

Adultery

Key Verse

"Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral." Hebrews 13:4 (NIV)

Basic Biblical Understanding

The Bible speaks of two primary sexual sins related to marriage: adultery and fornication. Adultery is extramarital sex by those who are married. Fornication is premarital sex by those who are not married. Both are defined as sin, and both are built on multiple layers of sexual immorality. God created sex to be enjoyed by a husband and wife in the confines of covenant marriage. Adultery and fornication are sexual acts outside of God's perfect design.

There are numerous passages that speak to God's great concern about adultery and its impact on marriage. Two of the Ten Commandments speak to the sin of adultery or sin leading to adultery. "You shall not commit adultery," and "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife" (Exodus 20:14, 17 NIV). There is a definitive link between adultery and coveting. Coveting is an intense desire for something that is not yours. Adultery is acting upon that desire by having sex with someone other than your spouse. Adultery tramples on the marriage covenant and destroys the trust in the relationship.

Adultery also exposes other sins that sit under the surface (e.g. deception, pride, lust, selfishness, lying, etc.). Therefore, it's not enough to stop the act of adultery; a person must also confront the sins that support an unfaithful mindset.

While the aftermath of adultery may take years to sort through, God gives real hope for those willing to do the hard work. Amidst the brokenness, He is our Rock, our Counselor.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:8–9
- "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." John 14:15
- "No one who is born of God practices sin, for His seed abides in him, and he cannot sin because he has been born of God." 1 John 3:9
- "In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." Matthew 7:12

Helpful Questions and Application

1. In your situation, was adultery the result of ongoing marital problems or a spouse giving into lustful temptation?
2. How did the marriage deteriorate over time (give specific examples)?
3. Did you see the deterioration? What actions were (or were not) taken to address the problems and work towards a solution?

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Proverbs 5–7, Matthew 19:3–10, 1 Corinthians 6:9–20

WordTruth articles: ["Adultery—Far Worse than You Might Think"](#)

["Adulterous Church Members – Stay or Leave"](#)