

VALUE MARRIAGE

Small Group Study Guide | June 23, 2024

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: Why do you think marriage is so important to God?

Key Text: “You shall not commit adultery.” (Deuteronomy 5:18)

In Commandment #7, God prohibits adultery, which encompasses voluntary sexual relations between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse. The purpose of Commandment #7 is to value and protect marriage. God’s definition of marriage is morally binding on all people in all societies for all time.

1. Revelation – What is God teaching us about Himself in Commandment #7?

In Commandment #7, God is teaching us His view of and standards for marriage.

- Marriage is to be: 1) *Heterosexual* (between a man and a woman only), 2) *Monogamous* (married to one person at a time), and 3) *Permanent* (one husband and one wife for life).

Discuss: How is marriage affirmed as heterosexual, monogamous, and permanent in Genesis 1:26-28; 2:18-25; Matthew 19:3-4, and Ephesians 5:22-23?

- Marriage and sex are for procreation and intimacy.

God commanded the first married couple, Adam and Eve, to “*be fruitful and multiply*” (Gen.1:28). Thus, one of the primary purposes of marriage is procreation. Not all couples can have children, for a variety of reasons, but part of the divine design for sex and marriage is procreation. Further, sex and marriage bond a man and a woman in the most intimate emotional connection possible. This is why God designed sex to be enjoyed only within the boundary of marriage: It is only safe to reveal the fullness of who we are to our spouse who loves us and has committed to be faithful and supportive “till death do us part.” By abstaining from sex until marriage, you are not only protecting yourself emotionally, but you’re also protecting the emotional safety that your future spouse will need to feel in marriage. The one-flesh unity of sex is a picture of the way two souls are joined together into a shared life – a strong bond that helps keep marriages and families intact, which is God’s intention for our lives.

Discuss: What are some consequences families suffer because of adultery?

- Marriage and sex symbolize Christ’s intimate relationship with the Church.

While every person reflects the image of God, a husband-and-wife union is the most important picture in the Bible of how intimate our relationship with God can be. Jesus is pictured as the husband who loves us, and we are the bride who responds back to Him. This spiritual component to sex helps us see more clearly why any and all sex outside of marriage falls far short of God’s intention for it to be holy, sacred, and protected.

Discuss: How does Ephesians 5:31-32 highlight marriage and sex as a symbol of Christ’s intimate relationship with the Church?

2. Introspection – What is God teaching us about ourselves in Commandment #7?

In Commandment #7, God is telling us that a clearly stated prohibition against adultery is necessary because our hearts are easily led astray—especially in matters of relationships, marriage, and sex. We must guard against our culture’s rejection of God and embracing of secularism, the belief that places humans—rather than God—at the center of the universe. Secularism does not believe that truth is absolute; rather it believes that truth is a matter of opinion or whatever a person determines is good for them. In secularism, each person is his/her own god; thus, marriage can be defined however a person desires, and sex is simply whatever brings a person pleasure.

Discuss: How do 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; 10:31 speak to the matter of adultery?

3. Transformation – How does God want us to live per Commandment #7?

In Colossians 3, God gives clear, practical instructions for husbands and wives on how to affair-proof their marriage and have a happy and healthy relationship together.

- **Wives Submit** – Colossians 3:18a says, “*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*” The word “*submit*” (v.18a) is a military term that means “to arrange in order.” The phrase “*fitting in the Lord*” (v.18b) means “it is proper, appropriate, as the Lord intended.” God had a plan from the first for marriage and the home. His plan was that it be a partnership of equals with the man as the lead partner. This is not suggesting in any way that the wife is inferior to her husband, nor that the husband should dominate his wife or lord it over her. Husbands are to be the spiritual leaders in the family, and the wife is to cooperate alongside him so that the marriage and family may be all God intended it to be.
- **Husbands Love** – Colossians 3:19 says, “*Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*” The word “love” comes from the Greek word *agapao* which is a word used for God’s unique, sacrificial kind of love. It means that a husband is to care more about his wife than he cares about himself. He will not be “*harsh*” (v.19) or sharp toward her; rather, he will treat her with courtesy, respect, kindness, and tenderness. He will be unselfish, considerate, and caring. Any wife will agree that it is never hard to submit to that kind of love from her husband! The problem with many marriages is not unsubmitive wives but irresponsible husbands who have abandoned their biblical role as the spiritual leader in the marriage and family. Consider the fact that Satan disrupted the first marriage by purposely switching the divine order and appealing to Eve to take the lead in making the spiritual decision to eat the forbidden fruit. Adam was right there “*with her*” (Gen.3:6) the entire time, but the roles got reversed—Adam became a passive responder instead of an active leader—and everything was ruined!

Discuss: Read Ephesians 5:22-33. What do you think it means for a wife to submit to her husband “*as to the Lord*” (v.22)? What do you think it looks like for a husband to love his wife “*as Christ loved the church*” (v.25)?

For Further Study:

Free online study tools (commentaries, dictionaries, etc.) at blueletterbible.org

Ten Secrets of Successful Living: A Perfect 10 for Families That Win by Adrian Rogers

“What Are the Roles of a Husband and Wife in a Family?” article at gotquestions.org