



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (PCA)

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November 12, 2020

Dear First Pres Family,

This Lord's Day morning we continue our study of the Ten Commandments, God willing turning our attention to the Seventh Commandment, which prohibits adultery and calls God's people to sexual purity.

This commandment is particularly difficult for our time - as in every age. For example, A study of consistory records in Geneva from 1542 to 1609 showed 636 men and 538 women under pastoral care and discipline for committing adultery or otherwise engaging in immoral acts of fornication. Rampant sexual immorality is not unique to our own time.

As we look together at the Seventh Commandment, we'll consider - as we normally do - how this particular command sets forth some of God's sovereign rights as well as what it both requires and prohibits.

Within the wider culture and even broad evangelicalism there are voices suggesting that unnatural expressions of sexuality fall within the bounds of godly Christian behavior so long as these relationships are committed and loving. For that reason, we will also briefly consider how the Scripture shows us clearly that marriage is a union only of one man and one woman.

A sermon dealing with the Seventh Commandment may cause covenant children to ask questions of their parents that are both difficult and just plain awkward. Yet it is good for parents to use this opportunity to explain to their children why we believe what we do regarding human sexuality and how to glorify and enjoy God both in our purity and our sexuality.

It is a good thing for children to ask questions about these subjects after hearing a sermon preached on it. Far too many children learn their sexual ethics from TV shows like *Friends*, *Will and Grace*, or *Game of Thrones*, and others that revel in deviant sexual behavior, which works to normalize harmful behavior. It is a blessing to have an opportunity to shepherd one's children and grand children in this area using the Bible's teaching on the Seventh Commandment.

Above all, we must understand God gave us His Law for our good, our health, and our enjoyment of His gifts. This is no less true in the Seventh Commandment. Biblical sexual ethics enable us to find godly fulfillment and joy and they enable us to experience love in ways that are deeper because we are following His design.

On the back of this letter, I've included some quotations from the *Westminster Larger Catechism* to both aid everyone in preparing for the morning sermon as well as to help parents and grandparents anticipate some of the questions their children may have on this matter.

I look forward to worshiping with you this Lord's Day.

Your pastor,

Ryan Biese

WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM

No. 138, *The duties required in the seventh commandment are, chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behavior; and the preservation of it in ourselves and others; watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses; temperance, keeping of chaste company, modesty in apparel; marriage by those that have not the gift of continency [celibacy], conjugal love, and cohabitation; diligent labor in our callings; shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.*

No. 139, *The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are, adultery, fornication, rape, incest, sodomy, and all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections; all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto; wanton looks, impudent or light behavior, immodest apparel; prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages; allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them; entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage; having more wives or husbands than one at the same time; unjust divorce, or desertion; idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company; lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays; and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.*

HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

No. 108, Q. What is God's will for us in the seventh commandment?

A. That God condemns all unchastity, and that we should therefore detest it wholeheartedly and live decent and chaste lives, within or outside of the holy state of marriage.

No. 109, Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

A. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul, and God wants both to be kept clean and holy. That is why God forbids all unchaste actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires, and whatever may incite someone to them.