

# The Ten Commandments

## The Seventh Commandment

*“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”*  
*Exodus 20:14*

### The Foundation

- Marriage is the oldest institution for mankind – Genesis 1:20-21, 2:18-24
- B.H. Carroll lists four lessons drawn from the Biblical basis of marriage:
  - “The unity of man and woman” – Genesis 2:23
  - “Marriage is a divine institution” – Genesis 1:27, 2:22; Matthew 19:6
  - “Marriage is the first and highest and most important human relation.” – Genesis 2:24
  - “Marriage typifies the covenant relation between God and Israel” – Isaiah 54:5
- God’s original design for marriage was for one man and one woman to: (1) unite as one in marriage, (2) unite for duration of their lives, and (3) contain physical intimacy within the bounds of marriage.
- Sin entered and corrupted mankind, but it did not alter or corrupt God’s design for marriage.

### The Commandment

- The Hebrew *naaph* (Strong’s H5003) clearly means “to commit adultery”.
  - This same word can be used as a metaphor for spiritual infidelity – Jeremiah 3:8-9, Hosea 2-3
- Other forms of sexual immorality are not explicitly listed here, but the spirit of this law is the protection of the sacred institution of marriage from all perversions.

### Historical Application for Israel

- The Mosaic Law contains many related prohibitions and punishments, as when:
  - Leviticus 18 lists many prohibitions concerning sexual relations, including adultery (verse 20)
  - Leviticus 20:10-21 lists prohibitions concerning sexual relations and their punishments, including adultery (verse 10)
  - NOTE – This section of Leviticus is based on the command “Ye shall be holy: for I the LORD your God am holy.” (Leviticus 19:2) – see also Leviticus 18:1-5, 20:20-26.
- The Rabbis saw a connection between the First Commandment (their Second, as they count Exodus 20:2 as the first) and the Seventh. The First demands fidelity toward God and God alone, Seventh to one’s spouse and them alone.

- Widespread adultery is seen as a symptom of Israel's backslidden condition – Jeremiah 5:7-9
  - Many pagan religions had sexual practices in their worship.

## Practical Application for Today

- The New Testament continues to condemn adultery – Ephesians 5:3-5, Hebrews 13:4
- Christ singles out the heart as the source of adultery – Matthew 15:19
- Christ expands the commandment to be not just the *act* of adultery but also the *desire* for it – Matthew 5:27-28
  - Carroll – “Now Jesus is not supplementing the Mosaic law; he is simply fulfilling it, filling it out, showing the spirituality of it; and that it does not refer (1) simply to an overt act, and (2) that it does not refer simply to the marriage relation; but it refers to the passion, whether it ever finds expression or not.”
- Christ commands us to go to extreme lengths to avoid temptation to sin – Matthew 5:29-30
  - Carroll – “Unquestionably, it is to be understood as spiritual. To show you that it must be so understood, let us suppose that a man uses his eye looking on a woman to lust after her, and he therefore plucks out his eye. That would not prevent the offense; it could go on with both his eyes plucked out. And if his hands were cut off, as long as the adultery came out of his heart, it could still go on. So it is perfectly foolish to talk about this excision being legal; it is spiritual. It means this: that whatever object entices you to sin, the preventive is, turn away from it; give it up; cut it off. That is the spiritual thought. Like Paul says, ‘I keep my body under.’ [I Corinthians 9:27] As the little girl in the Sunday school expressed it, ‘Paul kept his soul on top.’ ‘I keep my body under; keep the soul on top.’ The members of the body are merely instrumental, and Paul says that *all sin is apart from the body*. The body cannot sin. The body is used as an instrument of sin, but the sin comes from the inner man; it comes out of the heart of the man.”