

## Lesson 8: The Sixth Commandment – Faithfulness

“Inasmuch as this commandment is concerned specifically with the estate of marriage and gives occasion to speak of it, let us carefully note, first, how highly God honors and glorifies the married life, sanctioning and protecting it by his commandment.”

- Dr. Martin Luther, *Large Catechism*: The Sixth Commandment

### Keys to Lesson 8:

**NOTE: IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU HAVE OTHER ADULTS AND PREFERABLY WOMEN IN THE CLASSROOM FOR THIS LESSON. (As a general principle, it is a good idea never to be alone with your students anyway; but if for some reason you choose not to include other adults in your classroom, PLEASE do not ignore this recommendation for this of all lessons.)**

Topic: Faithfulness

Thesis: God honors and glorifies marriage.

Key question: What is God’s plan for sexual relationships?

Catechism: Sverdrup Questions 76-84

Accompanying Bible Story: Genesis 39:1-23 – Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife

### Warm-up or review:

As students enter the classroom, have a task posted for them.

Options:

Finish paragraph from Lesson 7

Finish questions from Lesson 7

Finish Lesson 7 summary

Lesson 7 quick quiz

Read and summarize Genesis 39

Read the Sverdrup questions assigned for this lesson

### Introduce new lesson:

Options:

Discuss Genesis 39 summaries

Review Sverdrup worksheets

Read and discuss the student worksheet text

**NOTE: Addressing human sexuality from a Biblical perspective is always difficult. Having “the talk” with junior high students may be even more so. The account of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife is pretty straight forward. The NASB phrases are “lie with me” and “make sport with me.” These are clearly references to sexual relations. The struggle for us is how to phrase the challenges our teens face in ways that are meaningful to them. The reality is that our teens face a great number of sexual temptations. Pornography is available at the tap of a finger or click of a mouse. Sexting (sending texts or snapchat messages of sexual content) is very popular. Boys are pressuring the girls into sending nude photos which are then shared amongst themselves and used in a form of “blackmail.” Our girls are desperate**

**for attention and will do much to get it, even if it means compromising their morals. They do share nude photos. They compete amongst themselves to see who can give the most boys oral sex. Our text is not explicit in our description of the temptations our teens face, but we do address the fact that there are temptations they need to deal with. It is our hope that having a solid Biblical understanding of marriage will set a good foundation for “a chaste and pure” life.**

*“It came about after these events that his master’s wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’” What’s a young man to do? We have no idea what Potiphar’s wife looked like, but all the paintings and movies make her out to be a stunning beauty, a desirable woman. We do know that Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. And we do know that Potiphar’s wife wanted him. She wanted to have sex with him, and she was not shy about letting him know it. Not just once did she invite him to bed, but she did so day after day. Eventually, she even grabbed him to take him there. What is a young man to do?*

*We have no way of knowing exactly what would have happened if Joseph had given in to the temptation to have sex outside of marriage. We know that giving in to sexual temptation is sin, and we know God hates sin. We also know the story would not have turned out the way it did if Joseph had committed adultery. Even so, we might be surprised at how the story turned out, at first anyway.*

*One of the things we can learn from Joseph is that we should do what God wants of us simply because it is right. Being rewarded should not be our motivation. Joseph resisted the temptation to have sex with his master’s wife. As a result, Joseph ended up in jail. He did not end up in jail because he resisted temptation. He ended up in jail because Potiphar’s wife lied about him, and her husband believed the lie. But, he ended up in jail with a clean conscience. In any case, Joseph paid dearly for being obedient to God. He went to jail, and he spent over two years there. Even though God blessed him in jail and gave him great authority there, jail was a terrible place to be. No matter how much Joseph may have thought it, God had not forgotten him. In fact, God used some very exceptional circumstances to free Joseph from “the pit.” Joseph was given the second highest place in Egypt, in command only under the Pharaoh himself.*

*We can also learn from Joseph that it is possible for us to resist sexual temptation. There is no question that there are many sexual temptations in our lives. Young ladies, it is the way of boys to want to be sexually active with you. Young men, the girls today are more and more bold; and you may have experiences much like Joseph did. Sex is everywhere we look: in advertising, in the movies, on TV, at school. Pornography is easy to find. There is no question we will be tempted.*

*To protect us from the terrible damage sexual sin can cause in our lives and to help us see God’s intent for sex, God has given us the Sixth Commandment.*

### **Lesson:**

Help the students work through the text and Bible passages in the student material.

For our study of the commandments, students will be copying from the *Bible* and *Small Catechism* instead of having the Commandments and explanations printed for them. This process helps them connect the Bible to the Catechism and begin to process the text of both.

### **\* Copy Exodus 20:14.**

*You shall not commit adultery.*

**\* Copy the meaning for the Sixth Commandment from your Lutheran *Small Catechism*.**  
*We should fear and love God so that we lead a chaste and pure life in word and deed, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.*

It might be helpful to define with the students what chaste and pure mean. Also see the Luther quote at the beginning of the lesson to accentuate that this lesson is really more about how to view and honor marriage than it is a lesson of don'ts about sexual behavior.

***Notice that the Catechism meaning for this commandment is a positive one. There isn't a list of "do not's." Dr. Martin Luther understood that the best way to understand this commandment was to have a proper understanding of marriage. Believing these five Biblical principles of marriage might be the best motivation for living a chaste and pure life.***

***I. Marriage is the union of one man and one woman each created in the image of God.***

**\* Read Genesis 1:27.**

*God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.*

**In whose image are we created?**

*We are created in the image of God.*

**In what two forms are we created?**

*We are created male and female.*

Should you choose to do so, you might engage in a discussion of gender identity very much a part of the conversations in society today. According to the Bible, there are two genders or sexes: male and female. God created these. God gave us these. They are determined by our chromosomes. You may also want to engage in the conversation about gender character traits and emphasize that it is OK to be a tough woman and that it is OK to be a tender man, but that if we live Biblical, God honoring lives, we accept the sex and gender that God made us.

***When God made us, He shared three of His character traits with us. This is what it mean to be created in His image. Read the following verses and answer the questions to discover these three traits.***

The following questions are intended to explore the image of God in us. At creation in the image of God, we were given three of God's character traits: holiness, immortality, and will. All three of these were destroyed in the fall. All three are partially restored in redemption. All three will be fully restored in final sanctification. The Gospel in this lesson might have to do with how God restores His image in us through the forgiveness of the sin that destroyed His image in us. Consider also how it is our brokenness which destroys God's purpose for marriage and our restoration that gives hope to our marriage relationships.

**\* Read Genesis 1:31.**

*God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there*

*was morning, the sixth day.*

**What did God conclude about His creation?**

*God said His creation was very good.*

**If this is true, what might we say about the presence of sin in the original creation?**

*This implies that there was no sin in His original creation. His creatures, the man and the woman, are fully holy.*

**\* Read Genesis 2:16, 17.**

*The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*

**What would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?**

*The penalty for eating of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is death.*

**If this is true, what might we say about death before sin?**

*The implication is that there was no death before sin came into the world. God made the man and the woman immortal.*

**\* Read Genesis 2:16, 17 again.**

*The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."*

**What choice did God give Adam and Eve?**

*That God added a consequence to eating the fruit implies that the man and the woman had a choice to eat or not to eat.*

**What might we say about having the will to choose before sin came into the world?**

*Before sin came into the world, we had a will which allowed us to choose to disobey. When sin came we lost that will and became bound to sin. That is why we are all born sinners separated from God. Only the blood sacrifice of Jesus through which God forgives us can free us from our bondage to sin to be instead bound to Christ.*

There is some nuance here around the bondage of the will. In reality, Adam and Eve were created in relationship with God. He had created and chosen them, so there was no choosing God for them. All there was for them was the choice to disobey. You can decide, based on the spiritual maturity of your students and your comfort in discussing this doctrine with them at their level, whether or not you want to further discuss how we no longer can choose not to sin since we are indeed bound to sin. At the same time, because we have been redeemed, it is possible for us to resist temptation. God does give us, with every temptation that comes, the means to escape it. And this is the tension we live in while we remain in the flesh.

***Did you discover that God made us holy and immortal and with a will? God gave us these traits when He made us in His image.***

**\* Read Genesis 2:21, 22.**

*So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.*

**What gift did God give Adam?**

*God declared that it was not good for the man to be alone, and so God gave him a woman.*

(God said his creation was very good, and ever since then man has been looking at the created gift God gave him and saying, “Hm! Not bad!”)

**\* Read Genesis 2:24.**

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

**What is God's plan for this special man/woman relationship?**

- 1. The man is to leave his family*
- 2. The man is to be joined to his wife*

**NASB Translation**

cleaves (4), cling (14), clings (3), closely pursued (1), closer (1), clung (4), deeply attracted (1), fasten its grip (1), follow closely (1), held fast (1), hold (2), hold fast (2), holding fast (1), joined (2), joined together (1), overtake (1), overtook (5), pursued him closely (1), pursued them closely (1), remained steadfast (1), stay (1), stay close (1), stayed close (1), stick (1), stick together (1), stuck (2) <<http://biblehub.com/hebrew/1692.htm>>

- 3. The two become one flesh*

Principle Four, below, will deal more with the sexual aspect of marriage. Feel free to address marital sexuality here or below. Paul clearly understands the one flesh union to be a result of the sexual union (see 1 Corinthians 6:16). Our students need to understand that there is far more than the joining of two bodies when we engage in sexual intercourse. As Paul argues in 2 Corinthians 6, even sex with a prostitute results in the “one body” union. When we have sexual relations with someone to whom we are not married, we create a union with that person. When we move on to another partner, the union with the first person is torn, ripped apart. Having multiple sexual partners destroys who God made us to be. The pain we experience from these broken relationships is part of the consequence of not living within God’s boundaries for marriage. On the other hand, it is also important to note that the marriage union is more than just sexual. It can be said that a marriage built on sex alone is an empty marriage but so is a marriage that has no sex.

***II. The purpose of marriage is to share in creation and fill the earth with the image of God.***

**\* Read Genesis 1:28.**

*God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”*

**What is the first command God gave the man and the woman?**

*The first command is actually a double command: to be fruitful and multiply.*

Try to connect principle one, created in His image, to principle two, to share in creation and fill the earth with God’s image. If we are indeed created in the image of God, when we have children we are joining God in His creative process; and we are filling the earth with God’s image.

**III. Marriage is a unique relationship in which a man and woman become one for life.**

**\* Read Genesis 2:24, 25.**

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

**What two things should the man do?**

*The man is to leave his family and be joined to or hold fast to his wife.*

**What is the result of this union?**

*The result of the joining is that the two become one.*

Marriage is unlike any other relationship in that the union creates one out of two. The joining is obviously sexual, but it is not only sexual. Combined, however, with principle Four, below, we find that it is the only relationship where sex is both allowed and to be celebrated and where there is one made from two. Marriage is also the most painful relationship to break because it is the ripping apart of the one. It is no coincidence, then, that God hates divorce (Malachi 2:16).

**\* Read Matthew 19:4-6.**

*And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”*

**What is our responsibility in marriage?**

*“What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”*

**IV. Marriage is the only relationship in which God allows and celebrates sexual intercourse.**

**\* Read Exodus 20:14.**

*You shall not commit adultery.*

**What sexual behavior does God condemn?**

*In the Sixth Commandment, God specifically condemn adultery, but we understand the commandment to include any and all sexual intercourse outside of a marriage of one man to one woman.*

**\* Read Proverbs 5:18, 19.**

*Let your fountain be blessed,*

*And rejoice in the wife of your youth.  
As a loving hind and a graceful doe,  
Let her breasts satisfy you at all times;  
Be exhilarated always with her love.*

**What is the proper place for a sexual relationship?**

*Solomon tells his son to delight himself in his relationship with his wife and only with his wife.*

**\* Summarize Hebrews 13:4.**

*Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

*The marriage is to be held in honor and the marriage bed is to be kept pure. All other sexual activity is not to be part of a Christian's life.*

Note that the word translated bed is the root of our English word *coitus*. It is clear from this passage that marital sexual relations are pure and are to be kept pure. One of the great poxes on our society today is the mass availability of pornography. The church must address this cancer among us. Pornography degrades and victimizes women. Pornography desensitizes men and destroys God's design for sex in and for them. If we think that our boys and men (and our girls and women) are immune from the pornography that is so pervasive around us, we deceive ourselves and do a great injustice to our people, people whom God has redeemed and whom God wants to set free.

***V. Marriage is a metaphor of God's relationship to the Church.***

**\* Read Isaiah 54:5.**

*"For your husband is your Maker,  
Whose name is the LORD of hosts;  
And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel,  
Who is called the God of all the earth."*

**What metaphor is used for God's relationship with His people?**

*God called Himself the husband to His people. God uses marriage as a metaphor of His relationship to His people.*

**\*Read Ephesians 5:31, 32.**

*For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.*

**According to verse 32, to what does the man and wife union refer?**

*Paul calls the man / woman one flesh union a great mystery and then refers it to the union between Christ and the Church.*

Of all the Biblical principles for marriage, this one is perhaps the one less considered but the one most important. Our purpose on earth is to glorify God and to witness to what He has done in our

lives. Our marriages are a part of that witness. When we dishonor marriage, when we fail to lead chaste and pure lives and husbands and wives fail to love and honor each other, we break the image God wants our marriages to be to the world. When we break the Sixth Commandment, we destroy the metaphor that points to the relationship God has with us, the Church, and we destroy our witness to the world.

**Summary:**

Options:

Students write questions in their question column

Students write a three to four sentence summary: What did I learn in this lesson?

Students write a SEE paragraph

Possible paragraph prompt:

*What is one Biblical truth about marriage?*

Sample paragraph:

*Marriage is a metaphor of the relationship that Christ has with the Church. "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:31, 32 NASB). When Paul quoted Genesis 2:24, he said it was a mystery. We can believe that a man and a woman joined in marriage become one flesh. We can also understand that in addition to God describing marriage He is giving us a living picture of the relationship Jesus wants to have with the Church, a relationship of perfect union.*



1 Now Joseph had been taken down to Egypt; and Potiphar, an Egyptian officer of Pharaoh, the captain of the bodyguard, bought him from the Ishmaelites, who had taken him down there. 2 The LORD was with Joseph, so he became a successful man. And he was in the house of his master, the Egyptian. 3 Now his master saw that the LORD was with him and how the LORD caused all that he did to prosper in his hand. 4 So Joseph found favor in his sight and became his personal servant; and he made him overseer over his house, and all that he owned he put in his charge. 5 It came about that from the time he made him overseer in his house and over all that he owned, the LORD blessed the Egyptian's house on account of Joseph; thus the LORD's blessing was upon all that he owned, in the house and in the field.

6 So he left everything he owned in Joseph's charge; and with him there he did not concern himself with anything except the food which he ate.

Now Joseph was handsome in form and appearance. 7 It came about after these events that his master's wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, "Lie with me." 8 But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Behold, with me here, my master does not concern himself with anything in the house, and he has put all that he owns in my charge. 9 There is no one greater in this house than I, and he has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife. How then could I do this great evil and sin against God?" 10 As she spoke to Joseph day after day, he did not listen to her to lie beside her or be with her. 11 Now it happened one day that he went into the house to do his work, and none of the men of the household was there inside. 12 She caught him by his garment, saying, "Lie with me!" And he left his garment in her hand and fled, and went outside. 13 When she saw that he had left his garment in her hand and had fled outside, 14 she called to the men of her household and said to them, "See, he has brought in a Hebrew to us to make sport of us; he came in to me to lie with me, and I screamed. 15 When he heard that I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled and went outside." 16 So she left his garment beside her until his master came home. 17 Then she spoke to him with these words, "The Hebrew slave, whom you brought to us, came in to me to make sport of me; 18 and as I raised my voice and screamed, he left his garment beside me and fled outside." 19 Now when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spoke to him, saying, "This is what your slave did to me," his anger burned. 20 So Joseph's master took him and put him into the jail, the place where the king's prisoners were confined; and he was there in the jail. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph and extended kindness to him, and gave him favor in the sight of the chief jailer. 22 The chief jailer committed to Joseph's charge all the prisoners who were in the jail; so that whatever was done there, he was responsible for it. 23 The chief jailer did not supervise anything under Joseph's charge because the LORD was with him; and whatever he did, the Lord made to prosper.