The Sermon on the Mount #5

The Seventh Commandment Corrected (5:27-32)

Introduction:

1. Our Lord continued the body of His sermon by rescuing true righteousness from the perversion of Pharisees.
2. Having explained clearly and forcefully that His intent was not to destroy the Law, He then applied the Law.
3. Having explained the importance of the least commandments and the totally inadequate righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, He continued by demonstrating their hypocrisy in marital and sexual matters.
4. The Lord Jesus continued His definition of kingdom righteousness by applying the seventh commandment.
5. The Pharisees through tradition had reduced the seventh commandment to only the overt act of adultery, seducing another man's wife and sneaking into bed to enjoy full intimacy reserved for a marital spouse only.
6. Self-righteousness, or presumed blamelessness before God, is always by limiting God's laws to fit your life.
7. It is extremely important to see that Jesus opposed what had been said, not what Moses had written earlier.
8. It is not an uncommon error that this sermon was Jesus Christ correcting and improving the Old Testament.
9. Missing the lesson here could cause you to think that Jesus changed the laws of sex, marriage, and divorce.
10. Since our Lord commended those who do and teach the least of His commandments, I will this day expand the seventh commandment of Moses to the full extent of the righteousness of our holy God (Matt 5:19).
11. Let the position of this lesson be instructive: Jesus began the body of His sermon with relationship problems, and then He followed that with sexual and marital problems, because these two areas cover most of our sins.
12. The Pharisees limited the commandment until no one was guilty; Jesus Christ expanded the commandment until everyone is guilty! But He obeyed His interpretation perfectly, and that righteousness is yours by grace!
13. Most every one is a whoremonger, and you will give an account for your lasciviousness on Judgment Day.
14. Let us tremble before God's word, search our hearts, cleanse our minds, and wash our feet from fornication!
15. This is not the easiest subject to deal with, and I ask every hearer to be merciful, for I will tell the whole truth.
16. Our generation needs this teaching of our Lord Jesus and its application more than any other generation, for this may be the most sexually free generation with more avenues for stolen pleasures than ever before.
17. The Lord Jesus Christ created love, sex, and marriage. He knows more about it than all men combined, and He has the right to regulate it for any purpose; but His regulations only maximize its pleasure and satisfaction.

The Text Explained

A. Jesus identified the traditional interpretation Israel had been taught by scribes and Pharisees (5:27).
   1. He refers to what they had heard about the seventh commandment, not what was written about it.
   2. Our Lord did not identify or correct, "It is written," but rather what had been preached in Israel.
   3. He did not correct, change, or modify Exodus 20:14; He corrected the wrong application of it.
   4. He condemned the oral teaching and traditional interpretation the Jews had heard in synagogues.
   5. The scribes and Pharisees taught the tradition of the elders, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," which tied the seventh commandment to overt and specific acts of adultery.
   6. They had take God's commandments and limited them to the act itself (Lev 20:10: Deut 22:22).
   7. Jesus Christ did not correct the law of God at all; He restored the law from Pharisee corruption.
   8. There are foolish and weak men who have become eunuchs by totally missing the Lord's lesson.
   9. They foolishly conclude Jesus rejected the seventh commandment and even desiring women!
   10. They leap at His words in Matthew 19:10-12 and/or Paul's words in I Corinthians 7:1 and either castrate themselves (Origen, the inventor of eternal sonship) or swear celibacy (John Paul II).

B. Jesus contrasted the righteousness of His kingdom to the teaching of scribes and Pharisees (5:28).
   1. There is a very definite contrast and opposition here by our Lord's use of the disjunctive "but."
   2. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He did not apologize for His superior religion!
   3. He dogmatically declared that God's standard of righteousness was far higher than the Jews!
   4. He did not flatter the false teachers or commend them in any way, because they were heretics!
   5. He did not excuse them from their error; He simply and boldly declared them wrong before God.
   6. Our Lord did not blanch or cringe dealing with sex; He authoritatively and strictly defined it.

7. The teaching of Jesus Christ was powerfully superior to the Jew's oral tradition (Matt 7:28-29).

C. Jesus expanded the seventh commandment to include merely the lustful thoughts of adultery (5:28).
   1. Consider well. The Lord applied the seventh commandment against adultery to merely lustful fantasies, which is something that may go no further than your heart! What powerful teaching! What condemning doctrine! What destruction of hope for the self-righteous! Give God the glory!
   2. Is this reasonable? Definitely. Lustful fantasies are the basis for all adultery, especially for men! Some naïve girls and women are taken advantage of by men, but not vice versa. The two main reasons it does not cause more is due merely to the lack of opportunity or fear of getting caught.
   3. Jesus did not err about sin. He knew that it began in the human heart with lust (James 1:13-16).
   4. Paul was convicted of concupiscence – sexual desires – by learning about lust (Romans 7:7-11).
   5. Sexual sins result from combinations of the three temptations – the lust of the flesh is the body's demand for gratification, the lust of the eyes is the image that arouses the flesh, and the pride of life is the excitement and flattery of the chase (I John 2:16). Sexual temptations use all three!
   6. But this sinful combination cannot occur, if the heart is dedicated to God and closed to the lust.
   7. This was not a totally new application (Ex 20:17; Job 31:1,9-12; Prov 6:25; 23:33; II Peter 2:14).

D. Jesus expanded the seventh commandment to include drastic measures to avoid adultery (5:29-30).
   1. In regard to matters of sexual temptation, Jesus Christ gave instruction for very drastic measures.
   2. Adultery is a terrible evil that cannot be corrected like stealing (Job 31:9-12; Proverbs 6:26-35).
   3. Sexual temptations, likely the second most powerful after pride and hate, must be harshly denied.
   4. There are figures of speech here – Jesus did not teach mutilation – and the figures are powerful.
   5. Your right eye is a dear and precious possession, but it is not worth meeting God as an adulterer!
   6. Your right hand is a dear and practical member, but it is not worth meeting God as an adulterer!
   7. It is better to give up the most precious and practical things you have in order to avoid adultery!
   8. Whatever tempts you in sexual ways should be removed violently from your life immediately!
   9. This is true conversion! Harlots violently pressing into Christ's kingdom (Matt 11:12; 21:28-32)!
   10. Godly men mortify the members of their flesh – they put them to death (Rom 8:13; Col 3:5-7)!
   11. Godly men crucify their lusts – they put them to death on a cross (Galatians 2:20; 5:24; 6:14).
   12. Godly men take up their crosses daily – bear the pain of sacrifice for Christ (Luke (9:23-24)!
   13. Godly men give up television, movies, Internet freedom, socializing with certain women, reading certain magazines, coed gyms, listening to certain music, working in certain offices or jobs, eating at certain restaurants, reading certain advertisements, driving past certain billboards, or get rid of anything else they perceive to be a threat to their marital and sexual holiness.
   14. Godly women give up television, movies, Internet freedom, socializing with certain men, reading certain magazines, coed gyms, listening to certain music, working in certain offices, eating at certain restaurants, reading certain novels, emailing certain men, taking phone calls from certain men, or get rid of anything else they perceive to be a threat to their marital and sexual holiness.
   15. Godly men flee youthful lusts (II Tim 2:22). They do not provide for the flesh (Rom 13:14). They guard their eyes from sinful viewing (Ps 101:3). They avoid bad company (I Cor 15:33; Jas 4:4). They love their spouse and maximize lovemaking with them (Pr 5:19-20; I Cor 7:1-5). They stay busy so as not to be tempted by idleness (Ezek 16:49; I Tim 5:14).

E. Jesus expanded the seventh commandment to include divorce for insufficient grounds (5:31-32).
   1. Jesus again addressed and corrected the tradition of the elders, not the written words of Moses.
   2. The Pharisees had taken Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and used it to divorce for any cause (Matt 19:1-9).
   3. They had developed quite a wife-swapping mess by pressing Moses' law far beyond its intents.
   4. But the Lord Jesus Christ saw through the legal loophole and blasted their legalized adultery.
   5. When a man divorces his wife because he found someone he likes better, he commits adultery.
   6. When a man divorces his wife because he is lazy and tired or bitter at her, he commits adultery.
   7. When a man divorces his wife for any foolish or light cause at all, he commits adultery.
   8. Leaving a woman vulnerable and needy without a husband forces her into adultery by marriage.

9. The man marrying such a woman also commits adultery by marriage, for she was not truly free.
10. Jesus condemned their whole divorce system as resulting in adultery for all parties involved, because he was not dealing with innocent or guilty spouses but rather a corrupt legal system.
11. These two verses have little instruction of our Lord's overall position on divorce and remarriage, for His intent was to condemn legalized adultery rather than define justifiable divorce.
12. This was not a totally new doctrine, for the prophet Malachi had condemned it (Mal 2:10-16).
13. While we are merciful about divorce in severe cases, we will never justify divorce for light cases.

The Text Applied

A. Our Lord Jesus Christ began with the most difficult and pervasive problem and temptation among men and women – godly relationships involving the heart, tongue, and actions (5:21-26).
B. He then took up the second most difficult and pervasive problem and temptation among men – sexual fidelity in marriage and godly service to the needs and temptations of others (5:27-32).
C. It will be our wisdom and righteousness to review ways that we break the seventh commandment.
   1. God's laws are exceeding broad: it is our duty to examine ourselves in their breadth (Ps 119:96).
   2. We received an introductory lesson with the sixth commandment earlier (5:21-26), where we saw how extensive a simple commandment can be with a holy interpretation and application.
   3. Given our Lord's expanded interpretation of adultery and the preceding example of applying the sixth commandment, we will apply the seventh commandment to any violation of sexual duties or rights, whether in the heart, in word or deed, directly or indirectly, actively or passively.
   4. We will consider a few other Holy Spirit examples of God's expanded definitions of adultery and other sexual sins (Num 5:11-31; Deut 22:13-19; Job 31:9-12; I Cor 7:1-5).
   5. Each and every one of the offences that follows violates, "Thou shalt not commit adultery"!
   6. It is a horrible shame to our religion, when (a) we commit these sins ourselves, (b) allow others to commit them with relative impunity, (c) expose ourselves to temptations in this very seductive area of our lives, or (d) do not treat the offenders as heinously as we would an unrepentant adulterer. Consider how you would watch and resist an unrepentant adulterer in our midst.
   7. We live in one of the most lascivious generations, when casual sex and divorce for any cause are justified, defended, and promoted with the same lies of Solomon's strange woman (Pr 9:17).
D. Your body belongs to the Lord Christ by several means, and you owe Him your total sexual fidelity.
   1. Your body and sexual pleasure are the Lord Christ's by creation and salvation (I Cor 6:12-20).
   2. He has provided very graciously for your sexual fulfillment (Prov 5:19; I Cor 7:1-9; Heb 13:4).
   3. Learning sexual control and body sanctification is God's will for every believer (I Thess 4:1-8).
E. God condemns sinful sexual thoughts (5:28; Ex 20:17; Job 31:1,9-12; Prov 6:25; 23:33; II Pet 2:14).
   1. Thinking of foolishness is sin (Prov 24:9); sexual sin is folly (Gen 34:7; II Sam 13:12; Pr 5:23).
   2. To imagine and desire a sexual sin is to commit it, for you only lack opportunity to complete it.
   3. Some women are more beautiful to look upon than others, and the holy God well knows this (Gen 12:11,14; 24:16; 26:7; 29:17; 39:6-7; I Sam 16:12; 25:3; II Sam 11:2).
   4. Recognizing a beautiful woman and appreciating her attractive features is no more a sin than is recognizing a beautiful house, car, rug, gun, horse, or pizza and appreciating attractive features.
   5. Married men admire beautiful women, but they cannot desire her as wife or for sex (Deut 5:21).
   6. Single men may admire and desire a beautiful single woman to be their wife for sex (Deu 21:11).
   7. Sin is committed when your mind passes from admire to desire, which can be only nanoseconds!
   8. Sin is committed when your mind starts thinking at all, I want that, I need that, or I will get that.
   9. Sin is committed when your mind begins considering situational details for seduction or sin.
   10. Sin is committed when your mind passes from contentment and happiness to bitterness or frustration with your wife (Prov 5:19; Ex 20:17; Col 3:19; Heb 13:4-6).
   11. Since some women are far more attractive and desirable than any house, car, rug, gun, horse, or pizza, you must cut off looking, talking, considering, or thinking much, much sooner.

12. Since the Lord Jesus condemned lustful thoughts and added the illustrations of self-mutilation, it is your duty to avoid and/or escape from any situation that provokes you to lustful thoughts.
13. Mental fantasies with anyone but your spouse are sin, for you are committing sin in your heart.
14. Private moments including fantasies of others are adultery and will be raised on Judgment Day.
15. Mental substitution of anyone for your spouse during sex is sin, for you are thinking adultery.

F. Therefore, pornography is wrong because it leads to the very sins of the heart we are considering.
   1. You must eliminate obvious pornography as drastically and thoroughly as plucking out an eye!
   2. You must identify and eliminate those more subtle things that lead to sexual temptation to lust.
   3. If you love righteousness, you will not shop at the Mall, look at clothing catalogs, read magazines with nearly nude advertisements, use most coed gyms, read "Dear Abby," etc., etc.
   4. There is a very extensive document available that condemns pornography from many angles.

G. Therefore, romantic novels are wrong for women because they lead to fantasies and discontentment.
   1. A perfect man in charisma and passion is no more righteous than a perfect female model nude.
   2. Even so-called Christian romance novels that promote an unrealistic male image are adulterous.
   3. For the women that want to justify them, should a man limit himself to Christian models?

H. The Internet is still mostly used for forbidden sexual pleasures for both men and women.
   1. The biggest business on the Internet is the sex business, where pornography of every sort can be viewed in private with the greatest security … but there is a God in heaven that sees it all.
   2. Men must avoid every picture, story, or opportunity it allows to see or meet the strange woman.
   3. Women must avoid every chatroom or email opportunity to talk with other men in private.

I. God also condemns those sexual liberties short of intercourse that are only the right of a spouse.
   1. In man's efforts to circumvent God's law, unwanted pregnancies, and sexually transmitted diseases, they have promoted intimate foreplay, oral sex, and other alternatives to intercourse.
   2. Some argue that oral sex is not true adultery, because it does not involve actual intercourse.
   3. The sharing of orgasms without intercourse is surely a violation of the seventh commandment, for it defrauds your spouse and steals from another spouse what is legitimately theirs only.
   4. The holy God of heaven knows the other alternatives of youthful sex (Ezekiel 23:3,21).

J. Sexually defrauding your spouse is equivalent to adultery in at least three different ways.
   1. First, you violate your marriage covenant where you promised unlimited sex for your spouse; if you did not understand it that way, it is too bad and too late, for that is what God intended.
   2. Second, you are violating your spouse with enormous pain and suffering for unsatisfied needs, which can be very physically, emotionally, mentally, and psychologically debilitating.
   3. Third, you are driving your spouse to commit fornication to gratify their unsatisfied needs, for they must find relief somewhere, whether in private fantasies or in responding to a fornicator.
   4. Men presume this only applies to their desires; but real women have needs equal to or greater.
   5. You do not have the authority, claims, power, or right to your own body. Your spouse has it all!
   6. You owe your spouse when, where, how, and how often they want sex; your thoughts on the matter are not part of the equation, except for mutual fasting and prayer (I Cor 7:1-5).
   7. Do not say your conscience will not allow natural pleasures; you can educate your conscience.
   8. Some women have deformed consciences due to growing up in sexually deformed homes.
   9. Do not say, "My spouse has not complained." They cannot complain. Trust Bible frequency and/or when your spouse says, "Enough!" And then start over again the next day!

K. God requires modest clothing on a woman to exemplify godliness and protect the hearts of men.
   1. If a man's lustful thoughts are adultery, then a woman provoking those thoughts is an adulteress.
   2. It is not a matter of liberty: God has clearly required modest clothes (I Tim 2:9-10; I Pet 3:3-4).
   3. He is detail conscience and despises provocative attire (Gen 3:7,21; Prov 7:10-18; Is 3:16-26).
   4. A woman's thoughts on modesty have nothing to do with it, for she does not really have a clue.
   5. A husband or father's thoughts on modesty have little to do with it, for other men see differently.
   6. A woman wearing provocative clothing ignorantly or rebelliously is an accomplice to adultery.

7. If Paul would not eat meat ever again to save weak consciences (I Cor 8:13), a godly woman will give up whorish fashion trends to save both weak and strong consciences of men.
8. Women should seek that glorious goal of being the virtuous woman of character and appearance.
9. The more attractive, fit, favored, or young a woman, the more care she must apply to her apparel.

L. Flirting by a woman that breaks down inhibitions or causes a man to be tempted is indirect adultery.
1. Holy women are sober and reserved when talking to men in person, on the phone, or by email.
2. Light and frivolous conversation is wrong, and so is flirtatious and flattering conversation.
3. Touching even in a light and friendly way is dangerous. Young girls should be taught against it.

M. Marital treachery is remaining married in a legal sense but torturing your spouse in various ways.
1. The word treachery is God's choice for Israelite men taking foreign brides and leaving the wives of their youth weeping at the altar of God for the violated marriage covenants (Malachi 2:10-16).
2. Sexual defrauding is an example of this sin, because a spouse tortures their marital companion by denying frequent and enthusiastic lovemaking that was implied or stated in the marriage vows.
3. Emotional abuse is providing none of the companionship and love that is fundamental and necessary to a godly marriage and marriage covenant, but expecting sexual intimacy anyway.
4. Emotional abuse is providing none of the companionship and love that is fundamental and necessary to a godly marriage and marriage covenant, and making the spouse beg for any sex.
5. Indirect sexual defrauding is a spouse letting himself or herself go physically, hygienically, or sexually, thus stealing the joy and anticipation that was implied or stated in the marriage vows.
6. God does not allow men to be bitter or to call their wives names (Deut 22:13-19; Col 3:19).
7. Marital rape is being an abusive, critical, sarcastic, moody, or whining baby and expecting sex whenever you feel like it without repairing the emotional damage you have done to your spouse.
8. Routine service is not lovemaking and it defrauds the spouse of considerably more than sex, for it denies the spouse the loving affection that is an integral part of all Christian lovemaking.
9. Marital coercion is forcing a spouse to participate in something against their conscience; if it is something natural, then the conscience better grow up; if it is not holy or natural, then it is sin.

Conclusion:

1. Do not despise adulterers in your thinking, unless you are free from the expanded interpretation of adultery!
2. Do not think highly of yourself in God's sight, until you are free from fantasies, defrauding, and such sins!
3. Do not presume that your worship of God is accepted, when you have stolen pleasure or deprived pleasure.
4. Do not yak about morality or purity or your preferences, when you fail to fulfill all your sexual duties.
5. Consider the great Day of Judgment, when you shall give an account for every violation of the seventh commandment, whether you or anyone else considers it adultery or not. You will be charged with lustful thoughts, sexual defrauding of your spouse, temptations you caused others, and treachery among other sins.

For Further Study:

1. The sermon outline, "Forgotten Sins," contains sins and detailed definitions that fit within the seventh commandment.
2. The sermon outline, "Your Body Is the Lord's," covers a misunderstood passage that condemns fornication.
3. The study outline, "Pornography Will Destroy You," which covers the subject from about every angle conceivable.
4. The commentary on Proverb 5:19, which gives God's instructions for a man being content with his own wife.
5. The commentary on Proverbs 5:20, which gives God's warning against sexual involvement with another man's wife.
6. There are many, many pages of study material for maximizing your Christian marriage in love, companionship, and sex.