Family Worship: The Sanctity of the One-Flesh Union

Scripture Block

Deuteronomy 22:22 (NKJV) — "If a man is found lying with a woman married to a husband, then both of them shall die—the man that lay with the woman, and the woman; so you shall put away the evil from Israel."

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NKJV) — "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."

Old Testament Connection Summary

These verses in Deuteronomy serve as case laws applying the Seventh Commandment: "You shall not commit adultery." They show us the creation order, where a man leaves his father and mother to be joined to his wife in a one-flesh union. In God's order, in God's way, these civil laws protected the family and the nation by treating sexual sin not merely as a private failure, but as a heinous crime that destroys the community. These strict penalties remind us of God's holy standard for marriage, which was divinely intended to be a picture of Christ and His pure bride, the Church.

Devotional Teaching and Application

And as we've been looking at this detailed section of the law, we see God fiercely protecting the exclusivity of the marriage covenant. The Creator designed sexual intimacy for one place alone: the one-flesh relationship of a husband and wife. All else is a perversion of the Creator's will. The case laws here cover different scenarios—a married woman, a betrothed virgin in the city, a betrothed virgin in the field, and an unbetrothed woman. In each situation, God's justice is precise. If a man lies with a married woman, he has coveted his neighbor's wife, trespassed on a covenant, and killed the marriage. Both were to die to put away the evil from Israel.

What do we mean by this today? Well, while the civil penalties of ancient Israel are not carried out by modern magistrates, the moral weight of the Seventh Commandment has not changed. Adultery remains a destructive evil. It unravels the fabric of the family, and as a result, it unravels the nation. When a society treats the marriage covenant lightly, as our modern culture does, it paves the way for every other kind of relational and sexual breakdown. The breakdown of the family does not start out there in the world; it starts when those who profess Christ tolerate infidelity, divorce, and the hidden sins of the heart within the church.

Yet, there is a spiritual reality we must also grasp. The New Testament warns us in James 4 that friendship with the world is spiritual adultery. We are the bride of Christ. When we adopt the sinful ways of the world, we are breaking our covenant with our Lord. But Paul gives to us here the greatest story that's ever been told, the gospel of Jesus Christ. He wrote to the Corinthians, a people surrounded by deep moral corruption, and listed the sexual sins that keep people from the kingdom of God. But then he added those glorious words: "And such were some of you." No matter the failures of the past, there is washing, sanctification, and justification in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Catechism Style Q&A

Parents, use these questions to teach your family the foundational truths found in this passage. We must train our children not just to know the rules, but to understand the holy character of the God who gave them.

By memorizing these truths, we anchor our minds in God's creation order. This simple catechism helps us remember why God guards marriage so closely and how He deals with our failures.

1. Question: What does the Seventh Commandment require? Answer: The Seventh Commandment requires us to preserve our own and our neighbor's purity in heart, speech, and behavior.
2. Question: Why did God give strict case laws protecting marriage? Answer: Because marriage is a holy, one-flesh covenant created by God, and breaking it destroys the family and society.
3. Question: Is there forgiveness for breaking God's law concerning purity? Answer: Yes, the gospel of Jesus Christ offers washing, sanctification, and justification to all who repent and believe.

These truths build a foundation of covenant faithfulness in our homes. When we understand both the severity of God's law and the depths of His grace, we are equipped to live as faithful citizens of Christ's kingdom.

Questions for Children

It is vital that we help our children grasp the plain meaning of the Scriptures we read together. The Bible is not just a book of ancient history; it is the living word that instructs us today.

Use these simple recall questions to ensure your younger listeners are following the narrative and the basic instructions God gave to Israel.

1. According to God's design, how many people make up a marriage?
2. What did God say should happen to the evil in Israel?
3. What did the Apostle Paul say happened to the Corinthians who used to live in sin?

Answering these basic questions prepares the soil of their hearts for deeper spiritual truths. Always encourage them for paying attention to the reading of the Word.

Theological Reflection and Adult Discussion

As mature believers, we must move beyond the surface and consider the deep theological implications of God's justice. The law of God is a reflection of His own unchanging character.

We must examine our own hearts and the spiritual posture of our homes. The world around us is built on a foundation of seduction, constantly attempting to draw our affections away from our Lord.

1. How does the biblical concept of "betrothal" (a promised, binding covenant) help us understand our current relationship to Christ as His bride awaiting the marriage supper?
2. In what ways do we see the church committing "spiritual adultery" (James 4:4) by compromising with the world, and how can we guard our own families against this?
3. How does the radical grace described in 1 Corinthians 6:11 change the way we counsel and restore those who have failed morally, without diminishing the seriousness of God's law?

Taking time to reflect on these matters fortifies our minds against the cultural lies about marriage and fidelity. It drives us back to the cross, where both the justice and the mercy of God are perfectly fulfilled.

Practical Applications for Obedience

Knowing God's law must translate into practical obedience in our daily lives. True faith always results in action. We are called to live differently than the culture around us.

Consider how you can actively apply the principles of purity and covenant faithfulness in your home this week.

1. Guard the influences in your home by actively monitoring and removing entertainment, media, or internet access that promotes seduction or sexual immorality.

2. Fathers and husbands, lead your family in praying specifically for the marriages in your local church, that God would protect them from the snare of the enemy.
3. Cultivate a culture of transparent confession in your marriage, remembering that sin loses its power when brought into the light of Christ's forgiveness.

By walking in these practical steps, we honor the Lord and build a fortress of righteousness for our families. Let us be a people who not only hear the word, but do it.

Family Prayer Prompt

Our Father in heaven, we bow before You and acknowledge that Your laws are good, holy, and just. You created marriage to be a beautiful picture of Christ and His Church, a one-flesh union meant to reflect Your covenant faithfulness. We confess that we live in a culture that despises Your creation order, and we ask that You would keep our hearts and minds pure. Forgive us for the times we have allowed the friendship of the world to draw us away from You. We thank You for the glorious truth of the gospel—that though we are sinners, we can be washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Give us the grace to walk in holiness, to protect the marriages in our church, and to honor You in all our ways. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Scripture Memorization

1 Corinthians 6:11 (NKJV) — "And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."