

Lesson 8: 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*

Thesis:  
God honors and glorifies marriage.

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

Catechism:  
Sverdrup’s Questions  
76-84

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

My questions:

“It came about after these events that his master’s wife looked with desire at Joseph, and she said, ‘Lie with me.’” 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 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.

\* Copy Exodus 20:14.

\* Copy the meaning for the Sixth Commandment from your Lutheran *Small Catechism*.

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 chaste and pure lives.

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

\* Read Genesis 1:27. In whose image are we created?

In what two forms are we created?

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

\* Read Genesis 1:31. What did God conclude about His creation?

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

\* Genesis 2:16, 17. What would happen to Adam and Eve if they ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

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

\* Genesis 2:16, 17 again. What choice did God give Adam and Eve?

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

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.

\* Genesis 2:21, 22. What gift did God give Adam?

\* Genesis 2:24. What is God's plan for this special man/woman relationship?

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

\* Read Genesis 1:28. What is the first command God gave the man and the woman?

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

\* Read Genesis 2:24, 25. What two things should the man do?

What is the result of this union?

\* Read Matthew 19:4-6. What is our responsibility in marriage?

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

\* Read Exodus 20:14. What sexual behavior does God condemn?

\* Read Read Proverbs 5:18, 19. What is the proper place for a sexual relationship?

\* Summarize Hebrews 13:4.

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

\* Read Isaiah 54:5. What metaphor is used for God's relationship with His people?

\* Read Ephesians 5:31, 32. According to verse 32, to what does the man and wife union refer?

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What did I learn in this lesson (three or four sentences)?