

Ten Commandments -- #7 Sexual Immorality

7	Do not commit adultery.	Enjoy the pleasure of sexual relations within a lifetime commitment.
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Do not commit adultery. (Exodus 20:14 NLT)

As Christians our primary concern is not what other people think or practice, but rather what God teaches us and the Bible is quite clear about the issue of sexual activity in its many forms. Sexual intimacy is to be saved for marriage. All other sexual relations break this commandment.

Don't you know that those who do wrong will have no share in the Kingdom of God? Don't fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, who are idol worshipers, adulterers, male prostitutes, homosexuals, thieves, greedy people, drunkards, abusers, and swindlers—none of these will have a share in the Kingdom of God ... Run away from sexual sin! No other sin so clearly affects the body as this one does. For sexual immorality is a sin against your own body. Or don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body. (1 Cor. 6:9-10, 18-20 NLT)

God's plan for sexual intercourse is that it only be practiced inside the protection of marriage. Any other sexual intercourse outside of marriage is wrong. Those are stark and startling words for the majority of people in our society today. This is certainly not what one hears in sex education classes in school. It definitely is not the pattern of television and movie storylines nor the lives of the actors who star in those dramas. Somewhere along the line in the 1960's in the "free love generation", society's attitudes towards sexual activity dramatically changed from what had been the standard from the beginning of time.

There's always been sex outside of marriage. Prostitution is known as the second oldest profession. Adultery is mentioned many times in the Bible so it's obvious intercourse outside of marriage was happening at least a few thousand years ago. The fact that people engage in sex outside of marriage is not the issue. What is the point is that until the 1960's it was well understood across society that such activity was wrong. Over the next 4 decades things have shifted so dramatically that saving sex for marriage now seems an impossible standard to attain, or at least an unreasonable demand from ancient times.

In Jesus' most important collection of teachings called the Sermon on the Mount, he extended the call to sexual purity to include not just our actions but our thoughts and feelings as well. **"You have heard that the law of Moses says, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart.** (Matthew 5:27-28 NLT)

When it comes to murder, everyone recognizes that it is wrong and something to not only be avoided but punished.

Jesus puts sexual sin in the same category as murder. **For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all other sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander. These are what defile you.** (Matthew 15:19-20) Jesus says that indulging in sex outside of marriage spoils and pollutes us, ruins and degrades us. We are also taught that those who engage in sexual activity outside of marriage are not just disobeying human rules but are actually pushing God away and rejecting him.

God wants you to be holy, so you should keep clear of all sexual sin. Then each of you will control your body and live in holiness and honor—not in lustful passion as the pagans do, in their ignorance of God and his ways. God has called us to be holy, not to live impure lives. Anyone who refuses to live by these rules is not disobeying human rules but is rejecting God, who gives his Holy Spirit to you. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7-8)

We need to be crystal clear. If we are engaging in sexual activity outside of marriage we are saying "No" to God. We cannot call ourselves followers of Jesus and disobey what He has so clearly taught us. We are told repeatedly that in we engage in sex outside of marriage we will have no part in the Kingdom of God, that we are rejecting God, and that we are sinning against the Holy Spirit. It's no wonder that so many people who enter recovery to find victory over drugs and alcohol find themselves relapsing back into their addictive lifestyles. When we disobey God in one area, we give the devil permission to act in our lives and he doesn't need much of an invitation.

For those of us not currently engaging in sexual intercourse, we are challenged to be very careful about what we condemn in others while condoning certain behaviours among ourselves. God includes the way we talk, the way we think, the jokes we tell, the offhanded comments we make in the category of sexual immorality and warns us clearly that if we engage in such activity we will NOT inherit the Kingdom of God. We risk eternal punishment. **Let there be no sexual immorality, impurity, or greed among you. Such sins have no place among God's people. Obscene stories, foolish talk, and coarse jokes—these are not for you. Instead, let there be thankfulness to God. You can be sure that no immoral, impure, or greedy person will inherit the Kingdom of Christ and of God.** (Ephesians 5:3-5 NLT)

Impossible standards? On our own. For sure. But God is faithful to do in us what we cannot do for ourselves. **God who calls you is faithful. He will do this.** (1 Thes. 5:24 NLT) Come Holy Spirit, and make my life holy and acceptable to God.