

**COMMANDMENTS 7 & 8**  
**The Ten Commandments**  
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We're looking at the Ten Commandments and saying they fall into two basic divisions. The first four have to do with our relationship to God and the last six, our relationship to one another. These last six commandments speak of the preservation of very important things in our life. The fifth commandment – honor parents – speaks of the preservation of the family. Sixth commandment – thou shalt not kill – the preservation of life itself. Basic fundamental human life. The seventh and eighth commandment which we look at this evening – the preservation of marriage and the preservation of property. The ninth and tenth commandments next week – the preservation of reputation. The barrier against lying. When we lie we destroy somebody else's reputation and honor. And also the guarantee of a person's contentedness – the commandment against coveting.

We look at the seventh commandment for a few moments: you shall not commit adultery.

There's so many ways of looking at our society with its stress upon sexuality. It seems like advertisers cannot sell a product without it. There was a report out a couple weeks ago in one of the secular periodicals that out of every sexual relationship on television that ends in intercourse that 8 out of 10 relationships occur between unmarried people. That tells you where the value system of the media society is.

We begin to talk about this whole subject of sexuality we see in western society at least with its permissiveness, the homosexual rights movement. With the tremendous license within our society today along comes this commandment saying to us you shall not commit adultery. A statement which has more to do than simply violating the sexual relationship within marriage by having an affair. The commandment as interpreted by Jesus covers all kinds of sexual sin whether it's fornication, adultery, homosexuality. Jesus as we will see talks about the lust that is within the heart.

The reason why God is involved in this area of our life is because he desires for us to be whole. He desires to preserve us emotionally, psychologically, spiritually. He desires the preservation of the family, a safe place for the family. He knows that when people are unfaithful in this area they leave off parenting and modeling responsibilities. The family begins to break up. In fact twenty-five million children every 10 years are brought up in a home split apart. God is concerned with our having a meaningful relationship with him and he's concerned with our having a meaningful relationship with other people, within family. He's concerned. He gave us laws that protect those relationships with him and with one another.

In looking at the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment we need to ask a couple of questions. Obviously the commandment on adultery relates to marriage. We need to ask what constitutes marriages.

Jesus in Mark 10:6-9 gives three things about marriage. From the beginning of creation God made them male and female. God created human sexuality. This is God's idea, not the devil's. The church needs to recover the fact that God created us as sexual persons, male and female and sexuality was never the devil's idea. It was God's.

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God then set limitation for the expression of sexuality within marriage. Again Mark 10:6-9 “For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they too shall become one. So they are no longer two but one.”

Then the Lord’s third teaching on marriage is not only has God created sexuality, not only does God desire a monogamous marriage but marriage is in dissolvable, un dividable. What therefore God has joined together let not man put asunder. The scripture is really saying when we make a commitment to the Lord that’s intended to be a lifelong commitment. And within marriage we make a commitment it is intended as lifelong commitment. Our relationship with God is a model of our relationship with one another. It’s therefore appropriate that the Lord many times describes himself to us as the bridegroom. We are the bride. We are covenanted to him. There’s that analogy of marriage to faith in Christ. Even as our faith is public, marriage is public. It is done before the presence of witnesses. It is permanent and it is unique as there is only one Lord, God’s designed that there be only one partner for us in life.

Obviously the seventh commandment has to do with the breakup of marriage and the violation of the marriage vows. We might ask legitimately if we look at what is marriage that we might also say when does marriage end. If you get married, when is the ending of it?

Obviously marriage may end in death, Romans 7. Or it may end in divorce. The Old Testament spoke specifically to the theme of divorce and indicated that there were grounds under which a person in God’s eyes might be divorced and remarried without incurring a violation of God’s law. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 says if a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her, sends her from his house, if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man and her second husband writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, the first husband who divorced her is not allowed to marry her again for she has been defiled.

The key verse is verse 1 – If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, God allows a certificate of divorce to be written. Jesus says this was done because of the hardness of people’s hearts. It was never God’s idea in the beginning to permit divorce.

But Jesus did in Matthew 5 permit divorce on one ground. It was found from Deuteronomy 24:1 “If a married partner finds something indecent about their marriage partner.”

In Jesus’ day the two schools of rabbis in the Pharisaic party were divided over what constitutes grounds for divorce. In that context Jesus came and said the only ground that divorce and remarriage may occur only on the ground of fornication. That something indecent is the adultery which has broken the marriage. If you take the words of Jesus all together you’ll find that even where there has been adultery in a marriage there is to be an attempt nevertheless of the Christian partner to have reconciliation. Exercise forgiveness and restoration.

Paul goes on in 1 Corinthians 7 to add one other condition whereby believers may be divorced and remarried and that is if a person is married to an unbeliever and they absolutely refuse to live with them because they are a believer. Paul says in such a case that person is no longer bound.

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Other than that all grounds for divorce and remarriage are tossed out of the scripture. I think scripture is rather matter of fact on that issue. Scriptures do however in 1 Corinthians 7:15 allow for separation without remarriage in the event of severe incompatibility.

I had a situation a person came and shared with me that before they were a Christian they had been divorced and remarried. During the second marriage both of them became saved but they became convinced that this second partner was not God's will for them. Another man entered the scene and through a word of prophecy he said that that marriage was not of God since it had been done as a result of an adulterous affair. It had been consummated before they became Christians. Therefore that person was no longer bound to the second marriage and indeed God had called him to be the believing partner. So having believed that the person divorces their second husband and marries the person who now is their third husband and she's having guilt about all this. They come and say to me, Are we really married?

I took it from John 4 where Jesus encounters the woman who was taken in adultery and she says I've had five husbands and the man I'm living with now is not my husband. Jesus did not pontificate with her and say, We've got to decide whether marriage 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 was a legitimate one and we need to repair that relationship. He simply took her where she was and canceled out the past. You cannot unscramble an egg. It's not going to make any sense to me to go back to husband number two because he had already married someone else. And number one the same way. I said to the man, What you did was wrong. You spoke in the Spirit supposedly to do something contrary to God's word. That's not in the Spirit. I said to her, next time he tells you something in the Spirit that's counter to God's word you don't listen to him. But get on with life. But please don't ever take a position of leadership in the body of Christ. But where you are God can take you and go on.

I think in regard to the past the church and the Lord Jesus Christ himself always does two things. On one hand the law of God is upheld to preserve in tact those marriages and those relationships that have not gone through the whole breaking up many times caused by sin and selfishness in one or both party's life. So on one hand, God's law is upheld. But on the other hand there's God's mercy toward those who have even been clearly in the wrong. God's mercy of restoration that is to be exercised.

I think where we do wrong is begin to talk about God's mercy and God's forgiveness when maybe there's a family that needs to hear at that moment about God's law.

I've generally found that if you commit sin from the vantage point of "I know God will be merciful to me," you're trading on God's mercy. You're doing something that violates God's mercy.

What should I do about an unhappy marriage? Work on making it happier. Commitment is more important than feeling. You may need counseling. But except for scriptural grounds of infidelity or an unbelieving spouse, scripture allows separation but scripture does not permit remarriage following such a separation unless again it was on biblical grounds.

What can you do to gain victory over lust? In as much Jesus defines adultery as occurring in the heart before it ever occurs in the act of adultery. In fact the Lord says, "You've heard it said by those of old time, you should not put away your wife. But I tell you whoever looks on a woman

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and goes on lusting after her in his heart has already committed adultery with her. If your right hand offend you cut it off. If your eye offend you pluck it out.” Obviously Jesus says those words in a context where there was not the kind of visual sexual temptation that is in our society. That scripture has been used to condemn an awful lot of people. Especially an awful lot of young men. The Lord is saying, do not go on looking lustfully in your heart. What does he say are the two safeguards? The sense of touch and the sense of sight. Guard those. The Lord is not speaking literally here. He’s speaking hyperbole. That’s an exaggerated statement for effect. If the disciples had taken Jesus literally we would have had a lot of amputated blind disciples preaching the gospel. It’s an over statement for effect.

He doesn’t say in regard to sexual sin, cut off your right foot because generally sexual temptation is not come through the toes. It comes through the touch gate and the eye gate. He’s saying to all of us, and especially to those who struggle with sexual feelings which are not of God, guard what is going into your eye and guard the sense of touch that it might be preserved.

The Christian man and the Christian woman lives with the tension that sexual urges themselves are created by God. They are pleasing to God and they are a means which drive us and impels us to even want to seek out marriage companionship.

But when they become areas of our life we excessively dwell upon that we become fixated on, we begin to make idol images in our minds, fantasy kind of images. At that point we begin to transgress God’s law and God calls us back to a sense of reality and soberness to replace real people with fantasy images which we have that are not of him.

God in the 7<sup>th</sup> commandment is guarding our happiness, preserving sexuality within marriage, keeping us as persons that can be whole and can ultimately within marriage honestly and authentically relate to one another. So as Adam and Eve with the blessing of God, man and wife might be naked and not be ashamed. There might not be anything which clouds their relationship with one another.

There’s so much that can be said. But God seeks first of all if you have been involved in sexual sin I have good news for you. God seeks to forgive you and restore you. But I also speak to those of you who have never been involved in sexual sin. God seeks to preserve you and to keep you. He wants you whole. It’d be better for you if you never fall into sexual sin.

The eighth commandment is thou shalt not steal. I suppose adultery is one form of stealing. It is stealing what belongs rightly to only our marriage partner. But the eighth commandment has to do with matters of financial stealing. And at the same time guarantees the right of property. If You shall not steal it means there are some things that are our rights to have that no one else can have. The state cannot socialize, Marxism cannot declare. I think there’s legitimate ground for basic tenants of capitalism that there is a God given right that individuals have to property and to their own financial care and welfare. That must be handled rightly.

The commandment, Thou shalt not steal, is protection in many ways. It for one thing is basic protection of the poor. Without the protection of the 8<sup>th</sup> commandment you have the law of the jungle where the strongest and the one most heavily armed walks away with everything. And the have nots then have nothing. You really only have four ways that you can come into possession of money. You can work for it, you can be given it – inherit it, you may invest it and gain

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dividend, or fourth, you may steal it. You may *not* steal it! Only the first three ways are approved in scripture.

There are two broad divisions of theft. There is theft against one another, other humans. And the second, theft against God.

I want to talk first of all about thefts against one another. None of the Ten Commandments is probably so often bent or broken as this one. There are various forms of thefts against one another. One is direct theft. Exodus 22 is a whole chapter that has to do with direct theft. When there is stealing that goes on Exodus 22 says if I take your ox I return five fold. That is I give you five oxen or cattle back. If I take your sheep however I'm only responsible to give you four back. If I take other things there's requirement on restoring two fold.

Why in the world if I took an ox would I have to restore it five times whereas a sheep only four times? Isn't an ox worth more than a sheep? Yes it is. The principle being that the higher the value of the things you steal the more it ought to pain you when you're caught. The principle of the longer sentence. Even in our laws we define the greater amount that you steal then the more culpable you are, the more punishable you are.

Zacchaeus we know when he was converted in Luke 19:18 took the Old Testament very literally. He said because he had stolen from people through unjust taxation "half of my goods I give to the poor and if I've defrauded anybody I'll return to them four times over what I've defrauded."

I think we could reform our prison system over night if instead of sentencing thieves to jail we simply make them pay for what they've stolen.

Types of direct theft. There is robbery. Taking a gun and stealing something from somebody, breaking into their house. There's shoplifting. That's a form of robbery. There are false weights and measurements. Deuteronomy 25:13-14. Amos 8:4-6 assails his people for having a false weight and a false measure.

Another type of direct theft is not paying a bill when it's due and you have the money to pay it. You've contracted a service, you have the money to pay it and you don't pay it, you're actually stealing from somebody by not paying it. Proverbs 3:28 "Do not say to your neighbor, go and come again tomorrow I will give it, when you have it with you."

There's another form of direct theft. That is buying by poor mouthing then boasting about it. Or misrepresentation in selling. Leviticus 19:11. If I take advantage of your ignorance it is theft.

There's petty theft: hotel towels, keeping too much change and not reporting it when it's given you, students plagiarizing, Xeroxing copyrighted sheet music. That's form of stealing. Person to person phone calls when you know the person isn't there but you just wanted to check to see if they'd arrived or not. All kinds of wonderful little ways to steal money.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. These are just some ways the Holy Spirit has convicted me.

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If those are all forms of direct theft then there is indirect thefts. Like if you're an employer not paying your employees what they are truly worth. What you can realistically pay. Deuteronomy 24:14-15 "You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy whether he is one of your brethren or one of the sojourners. You will give him his hire on the day he earns it before the sun goes down. For he is poor and sets his heart upon it. Lest he cry against you to the Lord, it be a sin in you."

Deuteronomy 25:4 which Paul applies to persons who teach the word "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain."

Jeremiah 22:13 woe to him who employs people but doesn't pay when the job is done. James 5:4.

If it's true that employers can steal from their employees, it's true that employees can steal from their employers. Proverbs 18:9 "He who is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys." 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11 "If anyone will not work, let him not eat." Ephesians 4:28 "He who has been stealing must no longer steal but work doing something useful with his own hands that he may have something to share with those who are in need." Do an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. If you've had a habit of lagging or sleeping on the job or not working at all it's time to turn that idleness around. Do not steal from your employer.

Another form of stealing is not leaving something left over for the poor. Leviticus 19:9-10.

There are all kind of ways you can steal from man.

There's also a way you can steal from God which Matthew 3:8-12 talks about. "Shall a man rob God?" In that kind of robbery the scripture is talking about not giving our tithe to the Lord. Our money is the means God uses to make his work go forward. When we withhold it, scripture tells us in is theft.

What these commandments are saying to us is that contentment in life can be kept within the boundaries. People think that in order to be free there ought to be no rules. That's the wrong view of life. There is no game in life, I'm talking about an athletic contest, that could be played if there were no rules. The game is only played well if there are rules. If you're playing a game of tennis, you'll never be good at tennis unless you hit the ball within the white lines. And get the ball over the net. Tennis would not be any fun if you could hit the ball anywhere you wanted. It must be played within the boundary in order to be challenging.

Every concept of freedom involves discipline. If there is no discipline then the game dissipates and loses its meaning. God's ordained life to be the same way. He's said to us, if you really want to know what sexual happiness is, make a lifelong commitment to the person within marriage. Save all sexual relationship until that moment of marriage. Then enjoy within marriage. Only in that way can you express the fullness of your sexuality without guilt, without grief. The only way. God says I give you this law for your protection and your happiness.

Same way with limits on stealing. God's way I've given you boundaries by which you may legitimately acquire money. By work, by gift or inheritance, by dividend. Work within those

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bounds. Learn to live within your income. Don't live outside that income. Live within it. That you may rejoice and be content and be without guilt.

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