

## WOULD PUTTING AWAY “FOR FORNICATION” INCLUDE ADULTERY “IN HIS HEART”?

Jeff Belknap

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exposed the teaching of the Scribes and Pharisees by revealing how they made the wrong application to the Scriptures. It appears that they emphasized action rather than attitude. Evidently their hearts were not “pure” in many of the things that they were doing (cf. Matthew 5:8; Philippians 4:8).

In Matthew 5:21-22, we learn that they were unaware that they were “murderers” (at heart). Jesus said; *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time; Then shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you...”* Verse 22 continues to reveal that they were guilty of being “angry” with their brethren “without a cause” and that they had some heartless words for their fellow men like “*Raca*” (i.e. “senseless” or “empty-headed”) and “fool.” Hence, Jesus was pointing out, that this is the spirit that kills (cf. 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:15).

It appears that the scribes and Pharisees thought, “I may not kill, but I sure can hate.” They were thinking, “I may not kill anybody, but I have the right to despise people if I want to.” Unfortunately, some would actually agree with that mindset because they think that the Law of Moses was not a law of the heart (but it most certainly was).

When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment of the Law (Matthew 22:36-40), He quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5 and stated *“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets”* (Matthew 22:37-40). Dear reader, to love your neighbor as yourself meant the same thing in the days of Moses as it does today (Romans 13:10). The law of Moses went to the heart! Unfortunately, the scribes and Pharisees missed that by a mile (cf. Matthew 23:23-28).

The intent of the Law of Moses was to get the children of Israel to love one another. Not only were they precluded from taking one another by the throat to choke one another to death, they were not permitted to even want to take one another by the throat! Biblical love is not just

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an emotion, it’s a lifestyle (1<sup>st</sup> John 3:18; 5:3).

Similarly, Jesus continued to condemn uncontrolled thinking in Matthew 5:27-28 and said, *“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”* Not only can men become guilty of this, but women as well (cf. Genesis 39:7; Romans 15:4). Therefore, we all must make a “covenant” with our eyes (cf. Job 31:1; Matthew 5:29). Moreover, although the scribes and Pharisees acknowledged that they were not to commit physical murder, they were totally blind to the law forbidding them to even “desire” another woman (Deuteronomy 5:21; Exodus 20:17).

Now, the question is: Did Jesus authorize mankind to put away their divinely obligated marriage partner for committing “adultery” with another “in his heart?”

Jesus was making a distinction in Matthew 5:27-28 between adultery and the sin of impure thinking which will lead to “*the very act*” (John 8:4). In fact, the ten commandments reveal the difference between sin number 7, “adultery” (Deuteronomy 5:18; Exodus 20:14), and sin number 10, desiring/coveting another (Deuteronomy 5:21; Exodus 20:17). Although coveting another with sinful thoughts will obviously “defile” us spiritually, such is not using our body to commit the physical act of fornication (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 6:13-18).

In the gospel of Mark, Jesus taught that *“from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders...”* (Mark 7:21-23). The definition of the Greek word translated “proceed” (Gk. No. 1607, ekporeuomai) is: “to depart, be discharged, proceed, project:–come (forth, out of), depart, go (forth, out), issue, proceed (out of)” (Strong).

Hence, divinely obligated men/women commit “adultery” in their hearts when they look and lust, while “loosed” (free) men/women commit “fornication” in their hearts when they look and lust (Mark 7:21; cf. Prov. 23:7). We are commanded to do the will of God “from the heart” (Matthew 18:35; Romans 6:17; Ephesians 6:6). However, doing His will “in the heart” (all alone) is not the same thing (cf. Romans 10:9-10)! We must also go through all the motions as well, to serve God.

**"WHAT MUST I DO  
TO BE SAVED?"**

**ACTS 16:30**

**LEARN THE GOSPEL**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17

**BELIEVE IN CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16

**CONFESS CHRIST**

Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 3:19; 17:30

**BE BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"THE ASSEMBLING OF  
OURSELVES TOGETHER"**

**HEBREWS 10:24-25**

**SUNDAY**

Worship @ 10:00 a.m.

Studies @ 11:45 a.m.

**WEDNESDAY**

Studies & Worship @ 7:00 p.m.

75 Sherrod Boulevard  
Belén, New Mexico

Seekers Welcome.  
Members Expected.

**"IF A MAN IS OVERTAKEN IN  
ANY TRESPASS...  
RESTORE SUCH A ONE"**

**GALATIANS 6:1**

**CONFESS TRESPASSES**

James 5:16; 1<sup>st</sup> John 1:9

**REPENT OF SIN**

Acts 8:22

**PRAY FOR FORGIVENESS**

Acts 8:22

**REMAIN STEADFAST**

1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 15:58; Revelation 2:10

**"A WORD FITLY SPOKEN IS  
LIKE APPLES OF GOLD IN  
SETTINGS OF SILVER"**

**PROVERBS 25:11**

"Atheism does not remove the suffering; it merely removes the hope."

– John Lennox

**"WHOLE COUNSEL"**

**ACTS 20:27**

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**"MARRIED TO WHOM SHE WISHES"**

Gardner Hall

*"If her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord" (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:39).*

A growing number of sincere disciples, perhaps influenced by Calvinism, believe that God has preordained one specific spouse for them, one specific job, perhaps one specific place where he wants them to live. These specifics are presumed to be part of a plan he has in mind for them.

The apostle Paul did not have that concept of divine micromanagement. Instead notice:

**He gave widows free will to choose a spouse.** God did not have only one in mind for them, neither did he tell them to wait for signs, providential nudges, etc. to lead them to that one.

**He did have a category in mind for them – "in the Lord."** Whoever they chose should be according to the Lord's will, taking scriptural principles into consideration. Perhaps several potential husbands might fall into that category of "in the Lord." She then had to choose.

The same biblical principle applies to our jobs, where we live and other choices. God wants everything we do to be "in the Lord" (Colossians 3:17). His plan is for us to serve Him, serve others and live eternally with him. However, he gives us free will to choose the details.

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