, an alternative is a gross sin.

This statement recognizes that these vile deeds are not born fully befouled and ready to devour all mankind, but are planted from the depths of hell as mere imaginations, idle words and conversations, which indeed will come to fruit every time in the continuing slide down this slippery slope into the very pit of hell itself. For this reason there is no casual nudity or soft pornography, all of it is equally vile and to be given the same proactive dispatch from the presence of a believer.

The Westminster Divines diverge to a fault when they include under this heading gluttony, which I cannot see how it would in any way lead to these others. The others, even idleness can be implicated and a connection made. While properly contained in another head and as such sin, gluttony does not here belong in my opinion. The foulness of this area says we must be careful, and not add that which might give reason for doubt of the complete command by overextending its call for purity of thought and deed in all areas of life.

We have not seen much of our beloved TULIP in this portion of the catechism. This is because here we are dealing with what may be termed Christian living or life. The TULIP systematically speaking deals with knowledge of God, doctrine of man, and soteriology. The moral law tells us how to live once God has revealed Himself to us. However I think we find the first petal vividly displayed anywhere we deal with the nature of the created, and as such could point again that where one petal exists, the others will bloom of necessity in the unity of God's Word. Nonetheless with the ample proofs of the doctrines of the TULIP already given we need not stretch here to present a false appearance of sincerity.

The only way to survive the temptations laid before us here is to obey another place of God's Word and to bind His word to our wrists and forehead, that is to make God's Word our constant companion so we might seek safety in the Word from the constant onslaught of an unclean world that would involve us in all sorts of sexual misadventures that we might be rendered unfit for the high calling we have in Christ. We must remember constantly that we live not by bread alone, but every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. That which we need, God has provided before He requires it of us. Even this awesome desire born of the flesh and matured in the gates of hell cannot remove us from the

hand of God, nor dispel the Holy Spirit that resides within. Yet, we can ruin our testimony and bring shame to the house of the Lord, and thus we render useless our works in the name of the Lord as they become wood, hay, and stubble. Nonetheless we read that not so with our eternal life, which by election is sure, we loose blessings now and rewards eternally but the soul of the elect is safe in the hands of Christ.

More pragmatically, an officer of the church who allows himself to be so spotted has removed himself from office forever, despite the rules of the church that would reclaim such a one. Reclaim for the kingdom, yes? Restore to a position of trust and authority in the church, God forbid. Such behavior on the part of a member will just as surely render that member unfit for office. Some will point to David and his offenses, but I will as quickly point out he was king and not priest, with absolutely no priestly duties, but rather needing the services of the priests and prophets. In the biblical saga of Elijah note how God describes the true remnant. It is true that the blood of Christ washes away sin and grants a new beginning in Christ. However it does not take the morally fallen and set them up as examples to the flock. Their presence exhibits the limitless mercy and love of God.

Solomon warns often of the dangers involved in this area in the wisdom literature. This grieves God and a burden on the soul of man. Little children flee from her. Submission to this temptation indeed has earthly and eternal consequences, more so in my opinion than any other violation of the laws of God.

Suggested Sermon Outline

Chastity, Adultery, and Eternity

What does the seventh commandment teach us?

That all unchastity is condemned by God, and that we should therefore detest it from the heart, and live chaste and disciplined lives, whether in holy wedlock or in single life.

Does God forbid nothing more than adultery and such gross sins in this commandment?

Since both our body and soul are a temple of the Holy Spirit, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy. Therefore He forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and what ever may excite another person to them.

I. Chastity Matters to God

A. God rejects all unchastity - These Are Not Victimless Crimes of No Eternal Substance .

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. (Galatians 5:19-21)

B. Believers must fight these sins and the conditions which promote them. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. (Jude 23)

C. And we must start with our own hearts. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; (1 Thessalonians 4:3-4)

D. Christian marriage is the alternative to these destructive practices. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

II. Godly Chastity Begins in the Heart

A. The vulgar climate of the age is incompatible with normal Christian living. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. (Ephesians 5:3-4)

B. Would the Christ Who went to the cross to pay for sin be comfortable in your heart? Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Corinthians 6:18-20)

C. Jesus removed the ambiguities behind which we hide our sins and enable us to lie to ourselves about the seriousness of what we are doing. Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (Matthew 5:27-29)

III. Protect Your Heart

A. When the heart is fixed on the right things it will not have much room for the wrong things. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; (Ephesians 5:18)

B. Do not accept the easy excuses which betray sinners. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. (1 Corinthians 15:33)