



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N32 August 7, 2022

TEN WORDS

“Keeping Our Passions in Check”

Exodus 20:14

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Self-Control

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

Titus 2:11-13



How is it possible to “keep” God’s commandments?

Temptation is the weed that never leaves our garden. “Ungodly and worldly passions” are the pestering mosquitoes that we can never seem to vanquish from our barbeque. The infant and the octogenarian are forever engaged in skirmishes of self-control. If temptation is a constant, what is our hope of ever defeating it?

Self-control, or what many refer to as “willpower” often operates like a physical muscle. Psychologists often refer to what is called “self-regulatory fatigue” or “ego-depletion” as a way of describing the failure to overcome addictions or pathological tendencies (*Pers. Soc. Psychol. Rev.* 2016 Nov; 20(4): 291–310). When we exert energy through our arms to pick up a heavy item or we run long distances with our legs, we know that we can only exert such power for a short time. Then we must rest and recharge. We cannot exert “muscle power” indefinitely. Willpower, like muscle power, is easily depleted. We can train ourselves to have a “stronger will” against temptation, but we are fooling ourselves if we think we can resist temptation by just getting stronger spiritually. Giving ourselves a “break” from temptation or removing ourselves from temptation’s power is a more effective deterrent to temptation than just fighting against the pull of temptation. Finding a way to avoid temptation or to remove ourselves from the presence of temptation may be the best strategy we have for self-control. Self-removal can lead to better self control. Jesus said that instead of “stumbling” or being “scandalized” by temptation, we would do better to remove the sources of or the means to temptation (Mt. 5:29-30). Drastic measures of removal may be the break that we need from temptation’s power.

Sometimes it is impossible to avoid temptation. Even if we cut off and gouge out all the sources of temptation, sometimes we still struggle with urges deep in our own hearts. Willpower is not only like a muscle that needs rest; willpower is also enhanced by proper motivation. Psychologists, again in the study of addiction (cited above), refer to something called a “Centralized Governor (CG).” The theory is that muscles do not really “run out of energy.” Rather, the central nervous system (CG) “tells” the muscles they are about to run out of energy. The theory is that the CG can also “tell” the mind to resist addictive behaviors, even in the face of major ego-depletion. Self-control can be aided or energized by just the right message at just the right time from the “Centralized Governor.” Jesus was tempted in the wilderness for forty days. He retreated from as many fleshly pleasures as possible, but the tempter was still able to pester him. When Jesus could no longer flee persistent temptation, he relied upon the motivation of God’s Word. Jesus was able to quote God’s Word and the tempter relented in the face of such truth. Rehearsing Scripture and filling our hearts with God’s Word can help us “say ‘No’ to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age” (Titus 2:12). Finding motivation through meditation on God’s Word can be “a lamp to our feet and a light to our path” (Ps. 119:105) as we navigate away from temptation and toward righteousness. Give yourself frequent “breaks” from the presence of temptation. Fill your heart, your “Centralized Governor,” with God’s Word to motivate you toward self-control and the fulfillment of God’s desires for your life.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Exodus 20:14

20:14 *You shall not commit adultery.*

Read a complementary passage, Matthew 5:27-30

27 *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

29 *If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle the main word in v. 14 and this word repeated in Matthew 5.
- Underline the contrast in Mt. 5:28.
- Double underline the word that describes how one looks in Mt. 5:28.
- Draw a box around the word that shows location in Mt. 5:28.
- Put brackets around synonyms for adultery in Mt. 5:29-30.
- Put a box around the phrase "it is better" in Mt. 5:29-30.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What is adultery and why does God prohibit it?
 2. What are some presumptions that are included in the seventh commandment?
 3. How would you respond to the claim that the seventh commandment does not apply to unmarried people?
 4. What would be some additional considerations regarding the seventh commandment from other portions of the Old Testament (Lev. 18, 20; Deut. 22; Prov. 5-9)?
 5. How does Jesus interpret the seventh commandment (Mt. 5:27-30)?
 6. Where does Jesus locate the infraction of adultery? What does this location teach us about sexual sin?
 7. How are lust and adultery like “stumbling” (Mt. 5:29-30)?
 8. Jesus’ solution (Mt. 5:29-30) sounds extreme. What is Jesus suggesting with such strong warnings?
 9. Matthew 5:28 describes lust from a male perspective. How would Jesus’ warnings about lust apply to women?
 10. What advice would you give to someone tempted to break the seventh commandment?
-

Commentary On The Text

Family, as an organizational unit, is foundational to law and order. The Ten Commandments cite family issues in the fifth, seventh and tenth commandments specifically. Some would argue that commandments six through ten all address family matters. Violation of law frequently wrecks havoc upon family structure. None of the commandments impacts the family more than perhaps the seventh commandment. Strictly speaking, the Old Testament understanding of adultery was the action of sexual infidelity involving a married person. Adultery was a foundational societal crime “the practice of which is a violation of God’s purpose of marriage (cf. Gen 2:24). Passages which define adultery (*na’aph*) include: (1) sexual intercourse with another man’s wife (Lev 18:20; 20:10; Deut 22:22); (2) sexual intercourse with the female of another man (Deut 22:23–27); (3) sexual intercourse with the fiancée of another man (Hos 4:13; Ezek 16:32). The term was used by the prophets to describe Israel’s unfaithfulness to Yahweh (Jer 5:7; Hos 4:2). Such uses indicate that the practice of adultery was a sin against Yahweh because it violated the covenant relationship” (Randall C. Bailey, *Exodus*, The College Press NIV Commentary, 224).

Family, offspring, inheritance, legacy and lineage was the strong flowing current of Old Testament culture and few swam against it. The presumption of the seventh commandment was that every young man and young woman would one day be married. The unmarried were virgins in the home of their fathers. Widows were beyond the age of matrimony. Eunuchs were pitied for their piety. Prostitutes were condemned for their life of unfaithfulness. Typically, everyone else was married. Thus, the abrupt commandment to “never commit adultery” was paradigmatic and foundational for a people who were to be faithful in covenant with their faithful God. A law concerning marital faithfulness did not ignore other forms of sexual immorality. Instead, such a pointed command assumed a life of covenant faithfulness for all followers of the one true God. As with other of the Ten Commandments, further delineation of “case law” would give further definition to this general moral edict. “The Sinai law corroborates the Lord’s concern for a strong community and healthy sexuality with numerous specific prohibitions regarding other forms of sexual behavior (Lev. 18:1–30; 20:10–23; Deut. 22:23–29). A woman was expected to be a virgin when she married (Deut. 22:13–21). This, together with the law against adultery, also removed the option of promiscuity for a young man. The prophets attacked adultery as evil and detestable, because it brought external devastation to the individual and the community (Jer. 23:10; Ezek. 18:10–13; Hos. 4:2; Mal. 3:5)” (James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, Understanding the Bible Commentary Series, 190).

There are many examples in the Old Testament of people who violated the commandment against adultery. The consequences described are severe and heartbreaking. The writer of Proverbs warned repeatedly against the “folly” of adultery (Pr. 2:16–19; 5:1–9:18). “This commandment is not only designed to condemn adultery, but

judges all forms of sexual impurity. It is the exemplar, or paradigm—that is, a standard to be applied to all types of sexual relationships. Thus, when the Mosaic law code expounds upon this commandment, it condemns and prohibits acts of homosexuality (Lev. 18:22), incest (Lev. 18:6–18), bestiality (Exod. 22:19) and fornication (Exod. 22:16). The law’s demand is for appropriate sexual behavior in all areas. This statute is striking in the light of pagan sexual practices. Leviticus 18 lists many of these depravities, such as temple prostitution, incest and adultery. Israel is to act differently. Sexual purity is one of the marks of being set apart. The positive dimension of the law is to maintain the sanctity of the marriage union. Not only are the Hebrews to avoid adultery and other forms of sexual perversion, but they are to cherish modesty and chastity and to honor marriage (Heb. 13:4). The seriousness of marital fidelity is driven home by the severity of the punishment for breaches of it (Deut. 22:22). Stories such as that of Joseph with Potiphar’s wife or of David with Bathsheba reflect the sanctity and sacred nature of marriage” (John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Exodus 19–40*, Vol. 2, 47).

Jesus supported the Old Testament’s value of marriage and heightened expectations regarding the prohibition of adultery. Along with other standards of justice, Jesus expected more and not less than conventional interpretations of the Old Testament. “Jesus quotes the seventh commandment (Matt. 5:27–30; 19:18; Mk. 10:19; Lk. 18:20), broadening its application to include the lustful look that betrays an adulterous heart. He teaches that such evils as adultery come from the heart (Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21). Dealing with divorce, Jesus declares remarriage of a divorced man or woman to be adultery (Matt. 5:31–32; 19:3–9; Mk. 10:2–12; Lk. 16:18), with one exception (Matt. 5:32; 19:9), the interpretation of which is debated. Jesus uses the term [adultery] figuratively of a people unfaithful to God (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; Mk. 8:38). In Jn. 8:2–11, the account of a woman taken in adultery reveals Jesus’ insistence on the equal guilt of the man. Without belittling the seriousness of adultery, Jesus exercises the sovereign pardoning power of the grace of God, coupled with a solemn injunction against future offenses. Jesus’ attitude toward adultery springs from his conception of marriage as God intended it and as it must be in the new Christian society” (Moisés Silva, “Adultery,” *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Dictionary*, 30).

To avoid “stumbling” into the scandal of sexual sin, Jesus strongly advised the removal of stimuli enticing one to lust and the means to the fulfillment of such desires (Mt. 5:29–30). “Flee youthful lusts” (2 Tim. 2:22), Paul charged his protégé Timothy. Avoidance of temptation and opportunities to sin are the starting place for moral virtue. Pursuing and nurturing healthy, God-honoring relationships is the positive countermeasure to temptations of adultery. Saying “Yes” to healthy relationships will help you say “No” to unhealthy ones. God is faithful to forgive us when we seek his cleansing (1 John 1:9) and he can empower us to keep even the seventh commandment with both our hands and our hearts (Romans 8:9–17).

Word Studies/Notes

Ex. 20:14 **adultery** “Specifically refers to having a sexual relationship with a person in violation of an existing marriage (either one is married and has sexual relations with another person, or one has sexual relations with another person’s spouse). See, for example, Lev. 20:10; Jer. 29:23; Hos. 4:13. We should note that betrothal is considered to be legally binding so that having sexual relations with a person other than the betrothed is also considered to be adultery. Also, the word [na’aph] is sometimes used metaphorically for idolatry (Israel is committing adultery against YHWH by going to idols; Jer. 3:9). Still, [na’aph] is not a generic word for sexual immorality, such as occurs when an unmarried man goes to an unmarried prostitute. For that, biblical Hebrew would use a word such as [zana] (e.g., Lev. 21:9). We should be clear that this is not grounds for supposing that the Bible only forbids sexual acts that violate a marriage vow, or that sexual relations between two unmarried persons, even if they are consenting adults, is acceptable. To the contrary, Scripture emphatically prohibits all licentiousness (see Lev. 18:6–23)” (Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library, 481).

v. 14 **adultery** “The law is aimed against sexual intercourse between a man and the wife or fiancée of another, not against premarital sex. The law regarding premarital sex requires the couple to marry and does not allow for divorce (see Exod 22:16–17; Deut 22:28–29). The social setting of the command is a patrilineal society in which paternity is essential for inheritance law. Thus the penalty of adultery is severe: death by stoning in Deuteronomy (22:24) and death by burning (Lev 20:14)” (Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, The Eerdmans Critical Commentary, 494).

v.14 **adultery** “The placement of this commandment after the one about murder may be intentional. Adultery can have the effect of murdering, and hence ending, the existence of the covenant relationships of two other people. It plunges a dagger deep into the sacred bonds of matrimony. Plus, Prov. 6:33–35 discourages adultery not primarily because the adulterer is sinful but because he is stupid. Should the husband ever get his hands on him, he will do everything physically violent to him short of killing him. Also, this commandment looks forward to the eighth commandment, for adultery is a form of theft” (Victor P. Hamilton, *Exodus: An Exegetical Commentary*, 345).

Mt. 5:27 **adultery** The ‘woman’ in Jesus’ declaration is thus to be understood also as another man’s wife and the looking ‘in order to desire her’ (literally) specifically of wanting (and planning?) sexual relations. The focus is thus not (as some tender adolescent consciences have read it) on sexual attraction as such, but on the desire for (and perhaps the planning of) an illicit sexual liaison (cf. Exod 20:17, ‘you shall not covet your neighbor’s ... wife,’ where LXX uses the same verb, *epithymeō*). The famous sin of David (2 Sam 11:2–4), where such a desire led not only to adultery but also to murder, would naturally come to mind as a lurid scriptural example. The danger of looking lustfully at women is the subject of many Jewish sayings (e.g. Job 31:1, 9; Prov 6:25)” (R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament, 204).

v. 27 **adultery** “If, however, harm comes to the mother or child then the concept of *lex talionis* comes into effect. It literally means “Paul names adultery as one of the tests of obedience to the law (Rom. 2:22), quotes the commandment (13:9), uses adultery as an analogy of our relation to God (7:3), says that adulterers “will not inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor. 6:9), and lists adultery among works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19). The sanctity of marriage is the point stressed in Heb. 13:4. In Jas. 2:1 the writer uses adultery and murder as examples of the equal obligation of all the commandments of God. In 4:4 adultery is a figure of speech for unfaithfulness to God. Spiritual adultery is condemned in Rev. 2:20–23. The NT treatment of adultery, following the implications of the OT concept, supports marriage as a lifelong monogamous union. Adultery is a special and aggravated case of fornication. In the teaching of Jesus and the apostles in the NT, all sexual impurity is sin against God, against self, and against others. Spiritual adultery (unfaithfulness to God) violates the union between Christ and his own” (Silva, 31).

v. 27 **cut it off** “Eyes and hands are primary offenders in sexual sin, but vv. 29–30 may be applied more broadly as well. Literal self-mutilation is not Christ’s objective. It is quite possible to be blind or crippled and still lust. Rather, as is characteristic of Jesus’ figurative and hyperbolic style, he commands us to take drastic measures to avoid temptations to sexual sin – to remove from ourselves anyone or anything that could lead us into scandal (“causes you to sin”). The “right” eye and hand refer to those viewed in antiquity as more valuable. Again, eternal judgment appears as the punishment for those who fail to heed Jesus’ words. Sin that is not dealt with leads inexorably to judgment. Jesus is not implying, however, that sexual sin cannot be forgiven when there is true repentance” (Craig Blomberg, *Matthew*, Vol. 22. The New American Commentary, 109).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Be faithful to God and to one another by being sexually faithful with your body and heart.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?
2. What does this passage teach me about myself?
3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

Over the last several weeks we have been talking about the Ten Commandments God has given us in Exodus. These commandments are not just rules to follow. They are actually meant to protect the gifts God has given us. This week we will talk about the seventh commandment which is "Do not commit adultery" (vs. 14). So, what gift is God protecting in this commandment? When God created the heavens, the earth and everything on the earth, He said that it was good, but when He talked about Adam being alone, He said, "it is not good." God gave Adam the gift of Eve knowing that they would need each other to care for all God had given them. When adults get married, the family they become is a gift from God. At the wedding ceremony, the man and woman make promises to love, respect and care for that gift in each other. God takes these promises very seriously and so should we. In 2 Samuel 11, David did not care about what God said about husbands and wives, and his disobedience led to very hard and sad consequences. But just like David needed forgiveness for his sin, so do we. We all fail to keep our promises by failing to do what God asks us to do sometimes. We don't always love, respect and care for God and the things He has given us. But, just like David asked for forgiveness and God forgave him, so can we. Through Jesus dying on the cross for our sins, all of us can be forgiven when we break our promises. That is God's promise to us, and the best news ever is that God always keeps His promises!

*Scrolls guest written by Cindi Kocich, ReGenesis Coordinator

What Does The Bible Say?	What Do You Think?	What Do You Do?
<p>Read Exodus 20:14</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the seventh commandment? 2. What does Psalm 145:13 say about who God is? 3. Where do we find help in keeping our promises, according to Psalm 124:8? 	<p>Why do you think it is important to love, respect and care for others?</p>	<p>Write down five promises you can keep this week that show love to others and ask God each day to help you keep these promises.</p>

CORE COMPETENCY: Love

I love and forgive others no matter what.

MEMORY VERSE: 2 Corinthians 5:17

"Therefore if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old has gone, the new is here!"

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week's verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Eric Wright (B.A. Biblical Studies, Faithway College, Th.M. Pastoral Ministry, Dallas Theological Seminary) Eric served as a pastor in churches in Michigan and Texas for 15 years. He currently serves as a business administrator for a local medical practice. Eric has ministered for over 10 years internationally in Southeast Asia teaching the Gospel of Mark to seminary students and volunteers locally with International Students Inc. at UT Arlington.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2022 Central Bible Church.

All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org