

Why Adulterous Relationships Must Be Terminated

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Love in Its Proper Time

- God has designed marriage to fulfill the needs of a husband and wife, but only if they are scripturally married.
- Love that is stirred up in its proper time is beautiful and even encouraged by God.
 - *“Let the husband render to his wife the **affection due her**, and likewise also the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. And likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **Do not deprive one another** except with consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again so that Satan does not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Cor. 7:3-5).*
- However, love stirred up outside the proper time is nothing more than a pursuit of the desires of the flesh, such as the ones we read about in **Gal. 5:17-21**.

Love in Its Proper Time

- God intends scripturally authorized marital sex to be something to be enjoyed but only for those who are scripturally eligible to participate.
 - *“Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge” (Heb. 13:4).*
- **1 Cor. 7** draws the clearest line on what 'is' and 'is not' within the boundaries God provides:
 - Husbands should fulfill the intimate needs of their wives, and wives should do the same for their husbands (**v.2-5**).
 - If you are single, dating, engaged, or married, everyone must control their passions and not give in to temptation (**v.1-10**).
 - For the scripturally married, only have sex with each other (**v.2-5**).
 - For single people, control your passions and avoid sexual immorality (**v.8-9, 36**).

Love in Its Proper Time

- God has placed boundaries on sexual activity. It is intended for a scripturally married husband and wife. Sex outside of these confines contradict God's laws.
- The need to recognize the boundaries God has placed on sex is important because the Bible says we should not just avoid, but "*flee all sexual immorality*" (**1 Cor. 6:18**).
- The word "immorality" translates the common Greek word 'porneia.' This word refers to sexual activity outside of a legitimate marriage relationship.
 - We realize from reading God's Word that sexual immorality exists in a wide variety, and adultery is one such form.

Adultery Defined

- W.E. Vine's Bible Dictionary defines "*adulterer*" as "***one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another.***"
- Webster defines "*adultery*" as "***voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and someone other than that person's current spouse or partner.***"

Adultery Defined

Consider how adultery is condemned in the following passages:

- **John 8:4** – *“They said to him, ‘Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery.’”*
 - The woman was not caught in the middle of a marriage ceremony, but, rather, she was caught having sexual intercourse with a man who was not her husband.
- **Heb. 13:4** – *“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.”*
 - "Bed" is a euphemism for sexual activity. Therefore, adultery is something committed in the "bed" and is outside the bounds of those who are in a scriptural "marriage."
- **Matt. 5:28** – *“But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*
 - Simply fantasizing about sexual intercourse with one who is not your scriptural spouse is a sin.

Adultery Defined

- *“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery” (Matt. 19:9, NKJV).*
 - When a divorce occurs for reasons other than sexual immorality, not only is it wrong for the one doing the divorcing to remarry, but it is also wrong for the one who was divorced to remarry.
- *"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man" (Rom. 7:2-3).*
 - The reason it is wrong for unscripturally divorced people to remarry is because they are "bound" to one another for life.

Repentance Defined

- When we sin, we should perform deeds in keeping with our repentance (**Acts 26:20**).
 - Continuing in sin (an adulterous relationship) certainly is not "in keeping" with repentance. No, we are more like this: "*As a dog returns to his own vomit, So a fool repeats his folly*" (**Prov. 26:11**).
- Consider two Old Testament examples:
 - "*You recently repented and did what was right in my eyes by proclaiming liberty, each to his neighbor . . . but then you turned around and profaned my name when each of you took back his male and female slaves, whom you had set free according to their desire, and you brought them into subjection to be your slaves*" (**Jer. 34:15-16**).
 - "*If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land*" (**2 Chron. 7:14**).

Why This Subject Matters

- Passages like **1 Cor. 6:9-10** inform us that “*adulterers*” (and other types of sinners) “*will not inherit the kingdom of God,*” meaning they will not be saved.
- One can repent of adultery and be forgiven just like any other sin. But for God to forgive one who commits adultery, the adulterer must truly repent by turning away from the adulterous marriage.
- Some will argue “two wrongs don't make a right,” but it is never wrong to stop sinning. In the case of an adulterous marriage, terminating an unscriptural marriage is not a wrong; it is a correct course of action; it is a “*fruit*” of repentance (**Matt. 3:8**).

Not Yet Convinced?

Consider three Bible parallels if you are not yet convinced that adulterous marriages must be terminated.

1. The book of Ezra describes the Israelites marrying foreign women in direct violation of Deut. 7:3-4. Ezra said, "*Now then make confession to the Lord, the God of your fathers and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples of the land and from the foreign wives*" (**Ezra 10:11**). Though the Israelites were not under New Testament law, we can see the parallel. When people today violate passages like Matt. 19:9 and Rom. 7:2-3, God expects them to get out of those unscriptural marriages.

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2. We learn from secular history that Herod divorced his wife and Herodias divorced her husband. **Mark 6:17-18** records this – *“For it was Herod who had sent and seized John and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, because he had married her. For John had been saying to Herod, 'It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife.'”* The word "have" denotes possession, ownership, or continuing to undergo and experience something. In this case, based on his rebuke, do you think John the Baptist wanted Herod to keep ("have") his wife or terminate the adulterous marriage? I believe we all know the answer.

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3. If a person was in a homosexual relationship and wanted to become a Christian, would God accept him if he did not turn from the sin of homosexuality? If we say one in an adulterous marriage does not need to terminate the marriage, we must also say the homosexual can continue in his homosexual marriage even though the Bible clearly says it is sinful (**Rom. 1:26-27**). If we can see why a homosexual relationship must be terminated upon repentance in order to be right with God, then we must apply the same logic to adulterous marriages, which, like every sin, must be forsaken.

Conclusion

Adultery is like every sin – we must stop committing it.

- Let's be like the Corinthians and put adultery (and any other sin that separates us from God) behind us.
 - *“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you**” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).*