**Seventh Commandment Discussion Guide**

**Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18**

**\* Sermon Overview**

Pastor Aaron will emphasize that the seventh commandment commends us to know God’s faithfulness and follow God’s faithfulness. His outline will be: (1) The Faithfulness of God—Matthew 5:27-28; (2) Our failure meets His faithfulness—John 7:53-8:11; (3) Jesus is our hope for faithfulness and purity—Titus 2:11-14.

**\* Observation/Interpretation Questions[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Note: Please do not feel compelled to cover all that is found within these questions in your community group. These questions will give you a grasp of what the text says and means so that we can think through how to apply the text to our lives.

**1. What is the context and meaning of the 7th Commandment?**

*In the seventh commandment, adultery is forbidden and purity/faithfulness is commended. Adultery consists of a mental and physical component. Physical adultery is having sexual relations with a married person who is not your spouse. Mental adultery is lusting after a person who is not your spouse (see Matthew 5:27-30). God forbids adultery because it disregards His instruction, which is for our good, and it violates the most sacred commitment between a man and a woman. One who is willing to break the marital bond between a man and a woman is (1) one who is willing to commit spiritual adultery against the Lord and (2) one who is willing to demonstrate unfaithfulness in every other area of life. As we will be reminded in the sermon, we all stand in need of the forgiving and transforming grace of Jesus to walk in faithfulness/purity.*

*As you think about this commandment, (1) Remember that the metaphor of adultery was often used to communicate Israel’s unfaithfulness to God (for example, see Hosea); (2) Reflect on what other commandments are violated/broken when one commits adultery.*

*As you think through this commandment, ask yourself these questions: (1) What passages illustrate the destructiveness of adultery and what passages illustrate one fighting for purity? (2) Why is it important for believers to fight for purity and faithfulness in their marriages? (3) Is purity possible? How does the gospel relate to this question? How does Jesus empower/enable believers to walk in purity and faithfulness?*

*For passages related to the 7th Commandment, see Genesis 20:6, 9; 39:9; Leviticus 18:20; 20:10-21; Numbers 5:11-31; Deuteronomy 22:13-30; 2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51; Proverbs 2:16-19; 4:23-25; 5:1-23; 6:20-35; 7:1-27; Song of Solomon; Matthew 5:27-32; 15:10-20; 19:1-12 (and parallels); John 7:53-8:11; 1 Corinthians 6:12-7:40; Ephesians 5:1-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8; 2 Timothy 2:22; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

*For passages related to sexual immorality generally (includes sexual abuse/rape, incest, bestiality, homosexuality, divorce and remarriage, spiritual adultery, etc.), see Exodus 22:16-17, 19; Leviticus 18; 20:10-21; Deuteronomy 22:13-30; 24:1-4; 31:16; Judges 2:16-17; 8:27, 33; Jeremiah 3:1-25; Ezekiel 16:1-63; Hosea; Malachi 2:10-16; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Galatians 5:16-26.*

*Philp Ryken writes, “What does it mean to commit adultery? The simplest answer is that adultery is marital infidelity. It is sexual intercourse that breaks the bonds of a marriage covenant. So the primary purpose of this commandment is to protect marriage.” He continues, “To put things more positively, the seventh commandment requires husbands and wives to nurture their love for one another, emotionally and spiritually, as well as sexually.” He concludes, “In short, the seventh commandment forbids any sexual activity that violates the covenant of marriage. Period. There are no exceptions and no loopholes.”*

*Martin Luther writes, “This commandment applies to every form of unchastity, however it is called. Not only is the external act forbidden, but also every kind of cause, motive, and means. Your heart, your lips, and your whole body are to be chaste and to afford no occasion, aid, or encouragement to unchastity.”*

*Westminster Shorter Catechism: “The Seventh Commandment requireth the preservation of our own and our neighbor’s chastity, in heart, speech, and behavior.”*

*Alister Begg writes, “The (Westminster) Shorter Catechism asks not only what is required by the seventh commandment but also what is forbidden by it. The seventh commandment forbids all unchaste thoughts, words, and actions. To commit adultery is to sin against God, our body, the partner in the affair, our spouse, and our partner’s spouse. Adultery is a betrayal, an intrusion, and a rejection of God’s instruction, which has been provided for our good. The adulterer separates what God has joined together and fails to love his neighbor as himself.”*

*Heidelberg Catechism: “God forbids all unchaste actions, gestures, words, thoughts, desires and whatever may excite another person to them.”*

*Mark Rooker writes, “Sexual sins such as fornication (Numbers 25:1), prostitution (Deuteronomy 22:21), homosexuality (Leviticus 18:22; Judges 19:22; Deuteronomy 23:17-18), premarital sex and cohabitation (Exodus 22:16-17; Deuteronomy 22:13-21), incest (Leviticus 18:6-18; 20:17-21), and bestiality (Exodus 22:19; Leviticus 18:23; 20:15-16; Deuteronomy 27:21) are transgressions against God’s law and are rightly condemned. Adultery, however, uniquely implies unfaithfulness in marriage, the most intimate of human relationships.”*

*J. I. Packer writes, “But what the words ‘you shall not commit adultery’ call us to face is, first, that sex is for marriage, and for marriage only; second, that marriage must be seen as a relation of lifelong fidelity; third, that other people’s marriages must not be interfered with by sexual intrusion.”*

*Albert Mohler writes, “Jesus makes clear His expectation for His people. The commandment stands against adultery with our eyes, with our brains, with our imagination. The command is about our attention, the totality of who we are.” He continues, “So, Scripture would have us think about adultery in two simultaneous dimensions—spiritual adultery and sexual adultery.”*

*ESV Gospel Transformation Bible: “Because he is our God and because he has redeemed us, we now are to live with our desires directed rightly—toward our spouses and ultimately toward God (*[*Ephesians 5:29–31*](https://www.esv.org/Ephesians+5%3A29%E2%80%9331/)*). And so, adultery is prohibited, but so is lust (see* [*Matthew 5:27–28*](https://www.esv.org/Matthew+5%3A27%E2%80%9328/)*) as well as other sexual sins, such as incest, fornication, and homosexuality (*[*Romans 1:24–25*](https://www.esv.org/Romans+1%3A24%E2%80%9325/)*;*[*1 Corinthians 5:1–13; 6:9–11*](https://www.esv.org/1+Corinthians+5%3A1%E2%80%9313%2C+6%3A9%E2%80%9311/)*).”*

**2. What does the 7th Commandment teach us about the character of God?**

*As you think about this commandment, we are reminded of three attributes of God:*

*1- God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16)—As a holy God, He calls us to live holy lives in thought, deed, and word. As we walk in newness of life given us by Christ, we reflect the power and holiness of God to those around us. In our day, believers walking in purity and faithfulness regarding sexual matters is a testament and witness to the power of the gospel. As you think about this commandment, how does the faithfulness of God in the gospel shape how we walk in faithfulness and purity in our lives?*

*2- God is faithful—Though we are faithless and sinful, God is always faithful. Unlike us, He does not break His Word. He is faithful to love, protect, guard, provide for, and cherish His people. Through Jesus, God forgives and transforms us to walk in faithfulness and purity. As you think about this commandment, how do you see the faithful love of God for His people displayed in the Old and New Testament?*

*3- God is good—Out of his wisdom and goodness, God gives instructions for our good. As we see the consequences and effects of the breakdown of the family all around us, we see the wisdom and goodness of God’s design for the family. As you think about this commandment, how can we both instruct our families of the goodness and wisdom of God’s design for sexual relations within the context of marriage and illustrate the goodness and wisdom of God’s design for sexual relations within the context of marriage?*

*Mark Rooker writes, “Adultery is the social equivalent of the religious crime of having other gods (see Exodus 20:3) since marriage is a mirror of God’s covenant with His people. This emphasis—that faithfulness (expressed by obedience) must permeate every sphere of life, both the religious and the secular—gives a distinctive character to the Israelite law on adultery. It was employed to show negatively the constant tendency by the people of God toward ‘spiritual adultery’ and positively the faithfulness and love of God for His people despite their unfaithfulness (see Ezekiel 16; Hosea 1-3).”*

*Albert Mohler writes, “In contrast to the expectation of fidelity and faithfulness, the sin of adultery stabbed like a dagger at the very heart of that covenant between God and His people. Today the sin of adultery stabs at the heart of the covenant between a man and a woman—it strikes at the heart of trust and faith, of love and affection. It undermines the husband-wife relationship and the family itself.”*

*Albert Mohler writes, “The biblical theology of adultery is the big story of God’s redeeming love, of God’s determination to save a people through the blood of His Son for the glory of His name. And note, God saves them out of an adulterous generation. It is the Father’s pleasure to create a bride for His Son the Bridegroom, and to present this bride to the Bridegroom without spot and without blemish. We in the church of the Lord Jesus Christ look forward to that eschatological promise of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. God’s big purpose of salvation, His dealings with His people, His redeeming love—all these are seen against the backdrop of this biblical theology of adultery.” He continues, “When God presents the bride—His church—without spot and blemish to the Bridegroom, not only will adultery be vanquished, so will lust! At that time, there will be not only no physical breaking of the covenant, there will also be nothing less than full fidelity to the covenant.”*

**3. How does the 7th Commandment reveal our sinfulness and need for Christ?**

*Like the sixth commandment, the seventh commandment might be one that people confess that they have never violated/broken. Then, when confronted with Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:27-30, we are reminded again that obedience to the commandment is not just a matter of external conformity, but it is also a matter of heart obedience. We are called to obey the seventh commandment with all of our being—our thoughts, words, and actions. Once again, I dare say, we are all reminded that we are sinners in need of a Savior. Thankfully, we serve a God who is faithful to His Word and pure in all His ways. While we were yet sinners, God demonstrated His love and faithfulness by sending His Son to bear the curse of sin and to shed His blood for the forgiveness of sin. In Christ, we sexually immoral people are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of Jesus and by the Spirit of God (see 1 Corinthians 6:9-11). Having received God’s forgiving grace, we now walk in His transforming grace, putting off sexual sin and putting on self-control, purity, faithfulness (and so much more of Christ-like life). God reminds us in the gospel that we can walk in newness of life, living faithful and pure lives.*

*Philip Ryken writes, “Sexual immorality is common in our culture. People are looking for love, but they are settling for sex.”*

*Martyn Lloyd Jones writes, “Even adultery is not the unforgivable sin. It is a terrible sin, but God forbid that there should be anyone who feels that he or she has sinned himself or herself outside the love of God or outside His kingdom because of adultery. No; if you truly repent and realize the enormity of your sin and cast yourself upon the boundless love and mercy and grace of God, you can be forgiven and I assure you of pardon.” He concludes, “But hear the words of our blessed Lord: ‘Go, and sin no more.’ (see John 8).”*

*Edmund Clowney writes, “Only Jesus was truly pure. He kept for us the seventh commandment against adultery. His holiness is the ground of our justification in this area of purity.”*

**4. How might the 7th Commandment apply to our lives today?**

*Here are two ways we can apply this commandment to our lives: (1) Flee from sexual immorality and (2) Pursue purity/righteousness/faithfulness. Granted, with each of these two applications, we can add many other concrete/practical application points. I would encourage you to do just that in your time together in community group. For example, when thinking about fleeing from sexual immorality, practical application points for this idea might include the following: confessing sexual sin, acknowledging areas of your life where you’ve been flirting with sexual sin and asking for accountability from someone to help you flee from sexual sin altogether, etc. When thinking about pursuing purity/righteousness/faithfulness, practical application points for this might include the following: remember the gospel or remember your identity in Christ, strive to be thankful for God’s grace/gifts to you (for example, see how thankfulness/gratitude is a strategy for purity in Ephesians 5:3-5), ask for God to give you a hunger and thirst for righteousness, request help of someone in your group to hold you accountable for time in the Word. As you can see, there are many application points to think through regarding this commandment. Take time in your community group to discuss pitfalls to avoid regarding purity/faithfulness and strategies to employ to grow in in faithfulness/purity.*

*Along with these application points, realize that this commandment will hit in different ways given their stage and situation of life. For example, how might this commandment be applied to a single person who has never been married? How might this commandment be applied to a married couple? How might this commandment be applied to a divorced person? Think through ways to apply the gospel to each of these situations and stages.*

*Philip Ryken writes, “The biblical view is that sex is not merely procreational, but also relational, and even recreational. Sex is for love, for pleasure, and for joy. And it is in order to protect this joy that God has given us the seventh commandment: ‘You shall not commit adultery.’”*

*Philip Ryken writes, “Submission and sacrifice are the virtues that marriage demands, and not surprisingly, they also prove to be the virtues that bring joy to sex.”*

*Philp Ryken writes, “One way to gain victory over sexual sin is to live self-sacrificially rather than self-indulgently, and to do so in every area of life. Godliness in one area promotes godliness in others.”*

*Philip Ryken writes, “We show our covenant loyalty to God by maintaining our sexual fidelity to our spouse (or our future spouse).”*

*Albert Mohler writes, “A culture that embraces adultery, accepts within itself a poison pill for every other relationship, a toxic substance that threatens every other commitment. Adultery is primal in its attack upon all that is honorable and good and true and faithful, unraveling precious bonds and commitments.”*

*Albert Mohler writes, “However, we must also admit that the contemporary church is so lax in its discipline and so accommodated to sin that even within many congregations there are patterns of adultery known by the congregation and yet unconfronted. Such a congregation accepts within its midst the breaking of a covenant, thus undermining its witness to the covenant of salvation.”*

**\* Application Questions**

Note: Please do not feel compelled to use every question, for you will have time for 3 to 5 questions in your community group. Also, please feel freedom to adapt the question or to create a question that will best help your community group “be doers of the Word” (James 1:22), for you know the stage and situation of your group members.

1. What is the meaning of the seventh commandment? What is prohibited and what is commended?

2. What does the seventh commandment teach us about God? How are sexual adultery and spiritual adultery related?

3. When you think about this commandment, this question arises: is purity possible? How would you answer that question? How does our being in Christ transform our fight for purity?

4. How does God’s faithfulness change our pursuit of faithfulness in all our relationships, especially in our marriages?

5. What other commandments are broken in the violating of the seventh commandment? In thinking about this question, how might this provide us with pitfalls to avoid in compromising purity and strategies to pursue in fighting for purity?

6. Read Matthew 5:27-30. What does Jesus teach us in this passage? By His grace, how ought we to apply this passage to our lives?

7. For married couples, how might you guard the purity of your marriage? What are the temptations to flee from and what are the strategies/weapons you might use to fight for the purity of your marriage? How does our identity in Christ shape all of this? In thinking about these questions, look at 2 Samuel 11-12; Psalm 51; Proverbs 5-7; Song of Solomon; Ephesians 5:22-33; and other passages (Note: Some of these questions might be better discussed in gendered specific groups).

8. For singles, how ought you to flee from sexual immorality and to guard your purity? What are pitfalls to avoid and strategies to employ in fighting for purity? How does our identity in Christ shape all of this? In thinking about these questions, look at Romans 6; 1 Corinthians 6:9-7:40; Titus 2:11-14.

9. For adulterers, what does it look like to bear fruit in keeping with repentance? How does identity in Christ (or the gospel) shape your response? Why is it important to remember the forgiving and transforming grace of Christ?

10. What role do community groups and discipleship groups play in helping each of us fight for purity? Why is it important for us to be concerned with purity?

11. If you are struggling to facilitate conversation in your group or if you are looking to start conversation in your group, here are some questions to prompt conversation:

A. Question of Impression—What stood out to you in the pastor’s sermon? Why did it stand out to you?

B. Question of Application—How have you been seeking to apply the sermon in your own life this week? Or, what is one way that you can apply the sermon to your life this week?

C. Question of Clarity—If you had to sum up the main idea of the sermon in one sentence, what would it be? What main themes do you see in the text and did you hear in the sermon?

D. Question of Reflection—How have you seen God at work this week in your life and in the lives of those around you? How has God been working in you this week through His Word, through prayer, through the body of Christ, and through service/evangelism? What were the highlights and lowlights of your week?

E. Question of Mission—How will you pass on what you have heard, learned, and applied this week to another believer this week so that they may know and follow Jesus? How will what you heard, learned, and applied this week equip you to share Jesus with an unbeliever this week where you live, work, and play?

12. In his book, *Asking the Right Questions,* Matthew Harmon gives the following questions for understanding and applying the Bible:

A. Understanding the Bible

1. What do we learn about God?

a. Look for God’s character (who he is, what he is like)

b. Look for God’s conduct (what he is doing)

c. Look for God’s concerns (what thing/events/people he is concerned about)

2. What do we learn about people?

a. Look for aspects of what it means to be created in God’s image

b. Look for the fallen condition

c. Look for how God’s people should live

3. What do we learn about relating to God?

a. Look for things to praise and thank God for

b. Look for sin to confess and repent

c. Look for promises and truths to believe

4. What do we learn about relating to others?

a. Look for how we should interact with and treat others

b. Look for ways to pursue reconciliation with others

c. Look for specific ways to love, serve, and care for others

B. Applying the Bible

a. What does God want me to think/understand?

b. What does God want me to believe?

c. What does God want me to desire?

d. What does God want me to do?

**\* Sermon Take Away**

Know God’s faithfulness and follow His faithfulness.

**\* Bible Reading Plan**

1. Monday—Matthew 11; Isaiah 63

2. Tuesday—Matthew 12; Isaiah 64

3. Wednesday—Matthew 13; Isaiah 65

4. Thursday—Matthew 14; Isaiah 66

5. Friday—Matthew 15; Jeremiah 1

6. Saturday—Matthew 16; Jeremiah 2

7. Sunday—Matthew 17; Jeremiah 3

* **Ten Commandments Series**

1. July 29th—8th Commandment

2. August 5th—9th Commandment

3. August 12th—10th Commandment

* **Vision Series/Journey of Discipleship Series**

1. August 19th—Worship

2. August 26th—Community (Acts 2:42-47)

3. September 2nd—Discipleship (Matthew 4:19-20)

4. September 9th—Multiply (Matthew 28:16-20)

* **Gospel of Mark Series**

1. September 16th—Mark 1

2. September 23rd—Mark 2

3. September 30th—Mark 3

4. October 7th—Mark 4

5. October 14th—Mark 5

6. October 21st—Mark 6

7. October 28th—Mark 7

8. November 4th—Mark 8

9. November 11th—Mark 9

10. November 18th—Mark 10

11. November 25th—Mark 11

12. December 2nd—Mark 12

13. December 9th—Mark 13

14. December 16th—Mark 14

15. December 30th—Mark 15

16. January 6th—Mark 16

* **Stand Alone Sermons**

1. December 23rd—Christmas Message (Passage TBD)

2. December 24th—Christmas Message (Passage TBD)

1. For the discussion guide, I used the following resources: Douglas Stuart, *Exodus*; R. Alan Cole, *Exodus*; John Currid, *Exodus*;J. A. Thompson, *Deuteronomy*; John Currid, *Deuteronomy*; Peter Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*; Eugene Merrill, *Deuteronomy*; Tony Merida, *Exalting Jesus in Exodus*; Al Mohler, *Words from the Fire*; Alistair Begg, *Pathway to Freedom*; Edmund Clowney, *How Jesus Transforms the Ten Commandments*; J. I. Packer, *Keeping the Ten Commandments*; Philip Ryken, *Written in Stone*; Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments*; Mark Rooker, *The Ten Commandments*; *ESV Study Bible*; *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)