

You Shall Not Commit Adultery

SCOTT HOEZEE

In all of life, we recognize a pattern in our relationships. The more casual the relationship, the less likely that any terrible hurt could emerge from it; but the relationships we have that are deep and close and intimate raise the stakes dramatically. When someone we trust utterly and love passionately betrays us, the wounds inflicted can last a lifetime. Well, few relationships in life are more intimate than marriage, and today on *Groundwork*, we look at the commandment that simply says: You must not commit adultery. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, this is episode number five in our eight-part series on the Ten Commandments. Our first program covered the first three, which was giving due reverence and honor to God and to God's name; then we looked at keeping the Sabbath; honoring our father and mother and all those in authority over us; and now, just in the previous episode, we discussed God's command not to murder. So, that brings us now to commandment number seven on not committing adultery.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, this is one of the most interesting topics that is taboo in a lot of circles and situations; but we do know that God has something to say about it because he has something to say about every area of our lives; and then, what is also interesting, Scott, is that God designed marriage; and so, when I think about marriage...and when I taught in youth ministry, I always said that when you start a fire, do you start a fire on the living room floor or do you start a fire in our house, do you start a fire on the street? No; you start it in the places that it was designed to be placed in, whether it be a firepit, a fireplace, or in the wood on the firepit. It has to have a specific place in order for it to go well, or some people are going to get hurt; and that is what happens with marriage. God has designed it; and so, it needs to go in its proper context, and we see that in scripture.

SCOTT HOEZEE

In Genesis 2, right back in the continuing creation account, we find out about marriage and the marriage relationship as part of creation. ¹⁸The Lord God said, "it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." ²¹So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. ²²Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. ²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, for she was taken out of man." ²⁴That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

DARRELL DELANEY

When I have heard this taught, or when I have heard this spoken at weddings that I have done or someone else has done, I realize that when Adam was brought into a deep sleep, that the rib was taken from him, it was taken from a place that is equal with him; but it is also something that I have noticed that she wasn't formed out of the dust of the ground, so you don't get to treat her like dirt.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yeah!

DARRELL DELANEY

You have to respect her.

SCOTT HOEZEE

There you go; and it is interesting to me that God didn't just create the woman *poof* you know; I mean, most things God said: Let there be tadpoles, and *poof* tadpoles. Why this funny business about the rib? Well, it is pretty clear, right? You just said it. God made Eve that way as a sign and a symbol that the man and the woman...the husband and the wife...belong together. They literally are part of each other...

DARRELL DELANEY

The same essence.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And if they become one flesh later, well, that makes sense because there is that intimate connection. They are literally made of the same stuff, indeed, so they belong together; and Darrell, in the New Testament, Jesus picks up on this story, too.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, in Matthew 19, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees and it says: ³Some Pharisees came to Jesus to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" ⁴"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵and said, 'For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?" ⁶So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let no one separate."

SCOTT HOEZEE

"Let no one separate..." that line Jesus adds there. It was not in the original Genesis 2 text, but I have spoken that at many weddings, as have you, and we have heard it spoken at many weddings. So, what is significant about all this, Darrell... We are going to be thinking about adultery, but first we need to think about why adultery is bad. One of the reasons it is bad is because Genesis 2, and now Jesus in Matthew 19, make it clear marriage is a creation ordinance. It is part of the tapestry of the very creation itself. We cannot get out of the creation accounts in Genesis 1 and 2 without hitting marriage. So, that is really, really significant. You know, the Roman Catholic Church goes so far as to make marriage one of the sacraments. Protestants don't go quite that far; but there is universal respect and reverence for the marriage relationship.

DARRELL DELANEY

And so, because the marriage is sacred, whether it be in the Catholic Church or the Protestant Church, we both see it as very important and very special; but when there is something that is beautiful and good that God has made, you can always count on the devil, or the enemy, to try to mar it, try to destroy it, or fight his hardest against it, because the unity that the marriage represents...the enemy does not want to see that kind of unity. That is a picture of Jesus Christ and his Church. He wants to get rid of it at all costs, so he will throw in everything he can to create chaos, confusion, and pain and hurt so that the marriages do not last and show that image that God wants them to show.

SCOTT HOEZEE

The other thing that we are not going to talk about in this program, except now I just thought of it, in the New Testament Jesus makes the man and the woman's relationship a symbol of Christ's relationship to the Church. Christ and his Church...this is his body...they are one flesh; so, that magnifies it yet again. So, you are right. No wonder the evil one wants to corrupt the marriage relationship, because there is a lot at stake when it goes well, and the devil doesn't want it to go well.

You know, there are a lot of reasons why a marriage might end in a divorce, and a lot of those reasons are just tragic. There is terrible abuse...maybe there is sexual abuse, maybe there is sexual abuse of children. There are some legitimate reasons why marriages must end, but they are still tragic reasons.

DARRELL DELANEY

The reasons are painful, the reasons are traumatic, and they take, sometimes, long times for people to heal; and as a pastor who walks with people who have been through these difficult situations, I have never been one to counsel them to go back into those situations that might create harm for them...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Or harm for another person; and so, there is brokenness all over when you have people who have a very intimate relationship, and they are sinful people, there are a lot of things that are happening. Sometimes it is their fault and sometimes it isn't their fault; but sometimes we need to find ways to move forward when the relationships don't go right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And of course, unfortunately, there are lots of marriages that end casually. I mean, you know, like for some people ending a marriage is like changing your socks or something...

DARRELL DELANEY

Irreconcilable differences.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, you know, you see these stories once in a while out of Hollywood about these people who were married for a week...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

A month... I mean, how does that happen? So, there are tragic reasons why marriages end. There are altogether too casual reasons, but I think we both know from experience as pastors, nothing ruins a marriage more quickly...not a hundred percent...but nothing ruins it more quickly than adultery. I mean, the most intimate part of the marriage relationship, the sexuality part, when that gets betrayed...when that gets intruded on by another...that isn't always the death knell of a marriage, but it very often is.

DARRELL DELANEY

For some people, it is a deal breaker; and in the next segment, we are going to look at the Bible's most searing story on this warning about adultery, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*. We are talking about the seventh commandment today, Darrell, and you just alluded a moment ago at the end of the previous part of the program that we are going to turn to 2 Samuel 11, the story of King David and a woman named Bathsheba; and as you said, Darrell, this is a very difficult story, and it is a warning. It goes like this, or the first part of it does. 2 Samuel 11:

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. ²One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof, he saw a

woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful,³ and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, “She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite.”⁴ Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home.⁵ The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, “I am pregnant.”

DARRELL DELANEY

What a scandal.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes, so far, so bad, but it gets worse.

DARRELL DELANEY

Okay; first of all, Bathsheba is Uriah the Hittite’s wife. So, he is actually serving David’s army...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right? So, he is out there in the military. In the situation where the kings are supposed to go off to war, it is made clear that David is not out there where he is supposed to be, so he is in the wrong place at the wrong time, and he has this opportunity where he is envisioning this thing with this woman, Bathsheba, and it is not his wife...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

That is the problem.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And you know, the fact, Darrell, that it is war season...that is kind of a weird way to think about it: In the spring, when the kings go out to war... It is like, what? But that is how it was; but the fact that David stayed behind kind of indicates he is kind of on the downward slope of his life, kind of, the bloom is off the rose a little bit, he is not the healthy young man he used to be. He is getting a little bored, he is getting a little restless, and now he is looking for something to maybe boost his ego; and he sees this beautiful woman. He has to have her, and he does. There is some question whether he rapes her, or how consensual it was, but she gets pregnant. So, now the story gets worse. David brings Uriah home...gives him a furlough from the army...tells him: Hey, you’ve got a pretty wife. Why don’t you go home to her tonight? He is hoping he will go home, that they will make love, and then it can look like her baby is Uriah’s baby; but Uriah is a good guy. He says: No; my troops are in the trenches. I don’t get to go home and have fun. So, he refuses to go home, which drives David nuts because Uriah’s loyalty only makes David look worse. So, what does David do? Well, a terrible thing. He pretty much arranges to have Uriah killed.

DARRELL DELANEY

What is unfortunate about that killing is that he had Uriah deliver his own letter that had in it the instructions for everybody to draw back from Uriah and put him in the hottest part of the battle, and have him killed. So, not only does David covet someone else’s wife, he has adultery...he sleeps with her...and then he covers it up by having the husband killed. So, it goes from bad to worse. So, there are always these other strings of relationships that are hurt when adultery happens. That is something I don’t think we talked about, but when there is... It is not just always between that one person and the other. There are other people who love these people who are connected that are also hurt by what happens in adultery.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; it is like a bad mafia movie or something, instead of a Bible story; but the text tells us all we need to know when we read this in 2 Samuel 11: ^{27b}But the thing David had done displeased the Lord.

I'll say; but, many of us know, David gets confronted, confesses later. The child Bathsheba bears dies. It is kind of like a punishment; but then, Darrell, things just kind of...it is like this adultery is the first domino, and then the murder is the next domino, and then the other dominoes keep going down, because soon, David's whole household is going to fall into disarray. His son Amnon...his son Absalom and Amnon in particular...you know, they sort of say: Well, the old man got away with it, so then they misbehave sexually. There is a rape of a woman named Tamar, and then Absalom rebels and kills Amnon; and ugh, the whole thing just falls apart. So, that is what you were saying, Darrell. When adultery happens, the ripples of hurt just go out to more and more and more people.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think it is important for us to understand, too, that you make this point about these relationships that are being hurt, and the domino effect that is going on. It seems like when there are things that are precious, that God sees as special, the more susceptible they are to corruption—the more susceptible they are to these things going wrong; and because of David's poor example, his children...his sons...they start to follow this example, because they take it to the next level really. It didn't matter if Tamar has given permission or not, and they have used these things to give them an excuse to go even further and make it worse.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It has been a problem all through history; and the Apostle Paul knew about it, too. We did a series on 1 Corinthians not long ago here on *Groundwork*, Darrell, and we looked at some of these passages, but here is Paul in 1 Corinthians 6, being very urgent in his language, starting at verse 18: Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually sins against their own body. ¹⁹Do 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; ²⁰you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.

DARRELL DELANEY

When we did this Corinthians series, we talked about how Paul just ticked off everything that they were asking him about...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And he would address many issues. In this situation, he is letting them know you need to run away from any kind of sexual immorality. It is interesting how he says they sin against their own body...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Because when you are married, you two become one, so you literally are sinning against yourself if you commit adultery; but he also brings in this part about being bought with a price. Because of Christ's redemption, we belong to him. So, we cannot just do whatever we want with these bodies. We cannot just do whatever we want with these minds. They literally are on lease from God, and we need to honor him with our bodies in each and every chance we get.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is interesting that you say that. I saw a film a while back where a man discovers that his wife, who has had an accident from which she will never wake up...she is in a coma, but he finds out after the coma that she

had had an affair...and he eventually confronts this man; and at one point he says: Did you ever sleep with my wife in my own bed? And the guy said: Yeah. And that somehow made it worse for him. You are right. Let the marriage bed be undefiled, the New Testament says. The physical bed...that was bad enough...but really, the hurt was already there, because even in another bed, it was as...they were one flesh...and it was as though he were being dragged down himself; just that sense of defilement, that sense of betrayal, the hurt that that causes, and the shattering effect it can cause. It is not a surprise how many marriages get shipwrecked on the shoals of adultery, because it can be awfully hard to ever blot it out of your mind again.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, as we think about this...we have talked about the pain, the hurt, and the sacrifices, and all these things that are negative about it...but as we close this program, we will want to consider how Jesus himself raises the stakes, and what that means for us in this sexually charged culture that we are in now. So, stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we are digging into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Darrell, in the Sermon on the Mount...we mentioned this in the previous program on the commandment not to murder...in the Sermon on the Mount...but really, Jesus did this throughout the Gospel of Matthew...Jesus works hard to teach Israel the deepest and truest meaning of God's law. Sometimes we say Jesus radicalized the law, but we mean that in the sense of the Latin word, *radix*, which means *root*. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount in particular, when he kind of starts ticking through a lot of the Ten Commandments, he gets past the surface obedience, and he dives down to the root of it all.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, I love that because, I mean, we know as we read the New Testament that he is the Word of God, and he actually co-wrote these commandments...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, I think the author of the commandments could give a real, tangible root example of what it really means. If you wrote a book, Scott, I wouldn't ask your cousin what it meant; I would ask you because you had the intended meaning. So, you could get to the root of what you meant, and Jesus does that; and he lets the Pharisees know it is not just about what is on the surface, but it is really about looking good in the heart; not just so everybody can say: Oh, wow; you are really religious. Oh, great; you keep these commandments. But their heart is really the issue, and Jesus gets to that in Matthew 5.

SCOTT HOEZEE

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

Boy, whether you are a man or a woman, you hear that and you can only respond with kind of a deep gulp of shame. I think we all know how easy it is to cross that line between just objectively noting: Hey, that is a handsome man...that is a pretty woman, to going over the line and thinking: I wonder what it would be like to hold her hand, or kiss him, or ummm...go to bed with him or her? That happens pretty easy, and Jesus says: You have already committed adultery in your heart when you do that. You said it earlier in the previous segment. That definitely raises the stakes.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, what is interesting is that: One, our culture makes it extremely easy, and normalizes that behavior...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

That is not acceptable to God; and second of all, even if you look further into the New Testament, Paul picks this up in Ephesians 5:3 when he says: Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, as some were in the habit of doing, you know; and the hint is what hits us right between the eyes. It is very, very impossible for us to do by ourselves, to keep self-control and to not have this adultery happen in our hearts; but we need help from God to do that in this sexualized culture.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You said that verse from Ephesians 5. You know, you sort of want to reply to Paul and say: Define *hint*. Is there wiggle room here? I am afraid there probably isn't. Not even a hint; not even a whiff of immorality or lewd talk and the like. Similar to Jesus in what we just read from Matthew 5. Now, Jesus said all of that because it was clearly a concern already in his day, two thousand years ago...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It has been a concern all through history, really; but I think we all recognize that we now live in a world that is pretty much saturated with pornography. It is free and easy on the Internet. The lust of the eye and the adultery of the heart is rampant; but it is not just pornography, it is sort of the whole culture.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, it is interesting because there are many companies that use these as marketing tools. Anything that they can use to make a dollar. Anything that they can use to make their business successful. It is in commercials, it is on the radio, it is in relationship conversations, it is in casual friends, it is on Tik-Tok, it is on Facebook, it is everywhere; and that is one thing that makes it very difficult for us, because we are constantly bombarded with these temptations, and we have a choice to make, but we need God's help in order to get to a place where these don't become a root problem for us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; I have never gone to advertising school, and never will, but based on most of the advertising I see, lecture number one in advertising graduate school has to be sex sells.

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

It is amazing! Half the time, you don't know what a commercial on TV is even for until the end of it because it is just all, you know, scantily clad people; and then in the end it is like this was for chewing gum?! How did we get to chewing gum on this thing? But it doesn't matter, right? I mean, you saw everything. So, what can we do as we close out this program? Is there any hope; is there any grace? Well, let's think about a few things, Darrell. I think the first thing we can say practically for ourselves is let's covenant to pray for purity.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think it is important for us to know that prayer is the power that can break a lot of these things, because we are asking God for help, and we are asking for the Holy Spirit's power to help us. We also need to use the A-word; the A-word is *accountability*; and when we discipline ourselves to not look at the things, we also need to tell a person: Here is my covenant and my plan for today. In a book called *Every Man's Battle* by Steve Arterburn, he talks about bouncing his eyes. I've got young boys. I tell them the same thing: You need to bounce your eyes if you look at something, but don't stare and don't let that take root in you, because those things are what we are trying to avoid; but I think the Holy Spirit can give us the strength that we need, whether you are a boy, a girl, a man or a woman, to give us what we need in order to fight the temptation.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; we cannot do it alone; but then secondly, recognizing that we all almost inevitably fail in this area at least now and then, if not more often than that, we need to confess our sins clearly and honestly.

Accountability...we need accountability before God. I didn't bounce my eyes, O Lord, I stared. I saw it; I lusted. So, we need to seek God's forgiveness in Jesus; and yes, that grace unto forgiveness can and it does extend even to those of us who have done adultery in our hearts, but it even extends to people who committed actual physical adultery.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, 1 John 1:9 says this. It is a verse that I have held onto so many times. It says if you confess your sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us of all unrighteousness. It is a promise. So, when we confess these things to God, he knows we are broken, he knows we are weak, he knows we will fall. Even for those who have committed adultery...who have had affairs, who have tried to lie, who have tried to cover it up...there is a confession that could bring you to cleansing. Even though it may take time to heal from those things, our God is able to forgive us. Even King David was forgiven. He confessed in Psalm 51. It specifically says that when David...after he committed [adultery] with Bathsheba...it says like a footnote in the beginning, and he does: Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to your unfailing love... and blot out my transgressions. And God forgives him as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; and in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1, we even have an overt reference to one of Jesus' great, great, great grandmothers, which was Uriah's wife, a sign that God does forgive us; but positively, let's end with these words from Proverbs 3, because this is what God wants for us:

³Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. ⁴Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man. ⁵Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on you own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

And that kind of stable, fruitful, happy, good life, that is what God wants for us, Darrell. He wants us to delight in our relationships. He wants us to delight in our marriages. He wants us to flourish. That is a gift of God, and thanks be to God that he helps us to preserve it by the power of his Holy Spirit.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we continue our study of the Ten Commandments with a look at the eighth command: You shall not steal.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

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