

7. Simple Commands - Serious Issues

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Nowadays when we hear some politicians, priests, movie stars or basketball players have illicit sexual relationships, we don't even wrinkle our eyebrows. Because we are so immune to them. However, when we see some husbands and wives lived together for more than 20 years, we say, "Wow!" Having a long lasting marriage became rare due to our own selfish desires and completely immoral society. When having sex before marriage became norm, having illicit relationship outside of marriage is just another thing, it is not that difficult for us to get into the same trap as they are in.

Last year American people spent 20 billion dollars in sex industry, ranging from porno magazines, topless bars, live peeping shows, visiting porno web sites, porno movies, phone sex and all the other raunchy sexual stuff. It is more than all the major box office revenues combined. All who were participated in this sex industry as customers, web site visitors, or subscribers were committing adultery in God's sight. If any of you are involved with these, you need to repent and ask God to forgive you from your sins NOW.

From the major network TV stations, Fox, Warner Brothers stations, MTV, Hollywood movies, pop songs, magazines, to internet, all of them encourage our young people and us to have loose living. Their motto is "If it feels good, do it."

Isaiah 5:20 Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

In last few years, one of the biggest jokes TV stations pull on the viewers is Reality shows. It is done in low budgets, the participants do all the stunts, making themselves idiots, using up their own vacation time, putting their reputations on line for money, short lived fame, and publicity. They are nothing more than televised peeping-Tom shows.

The current culture that encourages lust, fornication, adultery and easy way out of marriage is all together against what we believe and what we want to do in Christ.

With His piercing simplicity, Jesus makes it clear that marriage requires absolute faithfulness and personal relationship requires absolute truthfulness.

A. ADULTERY STARTS NOT IN THE BED, BUT IN THE HEAD

Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery (Ex 20:14).' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Unlike most preachers who tiptoe around explosive issues, Jesus walked resolutely through the mine fields of marital purity and personal integrity.

The shrapnel of dissatisfaction, disharmony and divorce has struck marriages in every generation with devastating effects.

Jesus is not saying that the act of adultery and adultery in the heart are the same thing. Jesus' point is that they are both sin, and both prohibited by the command against adultery.

Jesus reveals the source of sin that is human heart and teaches us that adultery starts in the head, not in the bed only. That means lustful thought equals adultery to God.

We have spies inside of us who help the enemy outside of us. The enemy is satan and his cohorts. Who is this spy inside of us? It is our flesh. Let's not allow that flesh to be fed with anymore new materials through our eyes.

We may not be able to control passing thoughts or feelings, but we certainly do decide where our heart and mind will rest. The great reformer Martin Luther said, "We cannot stop a bird flying over our heads. But we can certainly stop it from making a nest on our heads."

The generation without moral code is the generation that is crumbling. This is the generation without moral code.

Average 120 people die each day in AIDS in the United States. As you all know the origin of AIDS comes from an African man having sex with a monkey. It is the most prevalent sexual diseases among homosexual people. A tremendous numbers of teens who are sexually active will die before they become thirty years old in our generation.

James 1:14-15 But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.

Prov 6:32 Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; He who does so destroys his own soul.

It is true that women tends to understand about love more than men. However, it still bases on emotional love more than unconditional love. That is why the majority of romantic novel readers are women. Meanwhile, majority of men's idea of love is often translate to sex.

Women's idea of intimacy can be holding hands with the man she loves in the middle of 50,000 people in a football stadium, men's idea of intimacy is having sex. Are they both wrong? No, but they are only a part of the true and real love that God shows us in 1 Cor 13.

B. WHATEVER IT TAKES

Matthew 5:29-30 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

If we know we are heading into the area that fill with a bomb, what should we do? We should do everything within our power not to even get in there. Jesus is using a shocking method to warn us the danger of toying with possibility of sins in our lives.

If you have a bondage to pornography from magazines, movies, internet sites or whatever form or media, you must do the same thing what Jesus tells us to do. Pluck your eyes out, cut your arms. Not literally, but do it with the same seriousness. If you have a subscription of Playboy, Penthouse, or whatever, send them a note and tell them not to send it anymore. Forget about the balance of your subscription. God will honor you and bless you. Are you stumbling in your walk with Christ

because of HBO or other cable channels or going to see 'R' rated movies that show women's nudity? Cancel it, stop going to see those movies. You might say, "OK Preacher, now you are going too far." Am I? Would you go see that movie if Jesus is sitting next to you? I am sure that you will say, "No." If the answer is "No," why would you watch those movies that contain nudity, obscenity, vulgar, profanity, and mocking God in the name of freedom of expression, when you have the Holy Spirit who is God Himself living in you? You need to repent from it and turn to God.

Ladies, you are not off the hook. If you are reading romantic novels or watching soap operas that filled illicit sexual relationship and expecting your husbands to meet that romantic fantasied standard, or internet chat with some other man than your husband, you are committing adultery in God's sight. You need to repent and turn to God also.

If you are thinking that I am a legalist to tell you all these things and I am ruining your fun, you are not arguing with me. You are arguing with God. But God is always right, that means you are wrong.

Jesus simply stresses the point that one must be willing to sacrifice to be obedient and to please the Father in heaven. This is the one thing many are unwilling to do, and that is why they remain trapped in sin, or never come to Jesus. They never get beyond a vague wish to be better.

Some of you might say, "If you keep on saying that kind of things, you won't have any people in this church? So be it. Do I look like I am scared? I started this church with God and three other couples. I can go back to that if that is what the Lord wants. But I will not dilute the truth. I am not condemning you, but the Holy Spirit is convicting you.

C. ISSUE OF DIVORCE

The subject of adultery logically introduces a possible consequence - Divorce.

Matthew 5:31-32 "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

In many cases, the couples who come to marriage counseling already have divorce in their mind. They just want to find out if their situation qualify for divorce and to have the pastor's blessing for their divorce.

The majority of those who jump off their marriage ships, end up in another shipwreck of marriage and continue in ugly vicious cycle. Because they only know emotional love that goes out when the tough times come and have not learned how to love one another when they are not lovable.

Born-again Christian couples are not doing much better in the rate of divorce to compare with non-believers.

The devil knows that once he destroys the bonding between husband and wife, the rest is easy. In our social structure, family is the grass root, bottom line basic unit.

Every infrastructure of society is hinged on the family unit. It is no wonder why our society is going south, because our families are breaking apart faster than getting together.

Pharisees were preoccupied with the ground for divorce, but Jesus was preoccupied with keeping the marriage and making it strong.

Jesus lived in a day when views about divorce were batted back and forth between rabbinic schools. They were:

The school of Rabbi Shammai had a rigorous line. They considered there is only one reason for divorce that is marital unfaithfulness. However, the school of Rabbi Hillel held an extremely loose view for the ground for divorce - from burned breakfast to wife's plain looks.

We see the word sexual immorality. The Greek word for this is 'porneia.' We get our word 'pornography' from this. This sexual immorality includes illicit sexual intercourse, adultery that is sexual relationship outside of marriage, fornication that is sexual relationship before the marriage, homosexuality, lesbianism, bestiality, and incest.

What does God think about divorce? Let's hear it from His own lips.

Malachi 2:16 "For the Lord God of Israel says, "That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the Lord of hosts. "Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

Mark 10:9 Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Jesus teaches more fully on marriage and divorce in Matthew 19, but here we see the intent of Jesus: getting back to the intent of the law, instead of allowing it to be used as easy permission for divorce.

D. PERSONAL INTEGRITY

The subject of divorce naturally takes us back to our wedding vows, where we promised to stay with our partner "for better or for worse."

Because we don't take our word seriously, some of us are willing to go through divorce in spite of our wedding vows in the presence of God and many witnesses.

Matthew 5:33-37 "Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.' For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

This does not forbid solemn, official oaths, but only oaths made in common speech. Such oath-taking suggests that a person's normal words cannot be trusted. God's law says, "Do not lie under oath"; Jesus was telling His followers not to lie under any circumstances.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Be careful what we watch and what we put in our hearts.

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman."

2 Cor 10:5 We take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

2) Unless there is a biblical ground for divorce, your marriage and my marriage are here to stay according to His Word.

If we don't like our marriage, we should work at it instead of bailing out. If we bail out, we will face the same problem, because we didn't learn. I guarantee it.

3) When we make promise with someone, we need to keep it whether it is big thing to us or not.

If we promised that we are going to call them back, we should call them back. If we said we are going to pray for them, we'd better pray for them. The importance of big or small doesn't matter. What matter is keeping the promise.