

TEACHING GOAL

To study the prohibitions of the seventh commandment.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Which is the seventh commandment?
A. The seventh commandment is, Thou shalt not commit adultery.
- Q. What is forbidden in the seventh commandment?
A. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions.

S.C. 72, L.C. 139, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 95-96

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: I Corinthians 5

Support Passages: Genesis 2:23-24, 20:2-18, 34:5-7, 39:9; Leviticus 18, 20:10-26; Deuteronomy 22:22-27, 27:20-23; Proverbs 7:6-27; Romans 1:24-27

BIBLE STORY

II Samuel 11,12: David and Bathsheba

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

Hebrews 13:4

4 Marriage *is* honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

APPLICATION

Among the things forbidden by the seventh commandment are adultery, fornication, rape, incest, bestiality and homosexuality. Yet these matters of immorality are among the most frequent sins seen in our modern society. Television, motion pictures and other public media flaunt these sins as normal behavior. Therefore we must be very careful with our exposure to such sinful behavior lest

we be enticed to sin against God and our families.

SUMMARY

Having defined adultery and its relationship to the integrity of the family in the previous lesson, we now turn to a discussion of other sins implicit in the seventh commandment. The study text,¹ deals with just such a sin. The apostle Paul notes that among other things, a certain man in the Corinthian church "has his father's wife" and he uses the Greek word "porneia" (immorality or fornication) to describe this practice. The step-mother is probably in view here rather than the mother since the word for "mother" would probably be used if that was intended. In any event it is a serious offense infraction the seventh commandment to have a sexual relationship with one's step-mother as the context makes plain. So much so that Paul decided to deliver the man to Satan "for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" and he was to be excommunicated and treated as an infidel.

Actually such relationships are explicitly forbidden in several passages, for example, "Cursed is he who lies with his father's wife."² Sexual relations with any blood relative or any immediate relative by marriage are forbidden. Furthermore, sexual relations with animals (bestiality) are forbidden in these same passages, and as well, homosexual relationships. This latter is referred to by Paul as utter degradation.³ He uses the terms, impurity, degrading passion, an indecent act, error and a depraved mind do describe homosexual behavior. Clearly homosexuality is forbidden and is a most base sin.

Another type of relationship that was not ever condoned by God is digamy (marriage to a second husband or wife) or polygamy (marriage to many husbands or wives). The only such practice mentioned in scripture is the taking of a number of wives, there being no case of a woman taking more than one husband at once. The marriage ordinance⁴ implies monogamy where one man is united with one woman to become one flesh. Thus "digamy or polygamy was a departure from the original institution and therefore, though suffered or tolerated under the Old Testament, was, nevertheless, a violation of God's instituted order."⁵ There is not one instance in scripture where polygamy was a successful or happy relationship.

Lamech's digamy was accompanied with murder. Abraham's brought bitterness and sorrow to his house and instituted nations that are murderously hostile to each other to this day. David's polygamous and immoral relationship with Bathsheba brought him much grief. Solomon's wives turned him away from the Lord. Clearly the Lord desires monogamy when He states that an Elder or a

¹ I Corinthians 5

² Leviticus 18:8 or Deuteronomy 27:20

³ Romans 1:24-27

⁴ Genesis 2:24

⁵ John Murray, Principles of Conduct, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1957, p45.

Deacon must be the husband of one wife (this also implies that church officers must be male).⁶

Joseph refused to fornicate with Potiphar's wife calling such a thing a "great evil, and sin against God." Here is a great positive example to us in a society that flaunt's such relationships as desirable. It is said that any sexual relationship between consenting adults is permissible, but to this the Lord declares, "For whoever does any of these abominations, those persons who do so shall be cut off from among their people. Thus you are to keep My charge, that you do not practice any of the abominable customs which have been practiced before you, so as to defile yourselves with them; I am the LORD your God."⁷

⁶ I Timothy 3:2 & 12

⁷ Leviticus 18:29-30