

## TEN COMMANDMENTS SERIES: COMMANDMENT SEVEN

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### Introduction

1. I'm a pretty big Beatles fan. Like many of you, I've heard their songs all my life.
  - a. One of the most famous Beatles songs is not even a Beatles song.
  - b. John Lennon's song *Imagine* was released in 1971,
    - 1) In it, Lennon's conceptualized utopia. One of the key lyrics:
    - 2) *"Imagine all the people living life in peace... You may say I'm a dreamer but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us and the world will be as one."*
  - c. In a 1980 interview, Lennon said about this song, *"can you imagine a world without countries or religions? It's the same message over and over. And it's positive."*
2. We tend to view these things on a macro level rather than a micro level.
  - a. We envision peace between nations (EX: North/South Korea)
  - b. We usually don't think of peace occurring between two people.
  - c. How can we long for world peace when our most intimate relationships disintegrate?
3. In this message, we see a powerful commandment that, if followed, could produce more peace than even John Lennon could have imagined.
4. Let's read this week's text.

### Exodus 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."

- It's interesting that this commandment speaks to just two people— a husband and wife.
- As we examine this further, we'll see broader implications
- Understand, however, that this commandment is only as good as a couple agrees to it.

### A. First, let's look back at the origin of the marital relationship

1. **Genesis 2:24** *"That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become **one** flesh."*
  2. The marital relationship is defined as the couple becoming one.
    - a. The word for ONE in this text is the Hebrew word, *"echad."*
      - 1) It is used over 900 times in the Old Testament.
      - 2) Numerically . . . it means "one."
      - 3) Conceptionally, however, it means "a composite unity"
  3. Now let's look at **1 Corinthians 6:16** *"Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, 'The two will become one flesh.'"*
    - a. While this definitely has sexual undertones, it is more than just sexual unity.
    - b. *Echad* is more than just the sex act. There's a cosmic sense about this unity.
- B. So let's explore this in relationship to biblical *echad*.

### 1. We do so by examining the most important verse in the Hebrew Scriptures.

- a. **Deuteronomy 6:4,5** *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."*
  - b. Think about our *echad* definition as composite unity
    - 1) This speaks to not just monotheism, but trinitarianism.
  - c. The rabbinical concept of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) speaks to this.
    - 1) God created the universe whole, but sin in Eden shattered it.
    - 2) One of the tasks of humanity is to partner with God to restore unity. Restore *echad*.
  - d. We see this in the New Testament as well: **Ephesians 4:4-6**  
*"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."*
2. God (as creator of reality) instituted the power of oneness. Let's examine some etymology:
- a. *Integer* means "whole" or "complete."
  - b. *Integrity* means "the state of being whole or soundness of character."
  - c. *Disintegrate* means "to separate into parts or lose intactness."

3. God is fully invested in the concept of *echad* (composite unity).
  - a. To be clear, this is not panentheism (or monism).
    - 1) We do not exist within God.
    - 2) Nor does God doesn't need us within him.
  - b. But what we do see is that we find relational completeness within him.
  - c. It's the classic relational triangle between man and woman and God.
- C. Now let's dispel a few myths concerning human sexuality.
  1. "It's my body, I can sleep with whomever I want."
    - a. No it isn't.
    - b. The apostle Paul affirms this in **1 Corinthians 6:18-20**.
 

*"Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies."*
    - c. Again, the Bible testifies that there is something unique about sexual sin.
    - d. Abiding by God's parameters are yet another way of worshipping him.
  2. "It's just sex!"
    - a. No it isn't.
    - b. Recognize that the Ten Commandments cover both **vertical** and **horizontal**.
      - 1) We see commands that cover how we relate to both **God** and **humanity**.
    - c. Not committing adultery is an oft-repeated command in religious literature.
      - 1) The implication is that adultery is akin to idolatry (fidelity).
      - 2) Obedience is a sign of respect to God in our vertical relationship.
    - d. There are community/nation benefits when we all adhere to marital *echad*.
      - 1) Example: *Love and Other Drugs*, a movie based on nakedness.
      - 2) The actors/director said they needed to get naked for authenticity.
      - 3) There's a biblical truth that underlies this meaning.
      - 4) Truth: being naked is the *echad* metaphor (the closest we get to Eden).
      - 5) If you're willing to lie to your lover, who won't you lie to?
- D. Understand what this commandment is truly saying.
  - a. Biblically, the sexual relationship is *echad* within marriage between man/woman.
    - 1) Sexual involvement outside marriage is outside this relationship.
    - 2) Although it can still have remnants of goodness (like a child) it's not *echad*.
    - 3) God created sex, he's allowed to dictate the rules.
  - b. If you are married, you are to remain in *echad* with your spouse.

## CONCLUSION

1. The Scriptures speak often about this topic.
  - a. Sometimes we dwell on the negative **[DON'T]**, but there's much positive to be said.
  - b. The apostle Paul (a single guy)'s guide for marriage.
2. **Ephesians 5:25-30**

*"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— for we are members of his body."*
3. There's advice for all:
  - a. For the married couple: Live for your spouse. Live in *echad* with them.
  - b. For the single person (and those hoping to be married): live in anticipation, not in disintegration
  - c. Living celibately is living in *echad*.
4. Years ago, for a short time, I spoke abstinence education for teens. It wasn't fun.
  - a. More powerful than merely saying "don't," is the examples.
  - b. One a recent holiday weekend, I saw both sides of my extended family:

- 1) My parents: married almost 50 years.
  - 2) My wife's parents: married almost 50 years.
  - 3) Us: we've had 20 years of marriage.
- c. I can confidently tell you that fidelity has its benefits.
- d. *Echad* with God (and with each other) brings a fulfilling life.