

ADULTERY IS A HEINOUS CRIME

Job said in the long ago: *“For this (adultery ó dt) is an heinous crime; yea, it is an iniquity to be punished by the judges.”* (Job 31: 11). Adultery is no less an *“heinous crime”* today than it was in the days of Job. The word *“adultery”* describes the action of *“one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another”* (*W. E. Vine*). A *“crime”* is defined as *“a transgression against the public right; serious offense against the law.”* Adultery is a crime because it is an offense against God and man. We are told that 83% of men and 55% of women in this country are guilty of this sin at some time in their married lives. It is my purpose in this article to show how sinful and destructive adultery is that it might be prevented.

ADULTERY IS UNFAITHFULNESS

In marriage the husband and wife have vowed to be true and faithful to one another; they have entered into a covenant with each other. The prophet Malachi said to the unfaithful husbands in Israel: *“Yet is she thy companion, the wife of thy covenant.”* (Mal. 2:14). A covenant *“signifies a mutual understanding between two or more, each binding himself to fulfill obligations”* (*Vine*). The parties in a covenant obligate themselves to carry out their respective duties and commitments. Some of the mutual duties of the covenant of marriage are:

- (1) Companionship (Gen. 2:18; Mal. 2:14)
- (2) The duty of marriage ó sexual cohabitation (Ex. 21:10; I Cor. 7: 2 ó 5)
- (3) To love each other (Eph. 5:25; Tit. 2:4)
- (4) To jealously guard the purity of one another (Eph. 5: 26 ó 27; Tit. 2: 4 -5)
- (5) A division of labor (Tit. 2: 4 ó 5; I Tim. 5: 8)
- (6) To seek to understand each other (I Pet. 3:7)

God has witnessed this covenant (Mal. 2:14); He has joined them together in *“one flesh”* (Matt. 19: 5 ó 8), and has bound them for life (Rom. 7:2; I Cor. 7:39). When either party to this covenant commits adultery he/she breaks a most solemn promise to their companion and to God. They cruelly violate this most tender relationship. This unfaithfulness destroys love and trust; without fidelity love and trust cannot exist. This unfaithfulness is SIN against God (Gen. 39:9), and is the only grounds God has given for divorce (Matt. 19:9).

ADULTERY IS CRUEL

To be cruel is to cause pain and grief for another. Can you think of any greater cruelty in this life than to know that your bosom companion has violated your marriage bed? (Heb. 13:4) The writer of Proverbs said that this sin would produce jealousy and anger in the heart of the offended: *“For jealousy is the rage of a man; therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance. He will not regard any ransom; neither will he rest content, though thou givest many gifts.”* (Prov. 6: 34 ó 35). This sin cruelly destroys hopes and dreams and brings great suffering to little children. It is indeed a cruel sin!

ADULTERY BRINGS SELF-REPROACH

The man who seduces his neighbor's wife is not innocent: "*So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.*" (Prov. 6:29). First he must seduce her (taking advantage of her own weakness to satisfy his lustful desire), and in doing this he causes her to sin and robs her of her virtue (Prov. 12:4). There is nothing innocent about what this man has done! He has committed an *ō*heinous crime*ö*, one against God and man! He is not innocent in his own conscience. After David had sinned with Bathsheba he said, *öMy sin is ever before me.*" (Psa. 51:3). One who commits adultery cannot get the sin off his mind! Friend, if you think you can commit adultery without destroying all that is good in your life, then you just don't understand this sin!

ADULTERY CORRUPTS THE CHARACTER

The word *ö*character*ö* is defined as *ö*moral vigor, firmness and self-discipline*ö*. Adultery completely destroys the moral qualities of an individual. Let us look at how the Bible describes an adulterous person:

- (1) They will flatter and lie (Prov. 7:15, 21; 2:16)
- (2) They are loud and stubborn (Prov. 7:11)
- (3) He will wait at his neighbor's door for opportunity to take advantage of his wife (Job 31:9)
- (4) He will wait until twilight so that he won't be recognized (Job 24:15; Prov. 7: 6 ó 7)

The writer of Proverbs said, *öYea, many strong men have been slain by her.*" (Prov. 7:26). Friend, be not deceived by this heinous sin! It will destroy your moral vigor and self-discipline.

ADULTERY BRINGS SHAME TO ONE'S LIFE

Adultery stains one's character: "*A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.*" (Prov. 6:33). A man or woman gives their honor in adultery: "*Lest thou give thine honour unto others, and thy years unto the cruel.*" (Prov. 5:9). In committing adultery one brings shame to his family, to his friends and to the church.

THE SIN OF ADULTERY BRINGS IMPOVERISHMENT

öFor by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread; and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life." (Prov. 6:26); "*But he that keepeth company with harlots spendeth his substance.*" (Prov. 29:3); "*For it (adultery ó dt) is a fire that consumeth to destruction, and would root out all mine increase.*" (Job 31: 12); "*Lest strangers be filled with thy wealth; and thy labors be in the house of a stranger.*" (Prov. 5:10)

By committing adultery men lose their families, their wealth, their jobs and their good names. Many men and women in this world today are without anything because of adultery! The saddest thing is the spiritual impoverishment it will bring: "*He that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.*" (Prov. 6:32). God is the avenger of this sin (I Thess. 4:6).

THE BLISS OF LAWFUL AND HONORABLE LOVE

Why will men resort to shameful lust when they can be blessed with lawful and honorable love? The writer of Proverbs describes lawful and honorable love with all of its pleasures in Prov. 5: 15 ó 19. In verse 15 the wife is compared to a ðcisternö and a ðwellö from which a man drinks. This means that a man is to satisfy his desires with his lawful wife. He is to be fascinated and charmed by her (read Song of Solomon, chapter 7). She is to be to him *ðas the loving hind and a pleasant roe...*" (Prov. 5:19 ó attractive animals). Her love is to be satisfying and ravishing (intoxicating and enrapturing). The husband is to be so much in love with his wife that he will always find complete sexual thrill and satisfaction with her love, and if this be the case he will never *ðembrace the bosom of a stranger"* (Prov. 5: 20). My brethren, let us *ðflee fornication"* (I Cor. 6:18).

*Donald Townsley
160 Rice Rd.
Florence, AL 35633*