

The Sixth Commandment

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God that we may lead a chaste and decent life in word and deed, and each love and honor his spouse.

1. The 5th commandment having protected one's own body, the 6th protects one's chastity and family. What does the commandment prohibit, and why? *Matt 5:27–32; 19:1–15; John 7:53–8:11; 1 Cor 6:9–20.*
2. This commandment, perhaps more than others, shows us how our feelings, our passions, our desires, are twisted by original sin away from the good things God means to give, to want things that will harm us and our neighbors. Who is harmed when God's commandment is broken "between two consenting adults?" *Rom 1:18–32.* Is it faithful to approve those who practice these things? Is that love, or something else? *Gal 6:1; James 5:19–20; 1 Cor 5:1–13; 1 Cor 2:5–11; 12:21; John 3:16–21.*

From Luther's *Large Catechism* (I: Ten Commandments)

202–205 [B]ecause among us there is such a shameful mess and the very dregs of all vice and lewdness, this commandment is directed also against all manner of unchastity, whatever it may be called; and not only is the external act forbidden, but also every kind of cause, incitement, and means, so that the heart, the lips, and the whole body may be chaste and afford no opportunity, help, or persuasion to in chastity.

And not only this, but that we also make resistance, afford protection and rescue wherever there is danger and need; and again, that we give help and counsel, so as to maintain our neighbor's honor. For whenever you omit this when you could make resistance, or connive at it as if it did not concern you, you are as truly guilty as the one perpetrating the deed. Thus, to state it in the briefest manner, there is required this much, that every one both live chastely himself and help his neighbor do the same, so that God by this commandment wishes to hedge round about and protect [as with a rampart] every spouse that no one trespass against them...

217–218 Now, I speak of this in order that the young may be so guided that they conceive a liking for the married estate, and know that it is a blessed estate and pleasing to God. For in this way we might in the course of time bring it about that married life be restored to honor, and that there might be less of the filthy, dissolute, disorderly doings which now run riot the world over in open prostitution and other shameful vices arising from disregard of married life. Therefore it is the duty of parents and the government to see to it that our youth be brought up to discipline and respectability, and when they have come to years of maturity, to provide for them [to have them married] in the fear of God and honorably; He would not fail to add His blessing and grace, so that men would have joy and happiness from the same...

219 Let me now say in conclusion that this commandment demands not only that every one live chastely in thought, word, and deed in his condition, that is, especially in the estate of matrimony, but also that every one love and esteem the spouse given him by God. For where conjugal chastity is to be maintained, man and wife must by all means live together in love and harmony, that one may cherish the other from the heart and with entire fidelity. For that is one of the principal points which enkindle love and desire of chastity, so that, where this is found, chastity will follow as a matter of course without any command.