

Adultery and Fornication

What Saith the Scriptures?

"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you...? therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

1 Corinthians 6:18-20

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I. Although by the corrupt moral standards of today's permissive society premarital and extramarital sex are considered acceptable and blameless in the eyes of man, nevertheless, the Word of God clearly declares that God (Who never changes – Malachi 3:6) considers it sin.

Genesis 20:9 "a great sin"

Genesis 34:7 "which thing ought not to be done"

2 Samuel 13:12

Jeremiah 13:27

Ezekiel 16:3-22

1 Corinthians 6:18

2 Corinthians 12:21

II. What is the difference between fornication and adultery?

A. Fornication is the illicit sexual intercourse of unmarried persons.

1 Corinthians 6:9, 18

B. To commit adultery is to have sexual relations with someone other than one's own spouse (husband or wife).

Jeremiah 29:23; 5:7-8

Proverbs 6:29, 32; etc.

1. The scriptures also consider remarriage after divorce to be adultery.

Matthew 5:32; 19:9

2. Even looking at someone with a lustful heart is adultery.

Matthew 5:28

III. The Bible is not silent on the subject of premarital relations.

A. Sexual intercourse is to be confined to marriage.

Genesis 34:1-7, 31

B. Marriage is God's provision for the release of sexual desire.

1 Corinthians 7:2

Hebrews 13:4

C. Self-control is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). If a couple cannot restrain themselves, Paul said that they should go ahead and marry (1 Corinthians 7:9, 36-37).

D. Consider the following accounts of fornication in Scripture.

1. Schechem and Dinah

Genesis chapter 34

2. Tamar and Amnon

2 Samuel chapter 13

IV. Fornication and adultery are absolutely forbidden by God.

Genesis 20:9

Exodus 20:14 (Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27; 19:18;

Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20; Romans 13:9; James 2:11)

Leviticus 18:20

Deuteronomy 23:17-18

2 Samuel 13:12

Matthew 14:34 (Mark 6:17-18)

1 Corinthians 6:15; 10:8

A. These sins are exceedingly "evil" and "wicked" in God's sight.

Genesis 39:9

Leviticus 19:29

Deuteronomy 22:22-24, etc.

1 Samuel 2:22-23

1 Corinthians 5:13

B. They greatly displease God (Hosea 4:1-2, 11) and provoke Him to anger (Numbers 25:1, 3; Ezekiel 16:26; Colossians 3:5-6).

C. God abhors them.

Proverbs 22:14

D. "For this is a heinous crime" (Job 31:1, 9-12), "villainy" (Jeremiah 29:22-23) and filthiness (Revelation 17:4).

E. "They know not the light" but "are in the terrors of the shadow of death" (Job 24:15-17). It is "the way of hell;" "the dead are there" (Proverbs 7:27; 9:13-18).

F. The words of anyone who defends such "unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:3, 11-12) are "contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Timothy 1:9-10).

V. Adultery and fornication are serious offenses.

A. Under the law, such acts were counted worthy of death.

Genesis 20:3, 7, 17; 26:11

Leviticus 20:10-12

2 Samuel 12

Proverbs 2:16-19; 7:5-27

Romans 1:29, 32

1. Burned.

Genesis 38:15, 24

Leviticus 21:9

2. Stoned.

Deuteronomy 22:13-21, cp. John 8:4-5

B. In the days of the early church, fornication was considered just cause for excommunication from the fellowship of believers.

1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 9-12

C. Fornication justifies divorce.

Deuteronomy 22:13-21

Matthew 5:32; 19:9 (Mark 10:12)

D. In the Old Testament, fornication and adultery symbolized unfaithfulness to God, either by idolatry or backsliding in general.

Jeremiah 3:1, 6, 8, 9, 14, etc.

Ezekiel 6:9; 16:36, etc.

Hosea 1:2; 4:11-12; 3:1

Acts 15:29

E. Such offenses are self-defiling (Leviticus 18:20, 24, 30; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20) and can lead to one's own spiritual destruction.

Proverbs 2:16, 18-19 "unto death"

Proverbs 6:27-29, 32 "destroyeth his own soul"

Proverbs 9:13-18 "the dead are there ... in the depths of hell"

Genesis 20:3, 7 "thou art but a dead man ... for she is a man's wife"

F. Scripture lists fornication and adultery with such sins as murder, witchcraft, robbery, idolatry, etc.

Hosea 4:2

Romans 2:21

Acts 15:29; 21:25

1 Corinthians 6:9-10

Revelation 9:21

G. The offense shall be met with severe judgment.

Proverbs 6:27-29, 32

Ezekiel 16:38, 40-41

Malachi 3:5

Hebrews 13:4

1. Fornicators and adulterers shall not be allowed in the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10, 18

Galatians 5:19, 21

Ephesians 5:5-6

Revelation 22:15

2. They shall be tormented eternally in the lake of fire.

Jude 7

Revelation 21:8

VI. Why is this considered such a serious offense?

A. "Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

1 Corinthians 6:15-20, esp. verse 18

B. God desires a walk of consecration and holiness within His people.

Leviticus 21:7, 13-14

2 Corinthians 6:1

1 Thessalonians 4:3

Titus 2:11-12

C. Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:13-20

D. The sin is self-defiling.

Ezekiel 23

Matthew 15:19-20

Mark 7:20-23

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

E. It influences others by bad example.

2 Samuel 12:14

Nahum 3:4

Romans 1:32

Revelation 2:14, 20

F. An attitude of sexual permissiveness pollutes the entire nation.

Leviticus 18:24-28; 19:29

Jeremiah 3:2, 9

Nahum 3:4

Revelation 19:2

VII. Fornication and adultery should especially have no place among the people of God.

2 Samuel 13:12

Romans 2:21-22

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13

Ephesians 4:17-20

Hebrews 12:16

A. Such a way of life was expected of us before we were saved.

Ephesians 2:2-3

Colossians 3:7, 5-6

Titus 3:3-5

1. In describing the extent of moral corruption among unbelievers, the Bible says, "the land is full of adulterers." "...they committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlot's houses."

Jeremiah 23:10; 5:7

2. The world has hardened their hearts to the extent that they actually feel no guilt or shame for such wrongdoing.

Proverbs 30:18-20 "She saith, I have done no wickedness."

B. Christians are commanded to "flee," "avoid," and "abstain from fornication."

Acts 15:20, 29

1 Corinthians 6:18 (cp. Genesis 39:12); 7:2

1 Thessalonians 4:3

2 Timothy 2:22

1. "Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand."

1 Corinthians 10:8

2. "But fornication, and all uncleanness ... let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints ... For ye know that no whoremonger, nor unclean person ... hath any inheritance in the kingdom..."

Ephesians 5:3, 5

3. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God ... For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."

1 Thessalonians 4:3-7

C. When a person gives his life to Jesus, he is expected to put aside the evil practices of his former way of life.

2 Corinthians 12:21

Ephesians 4:17-20

D. We are forbidden even to fellowship with those who do such acts.

1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 9-13

Ephesians 3:11-12; 5:11

VIII. Scripture describes fornication and adultery as "a deep ditch" and "narrow pit" (Proverbs 22:14; 23:27-28), because the lustful intentions behind them are deadly (Proverbs 7:26; James 1:15) and deceitful (2 Samuel 13:3-5, etc.; Proverbs 5:3-4; 7:10).

A. They are works of the flesh.

Galatians 5:19-21

1. They originate in the heart.

Matthew 5:28; 15:19

Mark 7:21; 10:11

Luke 16:18

2. They spring from an evil lust.

1 Corinthians 10:6

1 Thessalonians 4:3-5, 7

3. Because lust is especially aroused by the sight of the eyes (Matthew 5:28), the Word of God specifically exhorts Christians to "adorn themselves in modest apparel" (1 Timothy 2:8-9; cp. 1 Peter 3:3; Isaiah 3:16-24).

Genesis 34:2 "saw"

Genesis 38:1-24 "saw"

Genesis 39:7-12 "cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, 'Lie with me'"

Judges 16:1 "saw"

2 Samuel 11:1-5 "he saw a woman washing herself, and the woman was very beautiful to look upon"

B. There is a great difference between love and lust.

1. "Love is of God" (1 John 4:7) and gives (John 3:16; 1 Corinthians 13:5). Lust is evil and seeks its own satisfaction (2 Samuel 13:12, 14).

2. While love is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23), fornication and adultery are works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

3. Love can wait; lust cannot.

2 Samuel 13:13-14

C. The result of yielding to fleshly lusts is corruption.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 10:8

Galatians 6:8

James 1:15

1. Murder.

2 Samuel 11:1-5

2. Rape.

2 Samuel 13:1-20

D. God can provide victory over lustful temptations (Romans 6:11-14; Galatians 5:16, 24-25; 2 Peter 2:9-10, 14), but it takes an act of our will.

1. "Cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."

Romans 13:12

2. "Mortify therefore ..."

Colossians 3:5

3. "Flee youthful lusts."

1 Corinthians 6:18

2 Timothy 2:22

4. "Put off ... the old man ... put on the new ..."

Ephesians 4:22-24

IX. Fornication and adultery are not unforgivable sins, if repented.

Matthew 21:31-32

Titus 3:3-5

Revelation 2:21

A. Some examples in scripture (in which God forgave the offense):

1. Rahab the harlot.

Joshua 2:1; 6:17, cp. Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25

2. King David.

2 Samuel 12:13, cp. 11:4

3. The prodigal son.

Luke 15:30, 32

4. The woman in the temple.

John 8:3-11

5. Early church believers.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 "such *were* (past tense) some of you: but ye are washed..."

B. However, we sometimes must face punishing consequences in this life
(according to the law of sowing and reaping).

2 Samuel 12:11-14

C. Many will never repent of the offense and for them there can be no forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 12:21

Revelation 9:21

1. "Being past feeling," and having a "seared conscience," they gave
"them selves over unto lasciviousness (Lit., sensuality; erotic lust)."

Ephesians 4:19

2. Therefore, "God gave them up" (they became reprobate).

Romans 1:28-29, 32

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