



March 5, 2023

Abounding Grace: The Grace of the Law Morality

Exodus 20:14

For Discussion and Reflection

1. Ancient cultures, like Egyptian and the Ugarit (northern Syria) cities, used a euphemism for adultery, referring to it as the “great sin.” They believed that adultery would bring the collapse of society by destroying the family. How is adultery and sexual freedom affecting our culture today? What signs do you see of its destructive force? How does monogamy in a complimentary marriage safeguard the gift of marriage and promote flourishing of the family?
2. The Genesis account of creation sets the paradigm for human sexuality. God saw Adam’s aloneness and that he had no one to complement him. After creating Eve from Adam, he brought her to him. She was like him but different, complimenting him in every way, even physically. Read the account in Genesis 2:22-25. Notice that they were not “ashamed” though they were naked. The word “naked” is often a euphemism for “sex” or “sexual relations.” If monogamy in a complimentary marriage doesn’t produce shame, what should we expect from sexual expression outside of that context? Notice how the Apostle Paul speaks to those who have engaged in sexual expression outside of marriage but have now come to Christ, 1 Corinthians 6:11. Why is his language meaningful to combat shame? Remember, “Jesus’ holiness is the basin in which we wash to be pure in our thoughts and lives.”
3. God uses “adultery” to describe Israel’s idolatry. Consider Jeremiah 3:8-9, 5:7; Ezekiel 23:37. Why does God use adultery to explain his experience of our idolatry? What’s the connection?
4. Israelite men understood that marriage was the only place for sexual expression, so they devised a way to circumvent this restriction by divorcing their wives for other women. Consider Deut. 24:1-4, Malachi 2:10-16. Notice they divorced their wives and married someone else (in Malachi foreign women.) While they did follow the letter of the law, they were not following the spirit of the law. How does God react to this pattern in Malachi 2:10-16?
5. Modern scholars argue that the word “homosexual” was not in the Bible until 1946 when it was added to our English translation. But notice in 1 Corinthians 6:9, the original word is “arsenokoitai.” This is a combination of two words: arsen-man and koitai-bed. Paul combines these two words to describe what we refer to as homosexuality. The word draws directly from Lev. 18:22 and 20:13, “man lies with man.” How would you answer this argument from the culture?
6. According to the paradigm of the seventh commandment, God commands the use of our bodies. Read Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 6:12-20. What statements stand out to you from the text? How important is our union with Christ to Paul’s argument?
7. Read Jesus’ statement in Matthew 5:27-28. Again, the religious leaders taught a legalistic view of the commandment. In essence, they taught, “So long as you don’t have extramarital sex, you haven’t broken

the commandment.” Jesus knows that sin isn’t just physical but fundamentally a spiritual heart issue. How do we respond to these heart issues? What does Jesus’ teaching say to you?

8. Sexual freedom is taught as a sign of maturity. Our culture describes it as “adult” or “for mature audiences.” What words should we use to describe un-governed sexual expression? How should the grace of God be training us to live? Consider Titus 2:11-12 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8.
9. Based on our study today, how can you respond to God’s call for morality? How can you faithfully pursue the grace of God?