

CONSIDERING THE CONSEQUENCES AND CASUALTIES OF ADULTERY

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Immorality, including the sins of fornication and adultery, has been a common practice among human beings since early in man's existence on God's earth, even among those in covenant relationship with God in the O.T., as well as professed believers, those previously saved by the blood of Jesus Christ by virtue of having believe and obeyed the gospel under the N.T. system of salvation. See Gen.4:19; Jude 7; Gen.19:30-36; Rom.1:22-27; 1Cor.6:9-11; 10:8; rev.2:14,20.
2. However, the commonality of the practice does not lessen its sinfulness, nor its terrible consequences and horrible casualties.
3. The burden of this lesson is to look at and consider some of it consequences and casualties, both material or physical and spiritual, with emphasis on the spiritual.

II. DISCUSSION

A. FIRST, A WORKING DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Fornication: porneia
 - a. W.E. Vine, II, 125: "is used (a) of illicit sexual intercourse...in Mt.5:32 and Mt.19:9 it stands for, or includes, adultery; it is distinguished from it (i.e. adultery, ejd) in Mt.15:19 and Mk.7:21."
 - b. Young's Analytical Concordance, p.368: "Whoredom"
 - c. Arndt & Gingrich, Greek English Lexicon, p.699: "prostitution, unchastity, of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse...Differentiated from adultery...Mt.15:19; Mk.7:21. On the other hand adultery appears as fornication"
 - d. Joseph Henry Thayer, Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the N.T., p.532: "prop. of illicit sexual intercourse in general...it is distinguished from adultery in Mt.15:19; Mk.7:21; and Gal.5:19; used of adultery in Mt.5:32; 19:9."
 - e. H. Reisser, The New International Dict. of N.T. Theology, ed. By Colin Brown, I, 497: "extra-marital sexual modes of behavior insofar as they deviated from accepted social and religious norms (e.g. homosexuality, promiscuity, pedophilia, and especially prostitution."
2. Adultery: moichos
 - a. Vine, I, 32: "denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another."

- b. Thayer, 417: moichao: “to have unlawful intercourse with another’s wife (husband, ejd), to commit adultery with.”
- c. Adultery is a certain kind of sexual act.
 - (1) See Lev.20:10; Isa.57:3; Jno.8:4; Heb.13:4.
 - (2) As a sexual sin, adultery is forbidden in Mt.5:27, and is prefaced by a lustful gaze in Mt.5:28.
 - (3) Jezebel of Thyatira would commit adultery after being “cast into a bed,” Rev.2:22.
 - (4) The consistent, literal use of “adultery” implies sexual misconduct, an unlawful sexual act.
 - (5) Adultery is a sexual act, a repeatable offense, and a treacherous violation of the marriage covenant.
- 3. In other words:
 - a. Fornication is a term referring to “illicit sexual intercourse in general”.
 - b. Fornication, in a given context, may refer specifically to “prostitution, whoredom, homosexuality, etc.”
 - c. Fornication as used in the N.T. may sometimes include the sin of adultery, and sometimes maybe differentiated from adultery.
 - d. Fornication is a general term for sexual immorality, or all kinds of unlawful sexual behavior, or sexual acts.
 - e. Aside from their figurative usages, both fornication and adultery, as used in the N.T., refer to actual sexual acts on the part of individuals which are unlawful, i.e., contrary to God’s law authorizing such acts within, and only within, a scriptural marriage.
 - f. Whereas fornication is a general term for all illicit sexual intercourse, adultery is used specifically of unlawful sexual conduct, or sexual acts, in violation of the marriage covenant.

B. ADULTERY IS A SERIOUS, A TREACHEROUS, VIOLATION OF DIVINE LAW, OF GOD’S MARRIAGE COVENANT.

- 1. Marriage is spoken of as a covenant between one man and one woman in which God has a vital part, because he is the one who joins them together when they enter a scriptural marriage, Gen.2:18-24; Mt.19:4-6; Mal.2:14-16.
- 2. Though God hates divorce, according to Mal.2:14-16, fornication or adultery is such a treacherous violation of the marriage covenant that God allows the innocent spouse to divorce the spouse who is guilty of fornication or adultery, and to break the marriage covenant, with the

innocent spouse granted the scriptural right to marry another without committing sin, Mt.19:9.

- a. In fact, fornication or adultery is the one and only cause divinely allowed for divorce, whether or not there is ever another marriage on the part of the innocent spouse who put away the guilty spouse for the cause allowed.
3. The seriousness, the hatefulness, the outrageousness, the treacherousness, of the sin of adultery, is explicitly declared in both Testaments.
 - a. Job, a faithful, upright, representative of the Patriarchs of old, in protestation of his integrity before his accusers, and speaking of adultery, designated it as “an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges,” job 31:1-11.
 - b. Under the law of Moses the sin of adultery carried the death penalty, Lev.20:10; Cf. Jno.8:4,5.

C. ADULTERY ALSO CARRIES THE MOST SERIOUS CONSEQUENCE OF ALL – THAT OF ETERNAL DEATH, OR ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.

1. In the Book of Proverbs Solomon repeatedly warns and admonished his son against the sin of adultery, where, in Chs.2,5,6, and 7, he describes its enticements and warns of the cost of its pleasures.
 - a. First, in Prov.2:10-19, he states that wisdom will deliver his son “from the strange (immoral) woman.”
 - b. The last in his series of warnings in Chs.2-7 against adultery in yielding to the immoral woman is in Prov.7:27: “Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.”
2. The N.T. is even more explicit in describing the eternal consequences of those who commit adultery.
 - a. Heb.13:4 states that God will judge (condemn) them.
 - b. 1Cor.6:9,10 and Gal.5:19-21 both warn that adulterers “shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
 - c. Rev.21:8 includes “whoremongers (fornicators)”, that Heb.13:4 says “God will judge,” among those who “shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.”

D. EVEN IF ONE SHOULD DECEIVE HIMSELF INTO PUTTING OFF CONSIDERING THE ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES AND CASUALTIES OF ADULTERY, IT HAS SO MANY CONSEQUENCES IN THIS EARTHLY LIFE ONE CAN'T POSSIBLY ESCAPE CONSIDERING THEM.

1. Even if one can tell himself he is going to repent and change his ways in time to avoid the eternal consequences of adultery, the earthly consequences in the here and now are too numerous and too painful for its pleasures. Consider some of them.
2. In between Ch.2:10-19 and Ch.7:27, Solomon, in Prov.5, warns of a whole series of consequences in this earthly life due to adultery.
 - a. Prov.5:8,9 – adultery is a waster of time – of life itself – in pursuit of a pleasure which produces nothing of value, but rather robs one of anything productive.
 - b. Prov.5:10.
 - (1) The financial cost of adultery is staggering.
 - (2) Bank accounts, life savings, gone, wasted, due to an illicit affair.
 - (3) Businesses wrecked because the owner or manager was involved in adultery.
 - (4) Alimony payments resulting from divorce because of adultery are not easy to meet – labor indeed going “to the house of a stranger”.
 - c. Prov.5:11
 - (1) The spread of dreadful diseases associated with sexual promiscuity has forced some who have refused other warnings of God to change their lifestyle.
 - (2) Yet many continue to disregard the dangers of disease from committing adultery and suffer the consequences.
 - (3) It may even result in causing infecting the unsuspecting spouse and of innocent children yet to be born.
 - d. Prov.5:12-14
 - (1) The guilty conscience is one of the more severe consequences of adultery.
 - (2) What a burden of guilty must fall upon the adulterer, who still has a conscience, to reflect upon how he or she has violated and lost the trust of his or her spouse, his or her brethren in Christ, his or her friends, his or her children.
 - (3) It’s often difficult for one to forgive self even when knowing he or she has God’s forgiveness. A guilty conscience is difficult to overcome for the sincere person who mourns his or her sin against God and one’s spouse.
3. In Prov.6:23-33, Solomon warns and describes the inevitable harm and disgrace of adultery in this present earthly life.

- a. The cost of adultery in terms of respect is still high, even in our day of loose morals on the part of so many.
 - b. Self-respect is damaged by the realization that one is breaking the most solemn vows and violating the most sacred trust that may exist between two human beings; for in the marriage covenant the two become “one flesh”.
 - c. David’s adultery with Bath-sheba gave “great occasion (concern) to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme” (2Sam.12:14), and the result is the same today when one of God’s own commits adultery.
 - d. It costs the adulterer his influence –no way he can convert the sinner now!
 - e. It costs the local church in terms of being able to reach the lost.
4. In spite of the warnings and regardless of the sad, inevitable consequences of adultery which we observe all about us, many are foolish enough to think, when they are tempted, that they can escape what others suffer because of the same sin. This Solomon addressed in Prov.6:27-32.
5. At least two other earthly consequences and/or casualties of adultery must not be overlooked.
- a. A destroyed marriage, by a spouse being rejected, put away, or divorced by the innocent spouse, which God permits, Mt.19:9.
 - (1) Death of a close family member, even a spouse, is often times easier to face and handle or cope with than divorce. For with divorce there is seldom, if ever, any closure. With death there is!
 - (2) In short, destroying a marriage is one of the most injurious things one person can do to another, which is done by adultery.
 - (3) Is it any wonder God called it a treacherous and violent act in Mal.2:14-16.
 - b. A destroyed family and family life, resulting in abandoned children.
 - (1) In the long run it’s the children of broken homes who suffer the most and the longest.
 - (2) Consider all they miss when mother or daddy no longer come home.
 - (3) Read the article: “Daddy Won’t Be Coming Home”
 - (4) I have said many times that where there children, “spouses who sin and cause divorce are some of the most selfish

people on earth. They think only of self to detriment of innocent children!”

- c. Perhaps a third casualty is a destroyed conscience, a seared conscience.
 - (1) Sin, any sin, especially adultery, engaged in long enough can easily sear the conscience.
 - (2) See 1Tim.4:1,2; Eph.4:17-19; Heb.6:4-6; Rom.1:28.

III. CONCLUSION

1. Prov.2:16-19 point up, or suggest, the difficulty of breaking free from the clutches of adultery once engaged in it.
2. Like illicit drugs, adultery seems to provide an unrealistic thrill which one is tempted to seek again and again, especially when problems or difficulty of some kind is encountered in one’s marriage relationship. Thus such warnings as those of 1Cor.7:1-5 and 6:18.
3. Most of those who experiment with adultery begin for themselves a lifetime of internal warfare – a war which all too often is lost in the end. They find that, indeed, “her house is the way to hell,” as Solomon said, Prov.7:27.
4. To commit adultery, whether on one occasion or in a continuing relationship, one must surely refuse to think about how stupid it really is, or to think about the terrible Biblical description of both the present earthly consequences, much less the eternal destiny of the offenders.
5. In view of circumstances, what can we do?
 - a. Discipline ourselves to refrain from the sin of adultery. It can be done! It must be done!
 - b. We must make our marriages work. This also can be done! Must be done!
 - c. To do so, we may have to make the best of some undesirable circumstances. This too can be done! It must be done! After all, remember your vows!
 - d. We must consider all aspects of our responsibilities as husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers as we learn and obey God’s will in marriage.
 - e. We must, at the same time, teach our children the absolute standard of God’s laws for marriage, which, of course, must begin with his absolute standard of holy living for each individual. To do this, we must set the example before them in both word and deed!